

CHIEF MINISTRIES

January 2019

And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ^{v33} I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' (John 1:32,33 ESV)

The dove is not the only way the Holy Spirit is depicted in the New Testament. He can be seen, described, or symbolized as fire, wind, water and possibly oil. But why the dove? The dove is, in fact, a wild bird, it cannot be trained or domesticated, even though it is a gentle bird.

Many people, including me, understandably and rightly pray that the "fire will fall" on them. I pray for this too. But after you read this, you may wonder if our most urgent need is for the Dove to come down on us. Could it be that the order of the day is: the Dove first, then the fire?

John the Baptist knew that Jesus was the Messiah because he had been told to look for the dove to come down on a particular man. There is more. He was not only to see the Spirit come down as a dove; this dove would "remain" on Him. In fact, the word remain is mentioned two times in the Scripture above. Have you ever thought about that?

You may know what it's like for the Holy Spirit to come down on you. The problem is, He doesn't stay. He doesn't remain. He apparently flies away. When the Holy Spirit comes down on you, there is literally nothing like it in the world. The peace. The joy. You want to freeze time. You don't want anything to interrupt it. If only it would last forever. While it lasts you find yourself calm and instilled with a deep holy peace. You find yourself pleased with God just as He is, without any complaints about the times He hides His face.

But that sense of His presence doesn't seem to last. It's not that the Holy Spirit leaves us. He doesn't. Jesus promised that He would abide "forever" (John 14:6). So let's be clear about this: This dove illustration I am using as a metaphor. The dove seems to fly away. He seems to lift. It is the sense of God that appears to lift from us.

With Jesus, the Dove remained. He stayed. He never flew away.

Why? It is because Jesus never grieved the Holy Spirit. When the heavenly dove came down on Jesus of Nazareth, He felt completely at home. It is as though the Dove said, "I like it here. I'm staying here." The Holy Spirit was at home with the Lord Jesus. Is He at "home" with you?

The Holy Spirit can be grieved. Paul said in Ephesians 4:30, "*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" When you look at this important verse, you see good news and bad news. The good news is that we are "sealed for the day of redemption." Nothing

can be clearer than that. But that is written for the possessor of the Spirit and not the professor. Belief must be in the heart it begins to throw out all of the things that you have allowed in there that grieve Him. But, I'm sure that even as you read this, you know if you have done just that, or are you just going through the motions, wanting to be "all that" in the kingdom of God without paying the price. Oh, you'll show up to church, all the while talking about someone else's sin without recognizing you're in the middle of one. Going back to where you live literally letting the enemy use you while you call yourself a believer. Maybe in your head, that is where most of us start to "believe" anything, but never allowing the Dove to truly settle down in the nest that He has been building, or trying to, in your heart, yet you keep shoving Him away. In those cases, the Dove has flown I believe. If you truly, truly have been saved, we can thank God for this, the Dove lifts but does not leave, but I have not only seen but experienced one's anointing to diminish, that is the sense of His presence is gone.

Grieving the Holy Spirit is the easiest thing in the world to do. To put it another way. The hardest thing in the world is to keep from grieving the Holy Spirit. Why? Because He is so sensitive. Indeed, reverently we can say He is hypersensitive. When we speak of a person being hypersensitive, it is not a complement. He's the only Holy Spirit you have. He will not adjust to you; you must adjust to Him. I wish it weren't true, the hardest thing in the world is not grieving the Spirit.

Find out what grieves the Holy Spirit and don't do that!

Believe me, make it your goal, sixty seconds a minute, sixty minutes an hour, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and you will have your work cut out for you.

There are many ways to grieve the Holy Spirit – many. But at the head of the list is bitterness. As soon as Paul said, "*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption,*" he immediately added, "*Get rid of all bitterness*" (Ephesians 4:30, 31).

Bitterness. It is a word that encapsulates resentment, anger, annoyance, being irritable, even impatience. It can spring forth in a second without notice. You were calm, happy, at peace. Then suddenly the dove flew away. It can happen when you're in the cafeteria line and invariably someone either bumps you cutting or just goes by you to the front without saying a word, or even does say excuse me but it still ticks you off. Or, you were eleventh in the commissary line and the boss man decides that's one too many, "go to the house", he says. You shoot him a dirty look, maybe even say something "fly" under your breath. They knew you were upset. But so did the Dove. He just flew away.

