

The burning ones - Micael Lahtinen

Prologue

For a long time I have been longing to write a book about the Holy Spirit. Over the years I have had the privilege to teach on this material in many Bible schools and in leadership forums. I have been writing in airplanes; sitting in the back seat of different cars on the missions field; alone somewhere in the vast fields of northern Sweden, and at home in my sofa. The privilege of a daily walk with Jesus here on earth is an amazing grace. It's a walk that will continue throughout eternity. This book is by no means a complete theological publication; it is rather a book about my experiences and my life with Him. The book is a complement to the teaching I call "The burning ones", which I have given on several places around the world. The book is handed out to all participants in the seminar. With this book I want to encourage you in your walk with the Lord, and I hope you will be greatly blessed. I hope and believe that it will bring you even closer to Jesus and give you a new revelation of how the Holy Spirit operates. Before you start reading, let's pray together:

Father, we come to you in the name of Jesus.

We pray that you will reveal your eternal Word.

We pray that you will show us who you are and what you've done for us.

Give us revelations from heaven, and let us understand what we see.

We thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit as a gift,

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 1 - Jesus calls his disciples

It all started when Jesus walked around to find suitable followers, disciples. He wanted to find twelve followers in whom he could invest all his time and all his passion. Through these twelve he would multiply himself through the Holy Spirit - that was his eternal plan. Jesus had a clear vision. He did not just walk around hoping that things would work out. No, the plan was to find people of the right material that he would be able to make something of. He didn't go to the well trained or those who had the perfect outer appearance. If that was his plan he would have gone to the arrogant Pharisees or the priests. In all the disciples these characteristics are clearer than others: devotion, loyalty, and humility. That was the kind of material Jesus wanted. He did not want to use those who were already "qualified" - he wanted to qualify those he had chosen. He wanted to make something of them. Their first calling was to follow Him, so he could make them fishers of men.

The first mission the disciples got was to simply follow Jesus. Walk in his footsteps. Watch him do what he did - it's so easy anyone can do it. I am often asked what the Christian faith is about, and I always give the same answer: *To meet with Jesus in person. To then follow him, in order to be like him.* That is every Christian's calling, to become like our Lord. To have Christ take form in us. And then, when we follow Jesus, the result is always the same: We become fishers of men.

It is impossible not to become a fisher of men when you follow Jesus, and it's impossible to become a fisher of men if you don't follow Jesus.

I often meet people who think evangelization is hard and difficult. For me, evangelization has never been an activity or a task that I do every now and then - it is a way of living. It is natural to me to tell about Him who transformed my life. I became a fisher of men because I started to follow Jesus.

What “material” did Jesus look for in his disciples?

Devotion

When I study the disciples I see several different pieces of material. Perhaps though the most important one was their devotion – they gave their lives to follow him.

We know that these disciples had a different life before they met Jesus. Peter, James, and John were fishermen. Their fathers were fishermen, perhaps their grandfathers and great grandfathers were fishermen too. Their children would become fishermen. In those days you did not get educated as we do today, but you inherited your father’s profession. Jesus was a carpenter because his dad was a carpenter.

When Jesus came to the beach where Peter, John, and James were cleansing their nets, they decided to leave the world as they knew it; their families, their line of work, their spare time – everything. We often read these lines too quickly, but I often remain with the verse that says: *“They pulled their boats up on shore, **left everything and followed him.**”*

There are few verses in the Bible that moves me as this verse does. This verse shows us the hearts that these guys had. They bet everything on one card – all in. For better or for worse. The boat was left behind and probably the boat and the entire situation yelled out to them: *“You are fools!”*, *“That is never going to work!”*, *“You’re just leaving without considering the consequences this will have on your families!”*, and so on. But they had decided. Such devotion! I’m sure it touched the heart of Jesus. He saw that they were willing to pay a price. The same went for the other disciples who also left their jobs and their comfort zone.

I can’t see any promises from Jesus from the beginning. I can’t see that Jesus started to negotiate what they would get in return. A littler further down the line we can see that Peter asks: *“We have left everything to follow you”*. Jesus answered: *“Truly I tell you, **no one who has left** home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or*

fields for me and the gospel will fail to **receive a hundred times as much in this present age**: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.”

Now they received a promise from Jesus. They had left their jobs, their families, their future, and their comfort. And now Jesus stepped in as a guarantor for their sustenance. Giving yourself to Jesus is the best retirement plan you can have. The creator himself gives his word that he will take care of you. This has not changed for us who want to follow him today; the promise is for you and me even today. But the promise is only for those who have left everything to follow Jesus.

