

**Ephesians 4: 30; “To Grieve the Holy Spirit”, Message # 37 in a series entitled –  
“The Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared by  
Pastor Paul Rendall for April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

The words, “and do not grieve the Holy Spirit” come immediately after Paul’s having told us what we as Christians should put away after we come to faith in Jesus Christ. Verse 25 says we are to put away lying, and we are to speak truth with our neighbor, because we are members of one another. Verse 26 says that we should be angry when we see sin, but we ourselves should not sin when we have that anger. And we are not to let the sun go down on our anger. In other words, the sinful things that we once pursued before we came to Christ, are the very things that we need to repent of, and stop doing. Whether it is stealing, or corrupt words coming out of our mouths, we put those things away. We put them away and we put them off, like old clothes.

We then cloth ourselves with Christ. We put Him on. We clothe ourselves in His teaching and His example, for He is the perfectly righteous and Holy One. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we make no provision for the flesh, as Paul says in Romans chapter 14, verse 13. Christ is the One who we put on, so that we will make progress in holiness, righteousness, and truth. Here in verse 30 however, we find a statement which we need to come to terms with, in relation to the way that we live our Christian life. Paul tells us – And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. I want to approach this subject by 1<sup>st</sup> of all – Attempting to define what it means to grieve the Holy Spirit. And then 2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to show you why you should not grieve the Holy Spirit. Let us now pray to receive this teaching.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Let me attempt to define what it means that the Holy Spirit is grieved.**

A concise definition of what it means for God the Holy Spirit to be grieved in relation to believers is this. It is when, as He examines our thoughts, our speech, or our conduct as believers, it reveals to Him, an unwillingness to change and to repent of any sin in our heart, mind, or life. There is an unwillingness in ourselves to bring ourselves, by His grace, to the place where we will do God’s will. This grieves Him. For instance, every Christian ought to be able, at any time in their experience, to pray the prayer of David in Psalm 139: 23 and 24. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” If you cannot pray that prayer, then it will be much easier for you to grieve the Holy Spirit and not even know that you are grieving Him.

We find another good example of praying in the right way, written down for us by David in Psalm 19, verses 12-14. “Who can understand his errors?” “Cleanse me from secret faults.” “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.” “Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.” “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” Now, you will notice that we ourselves cannot understand our errors in the way that the Holy Spirit understands them perfectly. And so we pray that He would help to understand and that He would cleanse us from secret faults.

But he also asks to be kept back, not only from the secret faults and sins, but from the presumptuous sins, which might break out in his speech and conduct. If we do not pray in this way, it may be that we are guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit. You may say to me that you believe that there a sense in which the Holy Spirit cannot be grieved, for He is God, and He, like the other Persons of the Divine Trinity are impassible in their great Being. You say that God does not have feelings and affections like a man that ebb and flow, and are affected essentially by anything that any man does. That is most certainly true. God is that great, that in His Being, He is above all that any man can do to Him to get Him to change. He is that strong in His Being, that He does not have passions. He does not have passions or griefs because He is unchangeable in His Being,

and there is nothing that He cannot do to change persons or to rectify situations where He is grieved.

We can see this scripturally if we will turn over to Job chapter 35, verses 1-8. Elihu is speaking here, and he is addressing Job concerning Job's having too stridently tried to justify himself in terms of his own righteousness, in the sight of both God and men. It says here – "Moreover Elihu answered and said: 'Do you think this is right?' 'Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's? 'For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You?' 'What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?' 'I will answer you, and you companions with you.'" "Look to the heavens and see; and behold the clouds – They are higher than you." "If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him?" "Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him" "If you are righteous, what do you give Him?" "Or what does He receive from your hand?" "Your wickedness affects a man such as you, and your righteousness a son of man."

So, we see here, that God is unaffected essentially in His Being, as regards Job's righteousness or wickedness, and yet He perfectly considers Job. We know from the end of this book, that He loved him, pitied him, and even boasted to the Devil about him, at the beginning of the book. These are God's Divine Affections being displayed. He said to the Devil that He was well-pleased with Job; that Job was a righteous man, that he feared God, and he was turning away from evil. (Job 1: 8) The only way that Job grieved God during the trial that he went through was that he did not correctly see God's love, or pity, or care for him in the trial that he was going through, that was ordained for him by God. But rather he mistook Satan's attacks upon him for God's having done these things, and that God had become His enemy.

So let us understand that this word "grief" like so many descriptions of the affections of God in the Bible, is an anthropopathism. It is God's letting us know, in language that we can understand, that He is affected by what we are doing. He does take notice of it. But He does not take notice of it in a way in which He Himself actually changes. What we do in our sins, does not actually grieve Him like a man would grieve, and or hurt Him in His Being, so that He is in anguish over it, and can do nothing about it. But rather, when He grieves over the sinful things that we do, He does so in a way of letting us know by His Spirit, that what we are doing is not right. He is not pleased with it, and so by His Spirit, He interacts with our spirit to communicate to our mind and conscience, that displeasure in a way that we ourselves will, with our human emotions, feel grief over it.

He causes us to know and understand how our committing a sin or continuing on in the practice of any sin, dishonors Him and His great love for us. In other words, there are in God, affections which are described in the Bible as grief and pity, and yes, even love and wrath in Him which He really feels. But even though these are held perfectly and unchangeably in Him, and when He exhibits them, we know that He does love us when we obey Him. And on the other hand, we can come to know that He is grieved, and that there is something wrong with us. The Spirit does let us know through the Scriptures and His working that there is something in us which will require His grace to make us over into the holy and righteous people that we should be. Turn with me over to Genesis chapter 6 and we will see an example of how God really does grieve over the sins of men.

