**Living the Life Jesus Made Possible**

Dr. Steve Hoke, The Village Church, July 19f, 2025

**As an MK in Japan in the 1950s, I first read the biography of famed mssy to China and founder of CIM: *Hudson Tahlor’s Spiritual Secret*** (1934). I read it voraciously to discover his *Spiritual Secret!*

HT was an Medical Assistant called to reach the interior millions of China in mid-1800’s. Over 54 years, he founded and grew a mission organization of over 1285 mssys, 300 stations, 125 schools, 4,000 national workers, and over 100k conversions at great personal cost: he lost his first wife Maria, multiple children, returned multiple times UK due to broken-health, for years at a time. After 16 years in China, the Holy Spirit spoke to him when he was dangerously exhausted and overextended through a letter from another CIM mssy, who shared w/ Him the freedom of the Spirit-filled life, not the effort-driven life he had been living! I was surprised when I realized there was no “mysterious secret” at all! **The “un-secret” of Hudson Taylor was his discovering the liberating truth of the Spirit-filled life! What was unknown to HT was Abiding in Christ, and relying on the power of the Spirit in Him to experience the life Jesus made possible!**

We have been walking the Roman road with Pastor Andy down the theological thoroughfare of Life in the Spirit—Calling, Justification, Sanctification, Glorification!

Today let’s take a Rest Stop to reflect on the relational flow of the Spirit-filled life Jesus made possible. We’ll see where the proverbial “rubber hits the road”—i.e. how the profound truths of Romans shape how we live our lives***!***

* 1. The apostle Paul clearly taught that we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we receive Christ as our Savior:

[Eph 1:13-14](https://www.bibleref.com/Ephesians/1/Ephesians-1-13.html) teaches “*Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession….”*

Rom 8:2,9-11: *“The Spirit has set you free in Christ Jesus… from the law of sin and death.”* [:9](https://www.bibleref.com/Romans/8/Romans-8-9.html) “*You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit…The Spirit of God lives in you…*10-11 “…*the Spirit is life because of righteousness!…He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells IN you.”*

* ***There is no “spiritual secret” for a chosen few! The truth is that the Spirit is IN every believer! and He’s there to stay! It’s “The Life Jesus Made Possible!*** *Amen! TYL!*

Several years ago, I discovered a helpful phrase that greatly expanded my understanding of the SFL.

1. **If the HS lives in you, you are “Hosting His Presence” in your life*!!!***  So, if there is any “spiritual secret” of the Spirit-filled life—it’s this—**it’s learning HOW to Host the Presence of the Holy Spirit—EVERYDAY!**

Since then, this biblical metaphor of *“****HTP”***has been life-giving for me!

* 1. Fascinated by this phrase—hosting the Spirit, I dug out Karen Mains’ 1976 bestseller, ***Open Heart, Open Home***on the biblical basis and practice for Christian hospitality. It unpacked how to intentionally prepare to host others; in contrast to living in the disorganized clutter of an un-prepared, unwelcoming home.
* My exp with hosting goes way back—My parents had the gift of Hospitality on steroids, and exercised it with a passion! I vividly recollect the hundreds of mssys, Christian leaders, Jps pastors, and neighbors we hosted in our home over my 15 years in Tokyo. I vividly remember the anticipation and prepared for the exuberant Xmas parties, the countless dinner conversations. My Senior yr of HS in Tokyo, we averaged 40 guests a month in our home for lunch or dinner.
* Visualize one of the most memorable times in which you hosted a person or family for an event in your home! Remember all you did to get ready to host their presence?
* We’ve all had good and bad hospitality experiences, haven’t we?   
  Bad: While visiting a couple in VEN w/ Pres one morn—we awaken to no breakfast… Finally the host calls out: *“Just* *fend for yourselves…”*

Good: In contrast imagine back to some of the great get-togethers you’ve experienced…

Eloise and I remember huge church get togethers at the Dickelman’s; Thanksgiving gatherings at Dave and Mary Fountain’s, hanging out and fellowshipping til late in homes of friends; receptions at Dee and Jerry Horne’s home—**life-time memories—Why? because we were hosted so well!**

* 1. In her book, Karen Mains clarifies that “hosting” graciously is not about the food or eating, it’s not about “entertaining”. It’s all about the whole experience—were people safe, comfortable, did they feel welcomed? Were they included, uplifted, and encouraged in your home? Was the conversation edifying, enjoyable, did your guests leave blessed?
* Now visualize the HS sitting on a Lazy-Boy in your living room. How’s He been since He arrived in the LR of your life? How has He felt about being hosted by you?
* What two things would you do if you knew in advance the HS was coming to dinner?