Then the disciples walked with Jesus for three years. Their relationship was put to test at times. Jesus wanted to see if they were ready to follow him even when it hurt. On a couple of occasions Jesus taught the people that those who follow him must eat his body and drink his blood. He spoke to Jews who were really careful about what they ate. Jesus spoke metaphorically and prophetically but those who listened to him must have thought he was serious. *“Are we supposed to eat his body? Drink his blood? No, he has gone too far!”* And we can read that they all left him. All except his twelve disciples. They were still there. Surely they too thought about leaving. It probably didn't feel great. If I were there I would probably have thought: *“Well, that wasn't too smart, was it? Now they're all leaving!”*

Then Jesus turns to his disciples and asks: *“You do not want to leave too, do you?”* to which Peter exclaims: *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* They had tasted his words, they knew that there was life in them. Perhaps they did not always understand what he meant, but one thing was certain: They were staying. They were still devoted, despite the hard times. I think we too are going through difficult seasons from time to time. In those seasons Jesus asks us: *“Are you ready to walk a little bit further?”* Even though it might not feel great, even though the trial is tough, the answer will be: *“I devote myself again.”* Abraham was challenged to even sacrifice his own son. I don't know how many times this has happened to me. When the music stops, the lights are out, and the friends have gone home. When it simply does not

feel good.

The Nepalese Adventure

In 2015 I went on a missions trip to Nepal. That's an amazing country with the most wonderful people. On the morning of April 25th I checked out of my hotel room at 6 am in the Thamel area in the central parts of Kathmandu. But just as I was leaving the room I heard the Holy Spirit whisper: *"Bring the two bottles of water, you will need them."* I was filled with awe and chills went down my spine. I understood that something was about to happen. We then went toward the Gorkha and Lamjung districts.

At 11:56 the earthquake hit. It measured 7,8 on the Richter Scale. I was just about to begin preaching when it happened. We all came out of it unharmed and the church was not damaged. As we came out of the church several buildings collapsed and there were a number of earthquakes in the mountains around us. All electricity, water, and communication was wiped out. I had experienced earthquakes before in Los Angeles, but that one had only measured 5,1 on the Richter Scale. I understood that this was a huge earthquake that would be a national catastrophe, but I had no idea where the epicenter was. Not until later I understood how close to it I had been. We decided to quickly get back to Kathmandu, so we went on our way. I also knew that that there would be several aftershocks and that we were up for a challenging journey. I recorded a short video message on my phone and put the passport in the pocket of my trousers - if things would get really bad and I would not come out of this alive, at least they would be able to identify me quickly and my family would get a few last words. In a situation of crisis such as this one, you don't always think spiritually. Like Peter, as he was sinking through the surface, you really just scream "HELP".

The journey back to Kathmandu was dangerous with lots of aftershocks. When at last we reached Kathmandu we had to take several de-tours to reach our destination. Houses had come down everywhere and you saw dead people wherever you looked. I particularly remember when we were closing in on the old part of Kathmandu. On

my inside I heard the Holy Spirit say: "Tell the driver to be quick - take a hard right and then hit full speed." I screamed from the top of my lungs the exact words I had heard from the Holy Spirit, and the driver did exactly as I told him. When we had gone about 100 meters on road after turning right, the second big aftershock hit and the house behind us collapsed. If I had not heard the Holy Spirit's voice we would have been buried in concrete.

I later reached the hotel where I was supposed to stay but it was shut closed. Instead of running a hotel they had established a crisis center where I was allowed to stay. I told my coordinator to go home to his family and relatives and check in on them. I did not want to be a hinder to anyone, so I said: *"It's okay, the Lord has always been faithful. He will be with me here also, so go home to your family."*

In the crisis centre where I stayed there were a lot of people, most of them tourists from different parts of the world. In the middle of this crisis there we able to create a very family-like atmosphere. We all shared what we had. As I went to bed that night things was very different from all other nights. I had no bed, no pillow - nothing. I had to sleep under the stars. I made a temporary bed out of my clothes, and my laundry became my pillow. But I had however eaten one meal. There was friendship, there were invisible pacts and connections among all of us who shared the same fate.

