

All right, well, this morning, if you want to get out your Bibles, we're going to be in Zechariah and the fifth chapter. And if you struggle with locating Zechariah, then make your way to Matthew and go two books to the left and you'll land there. Service announcements. Before I get started, one at the conclusion of our time in here together, we're going to observe communion. As we do this as a rhythm. Every first Sunday of the month, and then we are going to depart after communion, out for another baptism. So that never gets old. Yeah. Okay. As you guys are landing in Zechariah chapter 5. I'm reminded of a story I heard where a son said to his father, hey dad, do you have any dreams or visions or goals left? You know what? What do you think about or dream about? And the dad thought for a minute. He said, well, look, I gave all those up years ago, why don't we focus on you? I mean, you're young and you got your whole future ahead of you and Son said, well, dad, how many years ago? How long ago did you give up on those dreams? Those goals? The dad thought again. He said, well, son, how old are you? You know, and that happens in life, right? We have these ideas, these we have a vision. We have a dream. We have these goals. And we set out towards them. And then life happens. And some of them get derailed because things didn't go as we thought they should. Well, the Bible says Proverbs without vision, the people perish. That's Proverbs chapter 29, verse 18. And in our story, the people of Israel who had been departed to, you know, against their will, carried off into Babylon, they had a vision. They believed God gave them a vision to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. So this little hardy group of 42,000 souls, God calls them the remnant. They left made a 900 mile journey across the desert, made it back to Israel where the thing is in complete shambles. And they were charged up to rebuild the temple. They had a governor named Zerubbabel to lead them in the work. They had a high priest, Joshua, to lead them spiritually, and as soon as they got there they embarked upon this, this vision, this dream that they had. And yet opposition pops up, as it always does, and it stops them in their tracks. And so in the same year, the temple rebuilding started, it also stopped, and it stopped. As you guys know, if you've been with us not just for one year or two years or three years, but 16 years. So in 520 BC, God raises up two prophets. We call them minor prophets in tandem. Same time, Haggai and Zechariah, to stir the people up to rebuild the temple. And we've mentioned these are two very different guys. Haggai is very practical, and maybe you'd even say pragmatic. And he says, look, instead of building the Lord's house, you build your paneled houses. Let's get our priorities right. Start rebuilding the temple now. Zechariah. He comes on the scene at the same time. And as we mentioned, he's way more mystical and he's way more wordy, but he's also way more encouraging. And so what he does is the first six chapters of Zechariah, he gives visions of the Lord has given to him, to the people, to encourage them that the work of rebuilding the temple is a worthwhile project,

and God is going to complete it. So we'll call it eight visions. It's either 8 or 10, depending on how you break it up. It's either one vision that's got a string, all like pearls together, or it happens over time. I'm not for sure about that, but chapters one through six are these visions that God gives the people so they won't perish, so that they'll fulfill God's work for their life. And so what I want to do to get us to where we are today is take about ten minutes, probably, and go through each of these visions so you don't get lost in the visions and see how they work together to get us where to where we are. In chapter 5. So the first vision in chapter 1 is the vision of the horses or four angelic horsemen who talked with the angel of the Lord, which is Jesus. We made a case for among the myrtle trees and myrtle trees are emblematic of Israel, and these report to the Lord. We get this glimpse into the divine counsel of God. We get the curtain pulled back to the throne of the Lord, and there's the Holy Godhead talking with these angels about real time Israel. And the report that these angelic horsemen give is the earth is resting quietly, which is to say that all the nations of the earth are doing good. But in context, the one nation that's really struggling is Israel. And so that calls Jesus the angel of the Lord, or urges him to ask God to Father O Lord, how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem? I mean, this is an amazing thing to see the Triune Godhead talking about their creation. Well, God the Father responds in chapter one and he says, Zechariah that God responded with good and comforting words in chapter one verse 13, this is what God said. I'm zealous for Jerusalem, and I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy, and my house shall be built in it, says the Lord. That's what God responded, and how he responded when asked by the angel, what's going to happen? I'm going to do good to Israel. That leads us then to the second vision in chapter one, which is four horns and four craftsmen. So the four horns symbolized national powers or nations that had scattered Judah. So if you're going to do good to us, Lord, then you got to deal with our enemies would be inferred. And so God chose these nations to discipline Judah, but they enjoyed being God's instrument of discipline a little bit too much. They also went overboard. And so now God is assuring Zechariah and the people, I'm going to take care of those who look like they're not getting theirs. I'm going to raise up these angelic carpenters or craftsmen, and they're going to hammer these naughty nations for their hatred against God's people. Then we see the third vision in chapter 2, which is of the measuring man, and the measuring man pops up all over the Bible. As we've said, Ezekiel Zechariah Revelation. And this angelic surveyor, in this vision measures out Jerusalem. And what it signifies is that the city we will indeed be rebuilt. The lines have already been snapped. The you know, the plans are already done. And so when God's laid out the plans, it's as good as going to happen. And so too with our lives. He snapped the lines for our life. He's hung the plumb line. Everything's going to be straight and true when he's done with it. And as that is promised, that