It’s time to embrace **the reality of God’s taking up residence in you**.   
What have you learned about hosting the Spirit in a way is transforming you***!***

* This morning I’d like to link 3 action-phrases essential to living the Spirit-filled life: **Hosting the Spirit** (Rom 8), with the practice of **Spiritual Breathing** (I John), with **Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit** (Gal 5)**!**

**Hosting the Presence🡪 Spiritual Breathing 🡪 Bearing Fruit**

(Romans 8) (I John 1:9) (Galatians 5)

1. **What does it mean to *“be filled with the Holy Spirit”* as we Host His Presence?** 
   1. The OT prophet **Joel** (580 BC) promised *“And…I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy…old men shall dream dreams… young men shall see visions. In those days I will pour out my Spirit!!!* (2:18-29)
   2. In the NT, **Jesus** gave early hints of the coming of the Spirit: “*Whoever believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within him.* [ John comments: *Up to that time the Spirit had not been given in that way, since Jesus had not yet been glorified”* ] (Jn 7:38-39).

Yet it was not until the last months of Jesus’ ministry that He began to reveal that his departure would be followed by the coming of the Holy Spirit who would remain with them in his absence.

Only **John** records Jesus’ farewell Upper Room Discourse, when he gives his promise of the Spirit: (14:16-17) *“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth. You know him, for He dwells* ***with*** *you and will be* ***in*** *you.”* (Jn 3:6-8; 6:63; 7:39; 14:16; 15:26; 16:8, 13, etc.)

Then, it was not until Jesus’ post-Resurrection appearance to the disciples in the same Upper Room that **John** again records the disciples’ first filling of the Spirit: *“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when He had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit* (20:21-22)*.”*

* 1. In Acts 2, Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost links directly to Joel’s OT prophecy of the Spirit of God being “*poured out on all flesh.*” Peter claims that the sudden arrival of the Spirit on that day is a fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy spoken some 600 years previous to Pentecost! *The HS has come!*
  2. The Apostle Paul is the most prolific NT author describing the Spirit-filled Life; using these three phrases:

1. ***Walk in the Spirit…living by the Spirit****t*:

In Gal 5:16,25: Paul writes: *“But I say walk by the Spirit…If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit…”*

Romans 8:2ff: 2 *“For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death…:*5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on things of the Spirit.* :6…*For to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace…You, however, in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you…*:10 *If Christ is in you,…the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* :11 *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”*

1. ***Be filled with*** *the Holy Spirit*: Eph 3:19; 5:18—Paul uses the word “filling” that means to cause to abound, to be completely permeated, inhabited, consumed, or completely satisfied
2. ***Walk worthy in the Spirit*** Eph 4:1
   1. As we continue journeying through *Romans*, I want to focus today on parallel passages from two of Paul’s other epistles—***Galatians*** and ***Ephesians***, and a key verse from ***I Jn***that inform ***Rom 8!*** These supporting passages complete our understanding of **the relational flow of the Holy Spirit** in our lives—from our Hosting the Presence of the Spirit, to the transforming impact of the Spirit in producing the character traits of the Spirit” in every believer’s life!
   2. Remember that a frequent name for the Holy Ghost is “*breath”* or “*Spirit of God.”* Breath as an act of the Holy Spirit first appears at the Creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis, and appears again in the NT when Jesus breathed with fresh breath on his disciples to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit (Jn 20).

Bill Johnson writes: “The truth of the filling of the Spirit by the breath of God is not just for me. Let’s take that revelation to the next level. The greater the Presence inside of you was always intended to be released to transform the environment and people around you!” HTP-E 6.22.

