

NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

June 09, 2019

The X Factor

Dr. Mark Batterson

Welcome to National Community Church, all seven of our campuses. Shout out to our extended family listening via podcast, thanks for being a part of National Community Church at all seven campuses. Can I get a drum roll? Can I get a drum roll? I love it. Awesome. Hey, good news. A third party inspector checked every box this past week. Yep. And so that means that check this out, we got a conditional certificate of occupancy and they let our leadership summit happen at our new campus and that means that we are on track. June 23rd, mark your calendar, we are going to do an all church consecration, get some worship in the walls, pen some prayers maybe on the walls. I'm excited about that moment for us as a church, all of our campuses gathering in that context. And then that means we're also going to lock and load June 30 as a first service at that new campus. And so can we just praise God for some good news this last week?

Well a number of years ago I was hiking the Inca trail, the Machu Picchu, one of the hardest hikes I've done about four days. And there's a part of the hike where you go through something called 'dead woman's pass' and as we get up past 13,000 feet elevation, I start getting this throbbing headache. And you know, why oxygen deprivation. And so fortunately we had a guide who pulled out a can of pure oxygen and I inhaled. Is it okay over the next few weeks if we open up a can of the Holy Spirit and take a deep breath, in fact right now, would you just take a deep breath and then let it back out? It has this amazing physiological effect, doesn't it? Listen, that's what happens when we begin to breathe in the Holy Spirit, excited about where God is going to take us over these next three weeks, a series called "Breath". And if you have a Bible, you can open it. But I can't really tell you where to turn because we are going to be all over the map. In fact, if you want just head all the way back to Genesis and we'll get there in just a moment.

One of the mysteries of quantum mechanics is the fact that atoms are 99.99% empty space. Now, I don't understand that, but I'm fascinated by it. The size of an atom dictated by how far its electrons orbit and the outer orbit, which is called the electron shell or atomic shell is on average a hundred thousand times larger than its nucleus, which is where it gets its mass. Now, let me try to put that in perspective. When I go to a Nats game, I usually get some salted peanuts on the way into the game from one of those street vendors because it seems like a sin of omission not to. And so if that peanut, just a single peanut was the nucleus of an atom, then the electron shell would be the size of that baseball stadium. Simply put the atoms in your body are almost entirely empty space. Now I want you to poke the person next to you, not too hard. Poke the person next to you, it feels like you're touching them just like it feels like your butt is sitting in your seat. The quantum reality, well, you're not actually sitting in your seat, you're hovering over it ever so slightly. What you feel on the backside is some electric magnetic force of your electrons bumping into and pushing away from the electrons in the person next to you or the electrons in the seat you're sitting on. Now, the reason you don't poke through that person, the reason you don't sit through that seat is something called the Pauli Exclusion Principle, but that's another mystery for another day.

Now, even more mysterious than these atoms that are almost entirely empty space are these subatomic particles called quarks that are held together by massless particles called gluons. Again, don't get it; fascinated by it now, let me get where this is going. There's an evolving theory within quantum mechanics that almost all the mass in our bodies comes from the kinetic energy of quarks and the binding energy of gluons. Now, I want you to hold that thought. I'm going to throw some scriptures at this. Okay. For many, many years I've been fascinated by a little phrase you'll read right past it. Its Ephesians 1:23 and it describes God as him who fills all things in all ways. Think about it, if the atoms in your body are 99.99% empty space that is a lot of real estate for God to work with. Oh, in the universe, yeah, co-moving distance of about 93 billion light years, lot of room for God to fill all things in all ways.

The transcendence of God, he is bigger than big. The imminence of God, he is closer than close. A W Tozer said it this way, God is above, but he's not pushed up. He's beneath, but he's not pressed down. He's outside, but he's not excluded. He's inside but he's not confined. God is above all things presiding, beneath all things sustaining, outside all things embracing, and inside all things filling, him who fills all things in all ways. Colossians 1:17 describes Christ as him who holds all things together. Think about that. This is where quantum mechanics meets quantum theology. God is the Gluon with a capital G.