You might say, "God does not expect us to worry about things like that. Chief, you are being legalistic, too detailed, too careful, and holding to a ridiculously high standard that God does not expect of us."

If you wondered this, I know what you mean. That is the way I used to look at losing my temper, or being impatient, and until I began to understand this teaching, it changed my life. Especially here in prison. My relationships. My friends. My enemies. I was never to be the same again.

What is more, I begin to see things in the Bible I had not seen before. I begin to understand Old Testament characters, New Testament doctrine. The teachings of Jesus. The parables. Galatians. 1st and 2nd Corinthians. I could go on and on. It has little to do with my education or intelligence. It has everything to do with the anointing.

So then, you lose your anointing when we remain in a state of irritability, defensiveness, and resentment, the Dove will invariably be some distance away

When the anointing is on you, you will see things in the Bible you had not seen before. You will feel God near you as you had not felt Him. You will be easier to live with.

The reason for the connection between the un-grieved Spirit and the Bible is easily explained. The Holy Spirit wrote the Bible. It is His word. If you want to know His Word, get on good terms with Him. He knows His own Word inside and out, backwards and forward. When He dwells in you un-grieved, the Holy Spirit is in you if you are a Christian. (Romans 8:9). But it does not follow that He is always in you un-grieved.

The Holy Spirit won't bend the rules for any of us. He is no respecter of persons. He will not adjust to any of us. He favors no human being. We must adjust to Him. We must adjust to His ways.

Here is the point; when you spend time with God you get to know His ways as well as His word. (Assuming you are reading His word). More than that, you develop a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. You eventually get to know His ways to the extent that you sense when you are about to grieve Him. The problem is, when we grieve Him, we almost never know we did it! We find out later. But you rarely know at the precise moment. Samson told his secret to Delilah and didn't feel a thing. But he found out moments later that his "anointing" of strength was gone (Judges 16:20 – 21)

I would define spirituality as the time gap between sin and repentance. In other words how long does it take before you realize - or admit - you sinned? That you were wrong. Some take years. They say, "I'll never admit I was wrong". And they are true to their word. Some however after a long time cool off or come to themselves and say, "well, perhaps I got it wrong after all." But what a pity that it took so long! Some narrow the time gap to months. Some to weeks. Some to hours (that's better). Some to minutes. Some to seconds. And if you could narrow the time gap to seconds, you are often able to sense the wings of the Dove flapping and ready to fly off – and you stop yourself. Don't finish that sentence! Don't let out those curse words! Don't write that letter. Don't make that phone call! Don't talk about someone behind their backs! Nothing is worth grieving the Holy Spirit.

Did you know that pigeons and doves are in the same family? But they are not the same. You can train a pigeon. You cannot train a dove. The pigeon can be domesticated. The dove is a wild bird. A pigeon is belligerent. The dove is loving. A pigeon is boisterous. A dove is gentle. A pigeon will mate with more than one pigeon. The dove mates with only one dove for life. The pigeon represents the counterfeit spirit. Strange fire. The dove represents the Holy Spirit. Holy fire. I know here at Eastham working with some that I've had to work around, they're good at cheerleading the worship, eliciting emotional responses to their feelings rather than actually taking the time to spend with God to have His presence in what they're doing. Sadly, the response of the congregation goes right along with the "feel" due to spiritual immaturity and yet when the real deal shows up, everyone knows the difference. "There's just something different between good music and anointed worship. Trust me. I hear it all the time. I hear, "Man the Spirit of God was really in the service today, but when you get to the bottom of it, it was a "blues" session from the musicians or you discern it may have been "pigeon religion", strange fire. I know it is an absolutely wonderful but probably rare moment when the authentic Holy Spirit comes down in a great measure. Holy fire.

It's so easy to grieve the Spirit. It happens on the way to church. It happens in the pre-service rehearsal. The same guys causing all the commotion will worship as if nothing is wrong and wonder

why there is no sense of God, but fail to look at their own lack of discipline and submission to godly authority. They just want to “run something”, as we say here in the big house. It happens to the ministers as they prepare their sermons. It can happen at any moment. Although we only have ourselves to blame when we lose our temper, point the finger, or speak of another person in an unflattering manner it is also true that the devil, our adversary lurks about looking for an opportunity to seize our weak spot. We all have them.