All these figures of speech describe our deeply intimate and highly interactive relationship with the HS!

So, this “the filling of the Spirit” sounds like a weekly activity, doesn’t it?   
Hardly! It may need to be daily, several times daily—actually “TAKE AS NEEDED”!

1. **How do I remain filled with the Spirit?**

The divine prescription is an involuntary breathing pattern we need to master to spiritually thrive—until it becomes habitual***!*** Dr. Bill Bright of CCC called this essential two-step process **“*Spiritual Breathing.”***

* 1. Now let’s put this consistent “breathing process” into the context of hospitality—of hosting: If you ever made a major faux pas when hosting guests, what would you do? Whether you spilled on a guest or offended them by a remark… What would you do? You’d say you were sorry or apologize!! —you’d ask forgiveness. It’s not hard, it just takes a little humility and grace—to confess your mistake!

Here’s the key insight that reveals how the Spirit-filled life works on a moment-by-moment basis to help us apply the theology of Romans:

I John 1:9 promises “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse from all unrighteousness.”*

* 1) The breath-Spirit invites us **to EXHALE, to breathe out in confession**, so that we might immediately breathe IN or inhale the fresh breath of His forgiveness*!* **Our confession is what activates His forgiveness**

John is teaching us how to **“keep close accounts with God.”** You ask forgiveness as soon as you are aware of making a mistake, “in the moment,” as soon as it happens.

There is irony there. It’s not that He leaves when we blow it*!* It’s more like us pushing Him aside, forgetting He was there, or grieving his spirit by our actions. In Spiritual Breathing you confess as soon as you catch yourself, or are convicted—of a lie, an unkind word, in an impure thought, or wrong action.

We also exhale when we’ve exerted ourselves in acts of loving service. We’re spiritually out of breath—so to speak. That’s not sin; that’s depletion. E.g.: Elijah got depleted; Jesus got depleted; We get depleted. And often when we are depleted, we may feel we’ve fallen out of step with the Spirit. But what we really need is a ***refilling****!*

* 2) I**mmediately upon exhaling** (wait for it), **to INHALE—you take a deep breath IN of the Spirit**. It’s an activating breath that allows the Spirit to do His Work in your heart, mind, and actions.

// *Spiritual Breathing* simply mirrors the process of *physical breathing*—Breathe OUT, then breathe the Spirit IN. Breathe OUT; breathe IN. That’s how you get refilled. Unlike the religions of the world, you don’t have to go to a designated building, temple or shrine. You don’t have to bow, beg or scrape. You don’t have to offer alms or penance. **Just confess-EXHALE. Then INHALE the filling of the Spirit!** Don’t just say the words; take a moment to actually receive the fresh air from the Holy Spirit! Sense His Presence filling you!

* I just pray a simple prayer like this—pray it silently with me:

*“Holy Spirit, I need you; I have sinned against you by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ’s death on the cross. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. Thank you for refilling me with your Holy Spirit and directing my life. In Jesus name. Amen.”*

That’s how Christians stay alive—**spiritual breathing!** Anytime. Anywhere. By yourself, or in a group.

It’s what we learned on June 29 in Romans 10:3b: We submit ourselves to the righteousness of God.

**>>We BELIEVE🡪we SUBMIT/CONFESS🡪we RECEIVE His cleansing & R’ness🡪we REFLECT His GLORY!**

* 1. Remember: Keep it focused on relationship, on friendship. This is not a *formula* or gimmick.

Just as we enjoy being with friends, so it is as we host the Holy Spirit. We learn how to get along with and take care of “one another.” Minor offenses don’t end the relationship. In fact, the depth of relationships often depends on how deeply we’ve shared life with one another—how we’ve weathered misunderstandings, experienced loss together, and how we’ve grieved tog.