the lines have been snapped and the architecture's already planned, then Jesus comes on the scene and he says in verse ten of chapter 2, I am coming, and I will dwell in your midst. And of course, that happened when Jesus came as a God in the flesh and walked among the people. But then also in the church age, we live in that world too, where Jesus comes by His Holy Spirit and dwells within us in our midst. And then he says to these people, the the Israelites, when that day arrives, then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you, and you'll become my people, and I will dwell in your midst. And so we're going to get to that spot in Zechariah where that's going to be realized. It's to be had in the future. They're realizing that their Messiah was around and they missed him. And now eventually, in Zechariah, they're going to see they're going to have the scales pulled back from their eyes and a future date, and they're going to say, hey, where did you get those wounds? And he's going to say, I was wounded in the house of my friends. I was dwelling with you and you missed me. And then they're going to worship him as their true Messiah, and he's going to do all these things in, in their lives, rebuild their temple someday, redeem them and restore them spiritually. And that's because he says, you're the apple of my eye. Whoever touches you, I'm taking care of all these people, and I'm doing this for you because whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye. We talked about how that phrase is specifically used, and only used directly of the Israelites in Jerusalem. And Apple is pupil, which is one of the most sensitive parts on our whole body. The cornea has more nerves per square millimeter than any other place on our body. It's protected by the eyelid. Normally recessed somewhat, but then past that, the beauty and the Hebrew is that that word apple means little man or little woman. That when you look deeply and closely into someone's eye, what you see is reflection. You see a little you. So God says, when I look at you, I see a little me. And when you look at me, you should see a little you. In that sense, like I'm close to you and I'm doing this because I love you. So too. God sees us as an extension, as his people, as the apple of his eye. Then the fourth vision. We get taken to this heavenly court scene again, and there is a prosecutor there, which is Satan before the throne of God, the one being prosecuted or charged is Joshua the High priest. He's supposed to be clothed in these white robes. He's supposed to be the holiest guy in the whole nation. But as you remember, he's filthy. He's wearing both his own sins and the sins of the people. And so, as if this rebuilding project wasn't monumental enough, now your holiest guy in the nation, which is supposed to represent you to God, lacks holiness. And so that would be a very dire spot to be left in, unless there wasn't a defender. And so Jesus, the angel of the Lord, enters the scene as a defender. This defense attorney for Joshua, and he says, look, don't you guys realize as Satan is condemning Joshua, don't don't everyone watching realize this is a brand plucked from the burning? I've plucked this one from the fires of hell. And so Jesus then as