One more verse, Acts 17:28; *"In him, we live and move and have our being."* According to one estimate, about 37 sextillion chemical reactions happening in your body right now, but who's counting? Listen, you've got, you're digesting food, you're processing sound, you're regenerating cells, you're purifying toxins, you're catalyzing enzymes, you're producing hormones, and you're converting stored energy from body fat into blood sugar and that is the thinnest slice of what's happening right now.

The word move in Acts 17:28 Greek word 'kineó', its where do we get the word kinetic as in kinetic energy; it means to set in motion. The Holy Spirit is the opposite of inertia. It means to stir up; the opposite of indifference and this is kinda fun, it means to wag. I just think the Holy Spirit is the tail that wags the dog. Yes? And I rather like that; I think what I'm getting at is this. If you walked in this weekend and you feel a little empty, oh, that's where God does his best work. He creates ex nihilo out of nothing.

So I want to do something a little different this weekend. Often we'll choose a verse of scripture and then we'll zoom in and kind of unpack it. What I want to do this weekend is zoom out and a little bit of a crash course; we'll call it, nickel pneumatology. Okay. Fancy word for a theology of the Holy Spirit. What I want to do is a little bit of a fly over because I want to make sure we have an awareness of the way that the Spirit of God is moving and working and so here we go. Buckle your seatbelt; keep your hands inside the ride at all times. Here we go.

Second verse of Genesis gives us our first glimpse of the Holy Spirit. I want you to notice what he's doing. It says...

"¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now, the earth was formless and empty, empty, and darkness covered the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters."

Now, isn't it fun that in the Gospels, the Holy Spirit identified as a dove. Oh, but right here hovering like a hummingbird, right? He's still hovering. You know what he hovers over? Chaos and he wants to bring order out of the chaos in your life. Then God says, let there be light. Those four words still creating galaxies at the outer edge of the universe. If God can do that with four words, what are we worried about? But God doesn't just speak the universe into existence with his words, he animates the dust with his breath.

Genesis 2:7 *"Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being."*

For what it's worth, quantum mechanics again would say that if all the emptiness was extracted from your body, you would be a speck, a speck of dust. Do you know what Job said? Job 34 verse 14 if God were to withdraw his breath, we would return to dust. And so we're two chapters into scripture and the Holy Spirit is hovering and the Holy Spirit is breathing. And then the Holy Spirit, he goes off the grid for a bit. Reappears in Exodus 31 where it says, *I have chosen Bezalel and I have filled him with the Spirit of God with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts to make artistic designs and gold, silver and bronze to cut and set stones to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.* Isn't this beautiful? God is building his tabernacle. How is he doing it? Manifesting his Spirit through creative gifting, his spirit is now gifting beyond the ability, is now revealing beyond knowledge. Another name for that is the anointing.

Now I'm going to get ahead of myself right here. But can I just say the anointing not just meant for pastors as they preach; for anybody doing anything. I have prayed God's anointing on surgeons and politicians and entrepreneurs, professional athletes. I prayed that God would anoint them to do what they do. The anointing enables us to do what we do better than we're able to do it. That's who the Holy Spirit is; that's what the Holy Spirit does. Now, 1 John 2:27 says,

²⁷ *"But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true."*

The Holy Spirit is this lie detector test, if you will, helps us discern what's right and what's wrong. And then it says; *"His anointing teaches you about all things."* What things? All things and all encompassing anointing. Without the Holy Spirit, I'm below average. You don't have to 'amen' that too much. {Laughter} It's okay. With the help of the Holy Spirit, come on, all things are possible. It was the Holy Spirit who anointed Joshua to lead Israel. It was the Holy Spirit who anointed Othniel the wisdom to judge. It was the Holy Spirit who gave Sampson supernatural strength and it was the Holy Spirit who gave Gideon a holy confidence. And so we go from the judges to the kings and now it's the Holy Spirit who turned Saul into a prophet. Now listen, all these people made a lot of mistakes and they messed up some of that anointing that was on their life, it doesn't change the fact what the spirit of God is capable of doing. Then the Spirit downloads the plans, the blueprints for the temple into David's right brain imagination and then gives Daniel the ability to interpret dreams stirs the spirit. I just feel like churning the butter right now, I don't even know where that came from. Stirs the spirit of Zerubbabel to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and that's the Old Testament in the New Testament 90 times.