So it is with the Holy Spirit. When we blow it or fail, we don’t quit or feel shamed. Rather, we confess—agree with God, receive forgiveness, and take the next step together. The Spirit-filled life is just like that. **The flow of the Spirit-filled life is relational!**

1. **What is the result or impact of the Spirit living in us?**

British theologian Chris Wright recounts this anecdote about noted British pastor and Bible teacher Dr. John Stott. He started each morning with a prayer: *“Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause Your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”* Wright observes: “It is hardly surprising, then, that many people who knew John Stott personally said that he was the most Christlike person they ever met. For God answered his prayer by making the fruit of the Spirit ripen in his life.” 13

Here’s the point: “The more we are filled with God’s Spirit, and the more the Spirit ripens his fruit within us, the more we will be like Christ.”

When we live moment-by-moment in the Spirit, **He** **takes responsibility for growing His likeness—His character** in us!

* 1. Again, it’s John who first mentions spiritual fruit in our lives. In Jn 15:5 he records Jesus declaring: ***“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I in them, they will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing*.”**

He is promising his disciples that IF we abide in Him and He in us, THEN His Spirit will activate the ripening of fruitfulness IN and THROUGH our lives. But while we will auto-matically bear much fruit **if** we abide, we do not automatically abide. BR

* 1. As the Spirit lives and works in you, He transforms you from the inside out! As we abide, the first breath of the Spirit seeds the fruit that takes root and ripens. And this fruit is watered by an overflowing *“river of living water.”* It flows from the Spirit, through us, to others!

**Consistent filling results in a flow of *ripening* Fruit of the Spirit**.

Let me re-emphasize: *“The more we are filled with God’s Spirit, and the more the Spirit ripens his fruit within us, the more we will be like Christ.”* CW13b

* 1. The Apostle Paul longed that the Galatian believers be so filled with the Holy Spirit that Christ himself would actually be shaping their lives. He creates a fresh metaphor of *fruit*, but not tree fruit, but the “**fruit of the Spirit”***!* In Gal 5, in contrast to *“the acts of the flesh”,* Paul depicts the life of the Spirit with this dazzling word picture*:*

***“*But the *fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such there is no law****”* (5:22-23). 14t

All the lovely words Paul uses are taken together, the fruit of the Spirit is singular!.

***Becoming Fruit-bearers is a spiritually developmental process.*** As you host the Presence and breathe in the Spirit, you become holier, sweeter, more fragrant, more loving, easier to live with, more fun to be with—more of a mirror of God’s love in you (I Cor 13)! **That’s the point Paul is driving at in the book of Romans! *Walk in the Spirit! Let the Spirit change you!***

* 1. Jn 15:5 records Jesus’ conditional promise: “*If you abide in Me*…” *God’s part is to produce spiritual fruit in and through our lives.* *Our part* is to do whatever is required to remain in Him, to abide in His powerful, loving and holy presence.”
* You know the most wonderful benefit of living at SPV for Eloise and me—we are surrounded by a growing Body Life Community of fruit-bearers! Look around you! They are probably sitting next to in your row. They’re in the choir, on committees, in your Academy classes—in your Court neighbors who display—*the FOTHS!* You can see it—oozing out of them! 😊

Humorously, you realize that in the English lang we already use fruit as descriptors of char-acter: *“She’s a real peach!* Or, *“He’s a real sour lemon”* when not so positive!

* Here’s a practical BL tip: Let your Fruit-wearing friends, know when and how much you appreciate the fresh fruit they are displaying by affirming and encouraging them: E.g.: Choir—joy; Elders—goodness; neighbors in your court—loving, caring, kind. 😊
* So, which fruit do you need to cultivate into ripe fullness? For me, it’s *PATIENCE!!!* uh, gentleness; um, kindness, meekness…well—all of them!

Take a look in the mirror—or ask your spouse or a friend, or the Spirit—to clue you in to which branch of the fruit tree you need to develop further! Stick a PIN on your mirror!