as Joshua is a branch or a a little brand, Jesus is like a big branch. He's he's the one you can build your life upon. That's the imagery. And that's a messianic term for Christ. And Jesus is also then in that story. And the third chapter, the the stone, the foundation stone of our lives. And he's the one with seven eyes. He's all knowing. And so you can have your life built upon God, who knows and sees everything. And the point is, Jesus will accomplish the spiritual work necessary for both Joshua and the nation. He's going to do it all. Jesus is going to be the one who defends them. And then redeems them. And that leads us then to the fifth vision, which we looked at in two weeks. And that's in chapter 4. And that's the vision of the lampstand. So while their spiritual leader, Joshua, was tore up from the floor up, and he's then forgiven and given new robes by the defense attorney, Jesus Christ, then Zerubbabel also has a problem there, governor, or the foreman over all the work. And so this vision of the lampstand, the lampstand is actually a menorah, which is a seven armed lamp, and that menorah was in this vision, supernaturally perpetually fed by these two olive trees. And so that would never need refilled. The wicks wouldn't need trim. There was always going to be fuel to keep the lights burning. And so the menorah is a national symbol of Israel. And in one sense, God was saying, I know that the your light seems dim. I know it seems like it's about to go completely dark, but you're going to once again burn brightly for me, and then the vision is also directed at Zerubbabel himself. First and foremost, because this work is mountainous and God says, I know it seems like this thing's too big to scale, but this work is going to get accomplished not by might and not by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord. And so that's the key verse to the book. And as we've mentioned, the Holy Spirit is the key to fruitful and powerful lives. And so, with that longest introduction in history. You guys were very gracious. You acted, you know, really into the whole thing. Then chapter 5, then here's the sixth vision, the vision of the flying scroll. Then I turned and I raised my eyes and I saw there a flying scroll. And he that's the angel that speaks to Zechariah says, what do you see? And so I answered, I see a flying scroll. I like how he's just like, yeah, that's what I see. Its length is 20 cubits and its width ten cubits. And then he said to me, this is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth, every thief shall be expelled according to this side of the scroll, and every perjurer shall be expelled according to that side of it. And verse four, I will send out the curse, says the Lord of hosts. It shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it with its timber and its stones. So here's this flying scroll. It's a cubit, by the way, is about 18in standard cubit in biblical times. So this flying scroll's pretty good size, 30ft by 15ft. And the scroll we're told here is the curse over the whole earth. Many people believe that it's as I have here for you, possibly the Ten Commandments, because it has two sides. Originally the Ten Commandments were written on two

tablets. The first four on one tablet dealt with sins. If you didn't follow it, that would be sins between God and man. The second six on the other side would deal with sins that if you didn't follow the Ten Commandments, you would sin against another man. Between man and man. So in this case, then you have on one side sins against God and one side sins against man represented in thieves, sin against another man, and perjurors are verse for those who swear, swear falsely by God's name. Sin against God. And the whole simple point of this vision is So God's going to build a house for them, right? They're going to have this house that God builds by His spirit. But then if they don't deal with sin, it's going to tear their house down. It's going to come down stone by stone, brick by brick. And so even though God's going to do all this work, they have to deal with the sin in their midst, which makes me want to take about 7 to 10 minutes in the middle of this message and talk about making room for the Spirit of God. And as I start to talk about that, then let me say what I have here for you. And that's these visions that we've been looking at, I believe. Grant us a glimpse into God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. So God's sovereignty, sovereignty is just a big word, for God can do anything he wants to do. And that needs to be a baseline for you and I.

Understanding who God is. If we don't believe that about God, we got a real problem. So God can do anything he wants to do. He has that right. He also has the power. And then on the other side of it, you might say, which I believe biblically, these two sides work in harmony, but for lack of a better term, on the other side of it, you have man's responsibility. How God does give us freedom of choice, and he perplexingly condescends to partner with us for things that he wants to get done. So these two we find here in the passages, in the visions we've looked at. So God can do anything he wants to do. Let's start with that. That said, he does not do everything that he can do. So God could. And some people say this to me. They're like, I believe God can do. I'm a sovereignty of God person. I believe God can do anything he wants to do. I believe I bought into this because God has the right to pick this person to heaven and this person to hell. I'm like, well, God absolutely has that right, but it doesn't fit with the biblical nature of God nor Scripture, because God says through the pen of John that he died for our sins. That's Christians and the sins of the whole world. And whosoever will may come. And so even though God can do it, God doesn't do it that way. And if you got a problem with that, take it up with God. Now, in that same vein, there is and you might think this sometimes as you're trying to follow God. God, why didn't you make me Mr. Roboto or I will follow that Lord, why didn't you like it would be so much easier. Well, that's because God created us for relationship and robots. You know, just programmed to do God's will. Wouldn't have any relational value. And so relationship involves choice, love demands choice and trust. And so God then gives us freedom to actually not follow his ways. And so he doesn't do everything