Now I was lying there, under the stars. I did not know if I would ever see my dear ones again. I thought of my family, my relatives, my church and my friends. My heart ached with longing. Then and there a new question rose on my inside: "Do you still want to serve me? Are you still devoted?" The answer came without delay: *"Yes, Lord. I have nothing else. You have the word of eternal life. If I cannot come home to my family again, I will serve you here in Nepal until you bring me home."*

I gave my life to him once more. I wept and I was grateful to be so close to Jesus. I devoted my life to him again, and it became an important mile-stone in my life. Ever since I got saved, I've been in a covenant with Jesus. My prayer to salvation was: *"Lord, if you give me life, I will give you my life and I will serve you for the rest of my life."* I

think about that often.

Today I am grateful to have been part of such a major natural disaster. I have always had a desire to “walk in other people’s shoes”, and having grown up in safe and secure Sweden I have never really had to experience crisis or refugee camps. Now I too have been there, and now my heart has room for even more people. And I got a second chance in life.

Being saved is not just about getting to know the Lord. It is also about getting to know oneself. I am well aware of certain weaknesses in my life, but I’m also aware of certain strengths. And one strengths that I’ve always had is my complete loyalty to Jesus; my full devotion. I love him, and without him I have nothing.

At times we will need to devote ourselves again in our walk with Jesus. Sometimes we may even fail and think we are not even worthy of serving him. Peter probably thought he was unworthy after denying Jesus three times. But don’t forget, it was Jesus who time after time sought to find him. And Peter devoted himself again. Perhaps that’s where you are in your life; where it’s time for you to devote yourself again? Perhaps you devoted yourself early in your Christian life but now that you look back you realize that you’ve lost your fire? Tell him here and now: *“Lord, I want to follow you again. Once more I want to place my life in your hands.”*

Humility

Another characteristic that we see when we study the disciples is that they were humble. They had soft hearts, they were open to corrections. When Jesus called Peter he came to the place where he worked.¹ Peter was a fisherman and Jesus was a carpenter. They were cleansing their nets after a night in the boat. That’s when Jesus told them to try again and this time a little further from the shore. Peter knew fishing - he was a pro! What he did not know about fishing was not worth knowing. *Here comes a carpenter telling a fisherman how a fisherman should fish!* I don’t know if you

¹ Luke 5:1-11

have ever had someone tell you how to do your job properly, even though that person has much less experience and knowledge than you? Perhaps someone new has started at your workplace and immediately told you what you should do differently?

We have probably all been there. And immediately we think: *"What a minute! Are YOU going to tell ME how I should do this? I have done this ten thousand times and I know EXACTLY how it should be done!"*

That could have been Peter's response; he was a fisherman and Jesus was a carpenter. But his answer surprises me. He told Jesus: *"We have done everything just right. We have fished the way we always do, BUT because you say so I will do it again."* Such humility. Such a soft and beautiful heart living inside this man's chest. I have studied the life of Peter from Scripture and behind this very impulsive guy I see a heart of gold. He obeyed Jesus, and his obedience released an awesome miracle. The boat was filled with fish, so much that they needed to call for another boat, and even that second one was filled to the top.

When Peter came back to Jesus he was convinced that this man was something more; he was holy and there was something about his words that touched his inner being. When this man spoke faith arose; he saw the purity of Jesus and at the same time he saw his own inability to keep his thought and mind straight. He knew that he was a sinner and that he was unclean. He told Jesus: *"Go away from me, I am a sinner"*. But Jesus lifted him up and said: *"Do not be afraid, from now on you will fish for people."* He publicly confessed that he was a sinner - that speaks of humility. He could have said like so many others: *"I'm not worse than anyone else... sure, I'm not perfect but who is?"* No, he went down on his knees and begged him to leave a sinner such as himself. We see this over and over again when we follow Peter and the other disciples in their walk with Jesus - their soft and adaptable hearts.

Pride is the opposite of humility. Pride comes with the fruit of arrogance. Pride is hard

and stiff. Jesus sought out disciples who would be humble, and still today he is seeking for humble hearts that he can shape into his image.

Weakness, meekness, smallness

Another quality that Jesus liked was weakness, meekness, or smallness. People who simply did not think too much of themselves. They looked at themselves with small eyes. Jesus knew that the know-it-all-attitude would ultimately be bad for them. They needed to be dependant on him. They needed weakness. He wanted them to be dependant on him, just as a child is dependant on the parents.