Let me just focus on Jesus. It's the Spirit of God that conceives the Christ child within Mary. So let's start there. And then it's the Spirit of God that leads him into the wilderness, Spirit of God who descends at the baptism. And then Jesus says that the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom, recovery of sight, set the captives free. Yes, Jesus is the one who did those things, healed people raise the dead, but how did he do it? Just the same way we do with the help of the Holy Spirit, and when his earthly ministry was said and done, he said, it's to your advantage that I go away unless I go away the advocate will not come. What?

Now, let me stop right here. Advocate depends on your translation, comforter, counselor, helper. But it's such a beautiful word in the Greek language, *parakléto*s. It's this idea; it's a Roman military formation where two soldiers would get back to back with their shields in front of them. It's this idea that the spirit of God, the spirit of God's got your back. Ah, come on, interceding for you with groanings that cannot be uttered and he's got your back. Unbelievable, and so Jesus ascends to heaven to the right hand of the Father and the Holy Spirit descends on the day of Pentecost, there is this changing of the guard and the church is birthed and the Holy Spirit, doesn't just descend, indwells, in-fills, and sets up shop within us. At Bethlehem he is God with us, at Calvary he is God for us, but it gets even more at Pentecost he is God in us. The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in us.

Now, Holy Spirit drops the mic in a rather unique way. Jewish pilgrims from all over the ancient world, it's one of three pilgrimage feasts and so there in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit goes Google translate and gives them the ability to speak in languages they have never learned so that these pilgrims from all around the ancient world hear the Gospel, in their native tongue. They believe the Gospel and they end up being the first wave of missionaries commissioned to share the good news of the Gospel. Then the Holy Spirit goes Google maps and directs Philip on this crazy wild goose chase and sets up this divine appointment with this Ethiopian Eunuch and that changes the history of a country. And then Church of Antioch it's the Holy Spirit who set apart Paul and Barnabas sends them on their first missionary journey. Oh, it was the Holy Spirit who settled this bitter dispute that was happening in the early church at something called the council of Jerusalem and they come to a wonderful conclusion. I love the way it says it in Acts 15:28 *"it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."* Oh man, what a place to be; in a spot where it feels good, seems good to the Holy Spirit, seems good to us.

Now, 1 Corinthians 2:10 Holy Spirit goes Google search. The spirit searches all things including the deep things of God, and I can't get to a deep dive on this, but I think it's the Holy Spirit that has a way of surfacing some of these old memories right when we need them, right? In fact, Jesus said this in John 14 Holy Spirit will remind you of everything I have said, but doesn't just resurface what we need when we need; it also gives us new ideas. I like to call him God ideas and I'd rather have one God idea than a thousand good ideas. It's words of wisdom, its words of knowledge; it's operating in a way that again, is better than the best you can do because now it's the Holy Spirit doing something in you and through you.

And so all of that to say this, the Holy Spirit still doing it, still hovering, still breathing, still healing and gifting and guiding and convicting, and comforting and sealing and surfacing and anointing. And so my question this weekend on a Pentecost weekend is this, do we need the

Holy Spirit any less than the early church? I think not. And I know I need the Spirit of God more today than I did yesterday.

Romans 8:26 the Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. Listen, the power of the Spirit is manifested through his gifts and the character of God is manifested through his fruit. Acts 1:8 *"you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you"*. But isn't this beautiful not just in immaterial energy source, not something that we just plug into and charge the battery. He knows you better than you know you, how beautiful is that? Is closer to you than you are to you? I don't get that any more than I get 99.99% empty space.