Ask the Spirit do His deeper work in you—in that specific area of godliness He wants to bring to fruition! Then identify the biblical nutrients you need to be more spiritually fruitful*!*

1. Here’s where the theology of Romans becomes immensely practical! ***How do we “walk” or “keep in step with the Spirit”?*** CSW

First, in relation to the fruit, there is no law. You don’t legislate kindness. The Spirit cultivates it as you “Host the Presence.” Spiritual fruit flows from the person you are becoming. 155b-156t

Second, we are to say **NO** to the flesh—any lingering, former habits and ways of doing things. We are to live by grace in ways that exclude certain kinds of behavior. Paul is very clear*—“Setting your mind on the things of the flesh is deadly!”* If you have a pattern you can’t break, invite the Spirit to do his purifying work in you. 157m

Third, positively, say **YES** to the Spirit. In Romans 8:506 Paul has already said 4x to *“****set your mind on the things of the Spirit”!*** [ sidebar: Dallas Willard helps us here: *“The Spiritual Disciplines (BS, Med, Prayer, Fasting, Solitude, etc.) do not in themselves create godliness; rather they make room for the Holy Spirit to do His transforming work!”)*

In Gal 5, following his describing the fruit, concludes with a statement and then a command:

* The **fact**, Paul says, is that *“****Since we live by the Spirit****”!* We are created in the image of God, to live the life that Jesus made possible. It is ours for the asking! And receiving!!!
* **The command** is to guide our response: “*That being the case…****let us keep in step with the Spirit”*** (5:25). That’s the instruction*—“****Let the Spirit direct your course****.”* Like soldiers marching in step with the drum and the music! *“Listen to the beat of the Spirit, through the teaching of God’s word, and keep in step with Him!*

1. **Closing**: Today we have simply looked at three acts of obedient faith we can all take to grow “greater fruit.” **Hosting the Presence**, **Breathing the Spirit,** which results—amazingly—in our **Becoming Fruit Bearers** of the Holy Spirit. Those are three actions that keep us in step with the Spirit, toward living the life that Jesus made possible!

* Let me leave you with a real-life Spirit-filled model many of you rem: **Dr. David Howard**. I first met David as a freshman in college in 1967. I saw him next at Urbana ’70 when he served as Director of Urbana SMC and in ’73 and ’76, having already served as a mssy in Lat.Am for over 16 years.. After almost 30 years in msn ldrship, David and Phyllis moved to SP in 1996. Every quarter when I visited my parents here, I started having a breakfast with David regularly. He always had time for me, and I cherish those times together.

For perspective, I checked my memory with 2 of David’s good friends: Dr. Tom Horn, The Navigators:   
“David was one of the most gracious persons I ever met. He was never harsh or judgmental. He always had **joyful** spirit, a smile on his face, time for others, and a **love** to care for and encourage others. His door was always open—he was available, interruptible—he displayed a spiritual sensitivity and openness to being used by the Holy Spirit. I think he had a high capacity for overlooking offenses (**love**). Since the early 90s in Singapore, I have considered David my primary Mentor! AND

His wife, **Janet Howard shared**: David had a **loving** concern for other people; **kind** words of encouragement for everyone. It was always about others, never about himself. He lived a disciplined life. His time with God, reading Scripture and good books, and a consistent prayer life were invaluable to Him! He purposively set his mind on things of the Lord!

David Howard left quite an impressive record of effective leadership roles and accomplishments. But most importantly, he left the godly legacy of a Spirit-filled life.

* Do you want to leave a legacy like that? You can! Because the Spirit flowed through David, he lived the life that Jesus made possible! Memorable. Lasting. And Fruitful.

I conclude with the words from **Dr. John Stott’s final sermon**:

“*Nothing commends the gospel more eloquently than a transformed life,*

*and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency.*

*We are charged to behave in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ—*

*to ‘adorn’ it, enhancing its beauty by holy lives.*

*For the sake of the gospel of Christ, therefore,*

*we recommit ourselves to show our love for God…by believing and obeying Him.*

*There is no biblical mission without biblical living.”* 161b

**Let’s pray:**

**Abba**, we are grateful for your superabundant grace that draws us to yourself.

**Jesus**, we receive your gift of salvation you won on the Cross. We ask in your Name to receive the filling of Your Holy Spirit.

**Holy Spirit**, we invite you to fill and refill us moment-by-moment so that we might reflect the glory of Your fruit to the World. We ask you to change the atmosphere over our Village and over our city. I declare supernatural growth would take place, people would be ushered into Your kingdom, and those who are born again would become joyful, maturing disciples, walking in your fullness.

In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.