that he could do, could make us a robot, but he doesn't. So then, having said all that, what God does choose to do, he does by his spirit. So that's the other thing you need to know God as a Triune God. God the father plans the stuff out. God the son makes God the Father accessible, and God the Holy Spirit empowers God's will to happen in people's lives. And so when we look at these scriptures, these visions, we see this here's God doing what he does by His Spirit and his sovereignty says, I don't have to ask anybody's permission. So he promises Jerusalem will be rebuilt and their enemies judged. And he doesn't do it because they deserved it. And he doesn't do it because he asked permission of anyone, and he doesn't care what anybody thinks about it. God gets to do that, and he promises them, I'm gonna do it. He also cleanses Joshua, the high priest, and Joshua brings nothing to the table. He doesn't ask anything of Joshua. He just takes away his filthy robes and he puts on him new robes. And he doesn't ask anybody's permission. And he doesn't ask anything of the person who receives those righteous robes. And he encourages the rubble bell who can't complete this work. He doesn't measure up. And yet he says the temple is going to be rebuilt again, not by your might, which is corporate strength, actually, or not by power, which is what you got mustered up inside of you. But by my spirit, I'm going to do it. And I picked you to be a part, because that's what I chose to do. So there's God's sovereignty in this story. And yet, while God does his work by His Spirit, then God requires holiness of us in order to experience ongoing power and fruitfulness in our lives as he chooses to partner with us. So we see that in these visions where Joshua is cleansed by no part that he's played, and then at the same time, in chapter 3, God comes to him and says, after he's cleansed, if you walk in my ways, verse 7, and keep my commands, you will also judge my house. If you want to see this house stand and you get to be a part of it, you got to keep my commandments. You got to get rid of sin, and you got to be obedient. And after Zerubbabel is told I'm gonna do it by my might and not by power and not by your power, not by your might. I'm going to do this thing by my spirit then. Now, in chapter 5, on the heels of that, we encounter this vision, which is dealing with if you if you don't deal with sin, then it's going to tear your house down. The curse will be upon you, indicating the need for personal and in this case, corporate purity. So before I talk about making room for the spirit any longer, I just want to refer you to this. This image. Jordan actually found this and used it with the young adults. And then when he showed it to me, I wanted to show it to you. So this is a recent study. It says most Americans do not believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit exists. That's not what it says. It says most Christians, and that's in America, do not believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit exists. I think about that. Most Christians, we're not talking about the outside world. We as Christians love to go the world outside the church. These are these are people that confess Christ, and they don't believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit

actually exists. I'll just say, What's Captain Obvious? That's a problem. Ruh roh. Raggy. So I'll table Satan for another day. Okay, but let's just talk about the Holy Spirit for a second, since that's the topic. 41-ish percent up here of Christians do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a living force. By the way, you know, this is the case because most Christians, if they do talk about the Holy Spirit, talk about him as an IT like he's the Star Wars force. And so the Holy Spirit is he is the third person of the Trinity. Now there's the group on the bottom. I think it's 21%. They believe somewhat some they somewhat believe. What does that mean? We somewhat believe that he or it, the Holy Spirit is a living force. So I don't know. Maybe he's again, like the Star Wars, you know, force. And maybe Yoda has him. If you sit around cross-legged with big ears and meditate. But how else do the rest of us get him? You know, I don't know. And what does it work out? And so I would say this has been, you know, largely my experience in encountering Christian, encountering Christians over the years I've been in the ministry, unfortunately, which then makes you not shocked at the way that Christians don't have any life transformation or look any different than the outside world, or have their worldview being different than those walking around them. So anyway, you can reference that later, but I use that to say we have talked about in the last couple weeks ago, actually, about three positive relationships that can be had with the Holy Spirit. So whether we know it or not, or like it or not, before Christ, the Holy Spirit, he is with us. He's leading us to Christ. He's wooing us. If the eyes of our heart are opened, and then we decide that we will ask Jesus into our lives, we are converted. That's called born again. He gives us new life, and then he begins to start producing the fruit of the spirit. Because the spirit now dwells in us, and it's love and joy and peace and patience, long suffering, loving kindness and gentleness and self-control. That doesn't mean they all crop up immediately at once, but we're growing in that stuff. And yet we talked about there's a third relationship with the Holy Spirit that that many people dismiss out of hand or don't understand. And that's Jesus said, ask for the Holy Spirit. That's the coming upon the empowering, the filling of the Holy Spirit. And that is to make us witnesses to get the work done of Jesus, to build the kingdom, to give us the spiritual gifts that make us dynamic. Or the word is powerful. And so those are the three positive relationships that can be had with the spirit, and they're necessary for the church to be a light the way God intended us to be in our community. Now, there are also three negative relationships that can be had with the Holy Spirit, and that is that the Holy Spirit can be resisted first and foremost. So one of the reasons, if you're familiar with different doctrines, that we as a church wouldn't be like on the Calvinistic side, because on the five point Calvinistic side is, is this idea of irresistible grace, which is, if God chose for you to do something, you cannot resist it. And all these people that believe in irresistible grace are way smarter than me. I