Here's what I know for sure. The Holy Spirit can't fill you if you're full of yourself. Now I'm going to share with you what comes as close as I can get to what I would call a theory of everything and it's this. The answer to every prayer, it's more of the Holy Spirit. Oh no, no, no, no, I need, I need love. Well, Romans 5 I think it says this, that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. I need joy. I think that's a second fruit, peace third fruit, right? You want me to keep going? I need some self-control. No, you need more of the Holy Spirit because that's the last fruit of the Spirit. Listen, Spirit of God is our sixth sense, the X factor, the It factor. And so I say, Come Holy Spirit.

A W Tozer said this, about 50 years, "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference." Without the help of the Holy Spirit we are ordinary in every way, we're flesh and blood. But good news, he wants to fill you in a fresh way. Let me give you a little formula and I hesitate doing this because there are no formulas let God be original with others as he was with you and so part of me hesitates, but I want us to have an understanding because I think when I talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit, well wait, what? What is that? What's that? So let me give you a little equation, okay. I think awareness of plus submission to equals filled by. What have we been doing for the last 10, 12 minutes? Awareness of we need to know how the Holy Spirit operates. Just like you would grow in a relationship with someone and kind of get to know their gifts and abilities and what they're good at and how they like to manifest their personality. In much the same way we need an awareness of. Because I'll tell you this, Holy Spirit is present and accounted for. All that's absent is our awareness and a simple invitation.

And then I would say submission to; now this is tricky. That word 'submit' means to yield and it's often in the context of a marriage relationship where the Bible says submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. It's so beautiful. If you learn to submit to your spouse's strengths and gifts oh, then it's this beautiful complimentary relationship where you can celebrate each other. I think in much the same way, I want to make sure that the Holy Spirit has veto power in my life and not just the last word, the first word. I was reading this week and it really profoundly impacted me. You might not know the name John Wimber was a founder of the vineyard movement way back when but we're really used by God to impact millions of people and he would point to a defining moment in 1977. It was pretty simple, but pretty profound, he said there was this moment where he felt like God said to him, I've seen your ministry now let me

show you mine. In other words, you've been doing a lot in your own strength and wisdom. Let's see what can happen if you get out of the way and let my Spirit work in you and through you.

Ephesians 5:8 *"Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit."* It is a present passive imperative, which indicates continual action. In other words, keep on being filled with the spirit. Why? Because we leak. And so there isn't a day that I don't need his sustaining power in my life, that I don't need that in filling power in my life. Now is it okay if I just pushed the envelope a little bit right here? The Latin word for alcohol is spiritists and I find that interesting because I think, listen to me, I'm loving on your right now, I think some of us cheat the system and we want alcohol to do for us what the Holy Spirit wants to do in us. I think sometimes that we want boldness, right? I want that the right way, and I want to lose a little bit of my inhibitions. You know, I think self consciousness is a byproduct of the curse. Listen, before original sin they just ran around naked, no issue, right and then became self conscious. See as the Spirit of God fills us now God is sanctifying us. So you know what? We don't really, in fact, can I just say this? I don't think you can really care for people until you don't care what they think of you. In other words, some of us are so concerned about people's opinions of us that we pull punches and instead of loving them with grace and truth, we don't really allow the Spirit of God to work in us and through us. And so I guess what I'm saying is, Holy Spirit, come and fill me again.