The ungrieved Spirit in me will connect to the ungrieved Spirit in you. If you get two or three people together when we all have been walking in and ungrieved Holy Spirit, there is richness of fellowship. That doesn't mean everyone is in total agreement theologically or politically. But the sweetness is there. Imagine what it would be like when a congregation of a dozen or twelve hundred or twelve thousand are all – everyone – walking in the same ungrieved Holy Spirit! Who knows what would happen when marriages are healed, people start forgiving themselves, their parents, children, each other, Christians start speaking to one another, ministers, etc. and everybody truly loves each other!

First the Dove, then the fire.

I wonder how many people pray for revival but take no notice of their personal attitudes. Or pray for fire to fall but do not think of examining themselves. I wonder how many go to church to worship God and hear a sermon but have no awareness of personal issues that cause the Dove to stay at bay. I wonder how many times we grieve the Spirit and feel no conviction of sin whatsoever.

If you want to know what grieves the Spirit read Ephesians 4:30 – 32.

I return to bitterness. It is one of the most natural feelings in the world. It also seems right. We are all prone to feel justified in having a feeling of bitterness. It comes from being mistreated, maligned, hurt, betrayed, lied about – and especially when we feel we are upholding what is fair and true! There is one more ingredient in bitterness: self-righteousness. This is so often the cause. Because we feel so right, we may feel no conviction of sin – unless, that is we develop an acute sensitivity to the Spirit's ways.

God can show His wrath, but we cannot! Seems unfair doesn't it? But that's the way it is. No matter how right you and I may be – even theologically – when we lose our tempers, we are the ones in the wrong, even if we are right! The Holy Spirit's fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). The Dove is the fruit of the Spirit.

The ESV has “clamor and slander” (Ephesians 4:31). Clamor means shouting. The wisdom that comes from “below” said James 3:13-15, is “earthly” and “of the devil”. A shouting match shows that the devil got in.

Slander is making false and damaging statements about someone. You may ask, “but what if it is true?” I would only say, be very careful. You may be telling the truth, but what would be your motive in hurting someone's name or reputation.

Malice means ill will. Far from wishing a person well, you want to see them punished. Caught. Exposed. A motivation like this has its origin in the flesh and the devil. The Holy Spirit will not lead you to wish bad things for a person. Vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19). If the person you may hope will get their exposure has been truly evil, leave it to God. Don't touch it. Don't deprive

God of what He does best, namely to bring vengeance and to vindicate. Don't compete with His expertise.

The list on what grieves the Holy Spirit continues in Ephesians 5; don't overlook the obvious in Ephesians 5:1-7.

Paul asks that there not be "even a hint" of sexual immorality. This means that you cannot be too careful when it comes to sexual behavior and temptation. This includes flirting - saying something that you hope will ignite a person to have lustful thoughts towards you. When James talks about a "small spark" setting a forest on fire (James 3:5), this can happen either by venting your anger, by an unguarded comment, or by making an intentional remark that would tempt another.

Let's face it; sexual promiscuity is a problem that gets swept under the carpet. Nothing brings disgrace upon the name of Christ and the church like a sexual scandal. The world loves that, the press loves it. I've grown to hate it due to experiencing it. Many people can be duped by their leaders. One's gifts can flourish regardless of that person's personal morality. But when the Spirit is grieved, it means that one's ability to hear God is closed down.

A spiritual gift - but not the fruit of the spirit - may flourish whether or not a person has grieved the Holy Spirit. But the immediate and direct guidance only follows when the Spirit is not grieved in a person. The gifts of the Spirit are constant - you get to keep them. But the fruit of the spirit is not necessarily constant. The Dove may remain or lift; this depends on our personal relationship with God. A close walk with God is determined by our careful obedience to His word. We should pray for one another.

I'm praying that the Dove remains on you, but you must do your part.

Let 2019 be the year of the "Dove" in your life.

Chief

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Christ's

Heart

In

Every

Felon