should tell you that right now I have lots of initials typically behind whatever their title is, and I just sometimes wonder, have you read your Bible? I mean, I don't mean to be to be demeaning, but in acts chapter 7, verse 51, as Stephen is about to get stoned by religious people, he he tried to calm them down by saying, hey, hold on just for a second. Did I mention to you that you stiff necked individuals always resist the Holy Spirit? Wasn't big crowd pleaser, but what he's saying is what? They were in that spot because the Holy Spirit, they resisted him. And then in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30, we see the second relationship negatively that you can have with the Holy Spirit if you resist him. He is a person. You can grieve him. He grieves when he shares with us truth and and helps us. And you know, the scriptures say, John 14, that the Holy Spirit was given to us to convict us of sin and to promote righteousness and to help us and to teach us and to guide us. And so he's grieved if we resist him, and then thirdly, if you resist him and grieve him enough, you quench him, and for a believer, then we wonder, well, why don't I have any power in my life? Well, he's been saying, hey, I need I think you need to stop doing that thing or not. You know, be around that group or you need to get rid of this thing, or you need to lay at my feet, this thing. And when we resist that, it grieves him. And if we do it long enough, then we quench him and we walk around powerless. We're still headed for heaven. We can be loving on. Some people have some long suffering, but we got no dynamite. Power to see God do anything in our lives. And you don't look really that much in the world around you when that happens. So sometimes for believers, they don't have the Holy Spirit filling them and empowering them because they don't ask for him. And there's a lot of people that come to Parkland Chapel for whatever reason. And it could be because of the many different denominations around us. And I mean to speak no ill will, but a lot of churches in our area don't believe that the Holy Spirit is still viable for today, in the same way that he was for the New Testament church. And so people come in and they they don't have the power of the spirit because they don't ask. A lot of them don't ask because they're they're scared, you know, they think they might bark like a dog or run laps or, you know, heaven forbid, biblically, if you are filled with the spirit, you can still get the gift of tongues because it is relevant for today. People in this church have it, exercise it. Some of you have been where you've been in like churches that that was what happened. And so then you've seen abuses. And so you don't want any part of that. And so, so often in the charismatic side of things, there's good theology with some, some difficult or bad application. So, so people like I don't ask. So I don't get. But then much of the time I think when when people finally come to the point where they're like, okay, I need the filling of the Holy Spirit, I get my mind around these positive relationships. They lack the filling of the power of the Holy Spirit because there's no room for him. You might say in the entry, they don't remove, they don't. They resist him, they

grieve him, they they they don't, they don't follow his leading. And so even though they're praying for the filling of the Holy Spirit, they're like, why do I have no dynamite power? It's because I don't change my life and make any room for him. And so often it's not that we need more of the spirit. In some ways, we just need to make more room for him in our lives. And so we must remove sin to make room for the Holy Spirit to fill each of us. And that's what Paul's talking about in Ephesians, where he says, I want you to put off the old. The former conduct of ungodliness, and put on the new, which is righteousness. And so that's easy to preach. And the reason it's hard to live is even when we get our mind around mentally, I want more of the spirit, and I probably need to. It's very, very painful to confess sin in our lives. It's painful to admit we've been less than. It's painful to agree. Wait. And yet it's super powerful. And so the scriptures tell us that we're supposed to confess our sin to God if he exposes sin. You confess your sin and he's faithful to cleanse you and forgive you. But then it goes past that. It tells us in James chapter 5, verse 16 that we should find, and I think the inference is trusted. People are supposed to also confess our sins to them, because once the sin is out of the box, it can't keep you chained. It can't. You're like, you're free. Those who have been set free are free indeed. And so there's a a pain of making room for the always the Christian or the church. Powerful. But it's making room for the spirit to inhabit us. So unbeliever continually resisting, grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit. You run the risk of blaspheming the spirit. Matthew chapter 12, verse 31 and 32. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit being an unpardonable sin. So blasphemy is to speak against insult or curse. And what Jesus is saying there to people who had the Holy Spirit revealing to them Jesus, which there was in their presence, and they then went so far as to attribute his work to Satan. But the only unforgivable sin is the blasphemy of the spirit is to have the Holy Spirit reveal Jesus to you, and yet reject him or credit his work to someone or something else. And so immediately there's going to be people in here that are like, well, have I committed that thing? And so I have here for you, if you're worried about committing blasphemy against the spirit, that fear itself is a sign you probably haven't done so yet. And if you're not a believer, then, you know, lean in to Christ, invite him into your life. If you are a believer, you can't commit the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. You know you can grieve him. You can resist him, you can quench him, but you can't commit the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. So that leaves me with one minute and 28 seconds to cover the next set of verses. Verse five. Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth. So I ask and said, what is it? And he said, is it a bad? It's a basket that is going forth. And he also said, this is their resemblance throughout the earth. Here is a lead disc lifted up. And this is a woman sitting inside the basket. And then he said, this is wickedness. And he thrust her down into the basket and threw the lead cover over