Genesis chapter 6, verses 1-8 – "Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose." "And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'" "There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them." "Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown."

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” “And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’ “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” There are, if you will notice, two words which present difficulties to our understanding if we were to take them simply at face value without trying to understand them in the way that I have described to you above, as anthropopathisms . They are the words, “sorry” and “grieved”.

God was sorry that He had made man. It repented Him that He had made man, it says in the King James. For God to be sorry about anything that He has made, or done, would be inconsistent with His perfections of Wisdom and Omniscience; that somehow He had made a mistake concerning His having created man. But God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. (Numbers 23: 19) We should understand this word “sorry”, not in terms of God’s re-thinking what He had purposed to do in His creation of man, but of His purposing in Providence to deal with that whole generation of people in the world, except for Noah and his family, according to the hardness of their hearts in strict justice. He gave them 120 years to repent, in connection with the preaching of Noah to them, and then He destroyed them all.

His being grieved, that word in particular, should be understood in relation to His extreme displeasure, an actual affection of Divine grief; of sadness and sorrow, which is unchangeable in His Being, towards every sin of every unrepentant sinner. This grief implies no change in Him at all, either in His Being, or His eternal purpose. But nevertheless it is there in His holy heart and mind. God was grieved in His heart. We see this same kind of language used in regard to God’s anger in Psalm 7, verse 11 – “God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day.” This is a fixed eternal part of God’s Being, that He is angry with the wicked, not only every day, but all throughout eternity in hell, as well.

And yet, in terms of the wicked here upon the earth at this time, we find that Jesus says in Matthew chapter 5, verse 45, that, “He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” And in Luke 6: 35 and 36 – “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.” “For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.” “Therefore be merciful, just as your Father is also merciful.”

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to show you the reason why should not grieve the Holy Spirit.**

It is because as it says here in verse 30 – “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” We should notice that the Holy Spirit is called the Holy Spirit of God in this place. This is to show us that He represents God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in all of His motions and all of His actions in our life. We were sealed by Him for the day of redemption. It will help us even more to understand this “sealing” by the Spirit if we will turn over to Ephesians 1, verse 13. It says here – “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

We see here the order of the sealing of the Spirit in our conversion to Christ. It follows our having believed in Christ, that we are sealed with Him; that is, with the Holy Spirit Himself. And it is this being sealed with Him that guarantees our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession; that is, our receiving the resurrection body at the end of the world. When Christ returns the whole work of redemption will be completed in us. But this sealing is the promise of all of the future good work of the Holy Spirit in us, to change and transform us into the image of Christ. And it is worded here as something which is sure and certain for us, because we have received the Spirit when we received Christ.

This sealing with the Spirit, in other words, is how we come to have an experiential knowledge of Christ. We believe, we are sealed with the Spirit, and all of the promises of God begin to be fulfilled in us. Let's look at 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 1, verses 19-22 to establish this truth. "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us – by me, Silvanus, and Timothy – was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes." "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."

The word guarantee in the New King James is translated "a pledge" in the New American Standard. In the King James it is translated "the earnest" of the Spirit. Johann Albrecht Bengel in his commentary says that "the word is used for a pledge, which is given up at the payment of a debt; but elsewhere for earnest money, which is given beforehand, so that an assurance may be afforded as to the subsequent full performance of the bargain. Such an earnest is the Spirit Himself: whence also we are said to have the first fruits of the Spirit."

We need to remember that the Holy Spirit is with us always, every day, all through our life, following our conversion to Christ. He beholds all the thoughts and intents of our heart. This should bring us an increasing assurance of our salvation if our thoughts, words, and deeds are righteous. And it will be harder for us to conclude that we are a true Christian if we grieve the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." This is an experiential work that is on-going in our heart if we are a true Christian. This should speak to us of why He is grieved if He is beholding thoughts, feelings, and actions in us which are not righteous, but sinful. If we do not repent of those sins of our heart, how will we be able to prevent them breaking out into our life in our actions?

Let us remember that when we grieve the Holy Spirit, we shall cease to know and sense His Presence and blessing in our lives. You will see this truth if you will turn with me over to Isaiah chapter 64, verses 7-14. "I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses." "For He said, 'Surely they are My people, children who will not lie.'" "So He became their Savior." "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old."

"But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them." "Then He remembered the days of old, Moses and His people, saying: 'Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock?' "Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, who led them by the right hand of Moses, with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them to make for Himself an everlasting name, who let them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they might not stumble?" "As a beast goes down into the valley, and the Spirit of the Lord causes him to rest, so You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name."

So when the Lord leads us, His people, by His Holy Spirit, He does so in order to make for Himself a glorious name. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. We find rest for our souls. Like a horse in the wilderness He leads us so that we might not stumble. But these folks rebelled against God and they grieved His Holy Spirit, and so, it says, He turned to become their enemy. Well, many of them did not really know the Lord. You will never be the Lord's enemy if you truly know Him. But how will you know that you know Him unless you repent of your sins and seek His Presence and Power and blessing in your life?

Let us not be a people who will lie to ourselves, or to Him, by holding on to secret sins, or by refusing to repent of presumptuous sins. When we are sincere we will remember what Christ has done, and what He is doing for us every day. In all our affliction He was afflicted, and He is the

Angel of God's Presence who has saved us. In His love and in His pity He has redeemed us. He bears with us and He carries us through our days. Let us therefore remember that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and not grieve Him, but make Christ's name glorious by the way that we think in our hearts and the way that we live our lives.