

Good morning everyone, it's right and proper today on **Pentecost Sunday** we talk about the Holy Spirit and the verse I want to draw your attention to is;

Ephesians 4:30 "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice".

You may say that's an unusual verse on such a day when perhaps we want to talk about the Power and Joy of the Holy Ghost experienced at Pentecost.

I do believe however there is so much in this one verse that tells us so much about The Holy Spirit, Who He is, His nature, His role and His relationship to us.

Firstly this verse makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is a person - we said this on Tuesday night that;

Some define the Holy Spirit as simply a 'force or an influence'. In the 16th century, some people defined the Holy Spirit as "virtue or energy flowing from God to man." This is the view that most liberal theologians and cults hold today.

This is not what the Scriptures teach about The Holy Spirit. Just taking our little verse in isolation you cannot **grieve an influence or an energy or force**.

The Greek word translated as "grieve" in Ephesians 4:30 means "to cause to feel sorrow, pain, unhappiness, or distress." So the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit has a personality and the ability to feel emotions like joy (Luke 10: 21), outrage (Hebrews 10:29, ESV), and sorrow (Ephesians 4:30, NLT).

So that's the first thing this verse reveals to us it personalises the Holy Spirit.

Secondly what sort of Person is He? I am conscious when I say a Person regarding the Holy Spirit; I am saying that in a reverent way. God is God after all! 'His ways are higher than our ways', but we are created in His image.

So I think although we can say He is awesome and above us in every way, it is helpful to realise the Holy Spirit has a character and personality. We can only have a relationship with a life breathing Being.

But this verse brings out the peculiar aspect to God's character 'do not grieve the Holy Spirit' and we see the Holy Spirit portrayed elsewhere as a dove (Luke 3:22).

There is this sense that the Holy Spirit's nature is gentle, easily unsettled we know God is Holy but there is a sense here that the Spirit would only go where the Spirit of Christ is - what attracts Him is Humility.

And what is the role of the Holy Spirit? This is probably difficult for us to understand we can more easily imagine the role of God the Father because we have an earthly father and we know about the Son - Jesus because of his earthly ministry but the Holy Spirit? Maybe not, I tend to see it this way though

After the fall The Father designed and organised how mankind would be redeemed. He set into motion a complex set of events, and actions as part of His sovereign plan.

The Son carried out the plan (John 6:37-38). He followed the Father's instructions to come to earth, even though that meant He would have to die.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and the work he did on the cross, make Him real in the daily life of every believer and to recreate the life of Christ in His people.

I suppose it begs the question? Who do we pray to? I think most of us start our prayers with 'Heavenly Father' or 'Father God' and end them by praying 'in Jesus name'.

But we have to remember it's the Holy Spirit that helps us to pray.

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered". (Romans 8:26)

Perhaps the best way to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer is that we pray to the Father, through (or in the name of) the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. All three are active participants in the believer's prayer.

Thirdly this verse 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit' tells us all about our relationship with God - which is a love relationship.

Again you cannot grieve energy or force we are under grace not law –you can't grieve if you're not a member of the family. I have said before when we sin we don't so much break a holy law, which we do, but more importantly we grieve God.

Any indiscretion failure on our part, **first and foremost, it hurts God** and that's because it's a love relationship we have with Him. It is the same with anyone you love; you don't want to hurt them.

It's that 2 way relationship that should keep us from sin. When we fall we disappoint God, we grieve Him, but it doesn't sever the relationship, although it may go cold for a little while.

Just like a child that let's their parents down when they do wrong, he or she doesn't cease to be part of the family - but until that child recognises their wrong, things can be frosty for a bit between them.

And that again causes grieving because when we sin, God withdraws Himself, we may feel we are in a wilderness, we are bereft of peace, our actions have made us 'reap what we sow'. But we have to remember we are in the hands of a loving Father.

But let's go deeper into this verse and pick out another glorious truth it says: **“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”**

We are sealed for the day of redemption. No power in the universe can break that seal when Jesus gives eternal life and the Holy Spirit lives inside of you no one can take that away from you.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says **“When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory”**

In ancient times, people placed wax seals on letters, scrolls and important document containers. Each seal featured a personal mark pressed into it, unique and distinct to the person who prepared the document. Only the

authorised person could break the seal, and when they did, whatever the document contained could be released.

The seal of our salvation is permanent. God is the only one who can break it, and only when you're in heaven - and the work of grace is finished in you that he began in you when you first believed in Him.

Think of it this way; God had planned you before the creation of the world he set his seal upon you with his unique mark - when you received eternal life the Holy Spirit is a deposit of that seal, it's His job to keep the seal intact until it goes back to the Father - only He can release it.

To those who suggest that a person may "walk away" from salvation, I would say, in my humble opinion, that doing so would be impossible. No one but God can break the seal of the Holy Spirit on your life.

Whom Christ saves, he saves completely. Whom the Spirit seals, He seals permanently.

This is the guarantee of God the Father, and no one can alter this truth. Either you have believed in Jesus for salvation and God has saved you forever, or you have never been saved. But the seal of the Holy Spirit makes a third option impossible.

No one is able to break the seal of God. You cannot lose your salvation. Neither can you walk away from it; because you are sealed by the unbreakable seal of the Holy Spirit.

OK so how do we grieve the Holy Spirit? It's a serious matter that we would want to avoid at all costs - this morning I have highlighted 5 things;

Firstly and most obviously we grieve the Holy Spirit when we have active and unrepentant sin in our lives.

As our verse says '*get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice*'.