Let me close with a testimony. Last weekend talked about prophesying your praise. Now you can prophesy by fear. You can prophesy doubt. You can prophesy pain or you can prophesy praise. It's not just praising God for what he's already done its declaring the promises of God, its declaring the character of God and it's praising God by faith for what he will do and can do. I talked some about that song that I put on repeat, you remember that when my intestines ruptured. And I'm trading my sickness, I'm trading my pain. I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord. During different seasons in my life there are often worship songs that become kind of the soundtrack of my life in that season. Does that make sense? Now, July 2nd, 2016, you know this part, pray a brave prayer I said, God, would you heal my asthma? We're about three weeks for me celebrating three years of God healing me. I want to tell you what happened the week after I'm, at our Barracks Row campus, Pastor Chris is leading a song by All Sons and Daughters, Great Are You Lord. And at this moment I haven't taken an inhaler in a week. You've got to understand, in 40 years that hadn't happened. So in my spirit, I'm just, God, did you heal me? Did you do something? But listen, I second guessed too, I'm like, Peter, I get out of the boat, I'm walking on water, and then I look at the wind and the waves, it gets a little scary and then I wonder, did it really happen. And so I'm kind of in this place of like, I don't know. And then we get to this chorus and in fact I'm going to put it up on the screen at all of our campuses and then we're going to sing it in just a minute because man, these words just...

{Song Lyrics to Great Are You Lord}

It's Your breath in our lungs

So we pour out our praise

We pour out our praise

It's Your breath in our lungs

So we pour out our praise to You only

And it dropped me to my knees. I lose a little bit of emotional control because it's a moment where I feel like the Holy Spirit sealed a miracle within me. Two weeks ago, a pastor from England was visiting National Community Church and he was kind enough to then share a testimony. I had no idea this happened, but here's what he said a couple of years ago, you were our keynote speaker at a conference in the UK and at the end of your message you had a prayer line and the worship team started to play. Great Are You Lord. He says, I had sung that song many times, but I had a revelation in that moment. If God's truly courses through us as we breathe then his healing breath was rubbing up against my asthmatic lungs. I had been asthmatic all my life at the time I was 43 while I started singing the chorus so loud I thought I must be disturbing to people around me, I was belting. He was prophesying is praise. I was belting it out like a crazy rocker. I had never sung so loud in my life. I just knew something was going on and then as I continued drawing in deep lung fulls of air, I heard from the Lord who said, I am healing you right now. A minute later he said you retook the stage and you said this song is sacred to me, and you told the story of how you had been healed of asthma and I nearly fell over, I said, the timing was incredible. I knew God had just confirmed his healing. Walking back to the hotel, I felt different, my lungs felt clear, next day, no inhaler needed. Next day, the same and so on, that was May, 2017 I am healed.

Now, let me tell you why I'm sharing that because we overcome by the blood of the lamb and by the word of our testimony. So I'm run out of time. Here's the deal. Pentecost weekend, we're going to begin a season of 21 days of prayer and fasting. NCC.re/21days You follow us on social media you can track with us. Listen, would you just figure out what God wants to do in you over the next 21 days? I'm just thinking to myself, you cannot plan Pentecost, but you go and pray in an upper room for 10 days. Pentecost is bound to happen. There is an urgency that can only come at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. They knew how much they needed the Spirit of God, and so for 10 days they prayed. Listen, for 21 days, we're just going to pray and fast. We're not going to tell God how to do what God does. Listen, you, you do not have to tell God how to do his job. You want to be filled with the Spirit you don't have to say hondai five times fast. You just need to say, come Holy Spirit, come, come, do what you do, him who fills all things in all ways.

Now, I'm really going to close with this. Okay? Few years ago I visited the home of a former NFL MVP. He showed me his trophy room. Pretty impressive. But what I found interesting was right outside that room was a hyperbaric chamber that he would climb into almost like a tanning bed except different. And if you're in a hyperbaric chamber, you are breathing pure oxygen in a pressurized tube the air pressure multiplied times three. So just his oxygen deprivation kills cells in the same way more oxygen, pure oxygen, it expedites a healing process in our lives. Listen, I think that without the Holy Spirit, we're in big trouble. But we just say, come Holy Spirit. You do what you do. He's hovering, he's breathing, he's gifting, he's fruiting, he's convicting, and he's healing. So whatever you need this weekend, come Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.