its mouth. And then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women coming with the wind in their wings, for they had the wings like the wings of a stork. And they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth. And so I said to the angel who talked with me, where are they carrying the basket? And he said to me to build a house for it in the land of Shinar. And when it's ready, the basket will be set there on its base. So here's, here's the vision. Vision seven of eight. Vision of this. It's a produce basket. They would pick, produce and put it in the basket. And it's got a lead lid on it and the lid slides back. Lo and behold, there's a wicked woman in there. You know, she's a basket case, she might say, as I have here. So the and by the way, I thought I would just encourage you women today. You know, I thought, how can I really connect with the opposite sex today? I thought, well, I'll just I'll just mention to you, but that the Hebrew word for wickedness, wickedness is her name. By the way, the Hebrew word for wickedness is feminine. So, look, I didn't make it up. It's just. I'm just teaching the Bible here, folks. That's all I'm doing. You know? So anyway, as he. As the lid, you know, this comes back. The cover. There's wickedness. This woman. So I'll put the cover back on that thing then it's carried away by these two women. Very creepy. And they have wings of a stork. And the stork, by the way, is a dirty bird in the Bible. It's unclean bird. So all this is not good. And so what you got to know, to understand this is the Israelites went into captivity as an agrarian people, farmers. They were idolaters, but they were farmers. So they go to Babylon. Well, Babylon, they don't farm. They're commercial. I mean, it's all big systems. And, you know, big cities and and culture and, and so when Israel comes back, they come back no longer as farmers. But they had been bought in over 70 years, completely to the commercial side of things. Babylon. And so they come back as business people. And to this day, you know, globally, the best way I can say it is they are known as shrewd business people. And yet later, so late 1800s, 2000 years after where we're reading here in Zechariah are a little more. They return to the land Zionist movement. And it's interesting that they return after all that time, while globally they're all businessmen, typically they return as farmers and they settle the Land of Israel in kibbutz or communal housing, where they farm. That's just a little garnish. But that that all said, the Jews come back from Babylon and now they don't have an idolatry problem. They got a commercialism problem. They they've weaved commercialism into all of their beliefs in God. And that doesn't just impact them. In fact, the commercial system of Babylon and Babylon is a commercial, economic, spiritual, political system that impacts the whole world since Babel, all the way to revelation. And then that's the reason in revelation 18 and 19, God is going to destroy Babylon. Shinar. That's the land of Babylon. And so the baskets carried away where it can eventually be dealt with in order for them to have freedom. And that's what he's going to do to the whole world. Babylon is actually