Now there is a clear difference from consciously walking the path of sin, a deliberate lifestyle and occasionally falling into sin. We are weak and fallen by nature and this side of heaven we will sporadically succumb to temptation or the devils wiles. **We don't have to. We have the power to overcome** but in

reality we do. 1 John 3:9 says: “No one who is born of God will continue to sin”. This is the key here - **we do not continue to sin.**

Or as Psalm 1 says: “Blessed is the one who **does not walk in step** with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take”

Unless we are consciously walking the path of holiness and we are out of step with the path of the wicked, we will grieve the Spirit.

Secondly we grieve the Holy Spirit **by not** acknowledging Him inside of us.

Scripture says “*in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight*” (Proverbs 3:6). Are you aware of The Holy Spirit this morning working inside of you? Perhaps prompting you, leading you or even restraining you.

The Spirit is there but often we seem oblivious to Him, we are so caught up with our own activities - we have no time to hear that ‘still small voice’.

We should see Him as a ‘welcome guest’ who lives inside of us. If you had a guest that came to stay at your house, you would tidy the house, get it in order, and make it spit and span.

This is such a critical truth, if you want to be more holy, more like Jesus. We don’t need some great flashing lights or great deliverance, or deep ministry what we need is a revelation of this; **That the Holy Spirit is living inside of us He is our guest.** If we are just conscious of this we wouldn’t do, or say, or think half the things we do.

What the bible says is **when you do those things** you are living completely inconsistent, your acting ‘out of character’ with who you really are - the real you.

So how it works is when you are tempted to swear, complain, get angry, over eat, **whatever sin it may be.** You stop yourself and say ‘I can’t do this. I cannot live in this way; it is a betrayal to who I really am’

It is so important that we as Christians realise that the Holy Spirit lives inside of us and because of that we are ‘ambassadors for Christ’ we have a responsibility to live in the right way. The way that is pleasing to Him.

That's the second point I want to make; **when we are tempted to live wrongly in any way - it is inconsistent with whom we really are and it grieves the spirit of God**

Thirdly we grieve Him by trying to put God and the Holy Spirit in a box! When we constrain Him only to work only in the ways that we think He will work and refuse to come outside our comforts zones.

Be very careful of setting up your own little 'spiritual empire' and when you have got there and arranged it into a nice tidy space and you are not letting go of it. Not allowing God to take you places you would rather not go or use people you would prefer he didn't. Because it doesn't fit your profile of how God works.

Test everything to scripture not by your prejudices.

If you would ask me what is the biggest problem within the evangelical church? I would say it is a 'spirit of control'. Pastors, Minister's Leaders, Members trying to keep their hands on the steering wheel, controlling their 'empire' when the Spirit has moved on. Don't grieve the Spirit by trying to control things and putting God in a box.

Fourthly we grieve the spirit by always waiting - waiting for this elusive experience.

I know people who are always waiting, waiting to feel better, to feel more on fire, to experience something out of the ordinary, they say 'the grass will be greener the other side of the fence' if only I could know more of this 'spiritual filled life' If only the Holy Spirit will move - Their always waiting but never arriving. Their stuck and spiritually paralysed.

The truth is; what are they waiting for! Are they to worried about striving doing it all in their own strength? It's a deception! We have already been given the Holy Spirit and all we need at conversion. Aren't we meant move forward in faith?

It was only when Moses put his foot into the red sea that it parted.
It was only when Peter got out of the boat he walked on the water.
So fourthly we grieve by always passively waiting.

Fifthly and this is the opposite of above, **we grieve by running ahead of God** - this is what I would call '*more than Christianity*'. We live in an age where people are taking away from scripture, cherry picking, diluting them, that is 'less than' Christianity but an equal danger is 'more than'

They go further than the scriptures, further than what God wants; it's all about their efforts, their ministry. And by doing so they take all the glory.

You can't overtake the Holy Spirit by moving out of His lane into a faster one - He goes ahead of us we are led by Him not the other way around.

"Anyone who *runs ahead* and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9,).

They feel 'led by the spirit' to do all sorts of things but in the end they are just good works, dead works that come to nothing. Because the 'spirit has departed' it's not with them anymore.

They are like the Jews in the wilderness after they came out of Egypt who grumbled in the desert against God and He rejected them for their disobedience. Yet in presumptuous sorrow they went out to fight the battle in their own strength - but God was not with them, they were defeated.

Or they do as Abraham did, when God promised Sarah a child in her old age. Yet he took **matters into his own hands** and made Hagar a slave girl pregnant and suffered the consequences of his actions.

Or their like King Saul who lost his Kings mantle because of disobedience and tried to make amends on his terms but the spirit had moved to another man - David and everything he did from that point turned to sifting sand.

We are called to run the race but not run ahead.

So there are 5 areas we can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. We should make every effort not to do so. However I want to close with this because I believe the Spirit wants to touch lives and hearts this morning.

This week I was reminded - you know the story of Noah's ark - when the rain had stopped, the flood waters started receding - Noah sent out the dove - and

he did it again until the dove didn't come back - until he found a branch to rest his feet upon.

The dove represents the Holy Spirit – and like the earth that was cleansed by the flood waters - we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. So the Holy Spirit descends and looks for a branch, a shoulder to settle on – to settle on us. To bring healing, and comfort and power and deliverance from for all those things we talked about.

However if you have un -confessed sin in your life or bitterness or If God has spoken to you on those areas of grieving Him – The Holy Spirit won't rest on you - because he is as gentle as dove he won't go where he's not invited.

But if we have the right heart and want to meet with the Holy Spirit he can touch our lives afresh today.

So we are going to move into another time of worship, let us open up ourselves for the Spirit of God to move upon us.

Amen

Tony Troy