going to fall. Spiritual Babylon and commercial Babylon and Revelation, and in the whole world exalts they. They cry out, Babylon has fallen because they're no longer chained by, you might say, the cult of commercialism. And before I get ready to close, then I just want to mention, whether we know it or not, if you live in this world, you live oppressed by and influenced by the cult of commercialism. And in the West, we experience it as much as anybody ever has in our day and age, and unknowingly, what we do is we stir commercialism into our Christianity, and then we call it all good. We don't even let God look into those things. That's that's a values that we have from the spirit of this age. And so we just stir it all in there and we assume it tastes really nice. Well, it'll make you go crazy. And all of our studies recently, psychologically and sociologically, they'll prove this out. But I won't go into those statistics other than I will just say that it'll create havoc in your life if you let it run rampant and you mix it into your Christianity as a believer, it creates needs and it influences aspirations. About 100 years ago or so, and now, you know, all these these felt needs are created, wants, needs and our by commercialism, our, our aspirations are influenced in that we're always looking for the next thing and we're climbers and we're producers and we're, we're success driven by and large. So that's what commercialism does. And that's very stressful satisfaction because I always need something else. And then if I don't have what somebody else has or I don't measure up to my own standard, it creates really low self-esteem.

Commercialism values the material over the spiritual. And that's the biggest deal in Christianity. The carnal or the material person can't discern the things of the spirit. And so, so many of us as Christians, we've got so much commercialism in our lives that we refuse to let God remove that we're that we're always valuing the material, the spiritual, and that strain and strife. It really it keeps us unsettled. And the cult of commercialism always exploits the vulnerable. I'm going to get mine. If I can help people. And I like those people, and I'll let them get some. But if it influences me or takes from me, the vulnerable is going to have to work harder. So it is Christianity and this system, if we allow the spirit to work in our life, will produce peace. It creates a sufficiency in Christ's grace. I don't have to always achieve or climb. I don't have to need. I don't have to have the world influence my aspiration. I can find my worthiness and my identity and my sufficiency in Christ Jesus. And what that does is it produces godliness and contentment. Godliness with contentment. First Timothy says, is great gain. And then it values the spiritual above the material. This is a supernatural work. You can't do this unless the Holy Spirit quickens your heart. But when he does, then you start to value the spiritual above the material, and then Christianity throughout history has been vulnerable, even if they don't deserve it, because that's the story of Christianity. None of us deserve mercy or grace, and so then a few concluding thoughts. Though the Christian walks within Babylon's marketplace, you might say their hearts belong

elsewhere. I'm in this world as the biblical idea, but I'm not of this. It gives us the conviction, the wisdom, the power, and the love to walk worthy of our calling in this world and only the Holy Spirit does that. And so to live in step with the Holy Spirit, we must first create space for him in our lives. And this process mandates constant cleansing of our lives from commercial values. It's got to be an ongoing practice. It's hard and painful as it is. It's purifying and it's powerful. One final quote from Leonard Ravenhill. He says the first essential for coming, for the coming of the Holy Spirit into a heart today is that the heart should be cleansed from sin. For the Holy Ghost is not fill an unclean heart. He says, what God has cleansed. Then he fills finally whom God fills, he the authentic sign of being filled with the spirit. So we get ready to observe. Communion, I'd just like to refer you to First Corinthians chapter 11, where Paul writes to the Corinthians about communion. He says in verse 28, but let a man examine. And he goes on to say. For he who eats of this bread and drink of the cup in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgment to his own body, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, he says, many are weak. That is, spiritually and sick, that is physically among you and many sleep because many have went on to be with the Lord prematurely, because they haven't examined themselves. For if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened or disciplined by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. And so, as we contemplate, Communion and think about all God's done, it's a great time. And I'm going to encourage you today and challenge you today to while we. Engage in this worship song, to ask the Lord to reveal to you, to make room where I need to make room for Him and His Holy Spirit. And so convict me. Holy spirit, let me be able to to want to give you that space. Once you convict me. Holy Spirit, then let me confess and give you that space and Holy Spirit, fill me and empower me so I can walk worthy in this world. So, Heavenly Father, we want to pray just that. And we want to ask, as the worship team comes up and gets ready to lead us, that you would meet us here, your Holy Spirit would enter this place. Lord, we want to ask if we've got false ideas of the Holy Spirit or we haven't really believed in who he put all that stuff. And you know, help us as you bring it to the top to just put it off to the side, remove it from our lives, and Lord, you crucified at the foot of the cross and raise up new life. And Lord, that you would give us the fruit of the spirit and the filling of the spirit to be dynamite. Witnesses for you. Help us love, for it covers a multitude of sins, and as the fruit is the sign of the spirit in our lives, and give us dynamite. Lord, to be powerful as we we walk in fellowship with you in the body, in Jesus name, Amen.