Weakness is despised in the world. In the world you are supposed to be strong. I remember as a street evangelist people would often say to me: *"Yes, I understand that you need a religion to fall back upon, but I am strong. I don't need a religion."* What they meant was that they had everything under control; they didn't need a savior. In Sweden there's an insulting chant that goes: *"Eat your food and become strong, so you can party all night long. If you don't you'll be weak and search, for the nearest open church."*

I guess that's how some people think of Christians? Are we weak? I'd like to say that it was indeed our weakness that saved us. We reached a point in our lives where we realised that we really needed a savior. We faced a dead-end and understood that we needed someone to rescue us. And we reached out for the savior and he received us in his open arms.

Through the entire Bible there's a scarlet thread of weakness; all the prophets, all the men and women of God were weak in themselves but strong in the Lord. The 11th chapter of Hebrews is often referred to as the faith heroes' "Hall of Fame" and they all fit nicely in that chapter because they did something in FAITH. When the author has named all these heroes he says:

"Their weakness was turned to strength, they became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies." These heroes' strength was their weakness. They were fully

dependant on the Lord. They had moved their strength to the Lord, and they lived by faith.

In 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Paul wrote about the Lord's criteria when he calls his disciples:

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Jesus does not call the qualified - he qualifies those he calls.

Jesus was searching for the right kind of material; something which he could work with. Today the holy Spirit is searching for a landing site in our lives. Devotion, humility, and weakness are three landing sites that he needs in your life.

CHAPTER 2 - Jesus promised that he would send a replacement

When the end of Jesus' life here on earth was closing in, he started teaching more and more about the Holy Spirit. At one point he told his disciples: *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."*² Jesus had walked with the disciples for nearly three years. He had shown them how he did things so that they would be able to do the same; they would become replicas of him. We see that clearly in the beginning of the Book of Acts, when Peter and John is standing before the Sanhedrin. The priests could not understand that uneducated ordinary people had such authority, boldness and miracle power, but then it says: *"Then they remembered that they had been with Jesus."* Jesus' plan was now a fact! They remembered that these two men were followers of Jesus, and now they acted like him. A bit later in the Book of Acts we see that they started being called "Christians" for the very reason that they were copies of Jesus - "they were Christ-like".

When Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit he spoke in terms of a "replacement". The Holy Spirit would replace him on a spiritual level. This is very important for us to understand. The Holy Spirit's task is to take Jesus' place on earth today; we should walk with and be led by the Holy Spirit. He has not left us as orphans - he has given us the Holy Spirit as a replacement. And he would be with them; he would even live in them. He also said that it was better for them that he left, because if he didn't go back to heaven the Father could not give us the Holy Spirit.

So for three years the disciples walked with Jesus. And Jesus prepared the disciples to follow the Holy Spirit when the time had come.

When Jesus had risen from the dead he came back to his disciples and the first thing

² John 14:18

he did was to breathe on them, saying: *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* Just as the creator breathed life into Adam’s lungs and gave him the Holy Spirit, so Jesus breathed on the disciples. Life came back to the disciples. In an instant they experienced the glorious rebirth. Now the Holy Spirit lived in them, and they would wait for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Fire would consume them - they would become the burning ones.

The replacement arrived

On the day of Pentecost they were all gathered in prayer. The adventure with Jesus would continue but had the disciples really understood what Jesus had meant? I am not so sure. When they had stopped praying the ground began to shake. The time had come. What Jesus had promised them and what had been spoken through the Prophet Joel was about to be fulfilled: *“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even in the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.”*³ God would live inside the human beings. And they would be baptized in fire.

When the fire of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, Jesus’ plan had been fulfilled. Even Jesus would have been without miracle power if it wasn’t for the Holy Spirit. But when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus his miracle ministry started. Now the same Spirit came upon these disciples and they stepped into a supernatural life together with the Holy Spirit.

A new chapter of their lives began. *“The acts of the Holy Spirit through the disciples”* - that is the Book of Acts. A people that was driven by his Spirit, led by his Spirit, burning with his Spirit. A people who even today walk this earth - the Spirit’s people -

³ Joel 2:28-29

a people on fire, beyond all denominational borders and above all labels. Look at how different the disciples were before and after the baptism in fire; they used to lock the doors, afraid of everything and everyone, but when the Holy Spirit came upon them they were bold as lions. What was the difference before and after? The baptism in the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you feel shy, insufficient, and suffer from inferiority complex? Pray that you will experience the baptism in fire, and don't give up until you have the Spirit's fire all over your life. As John Wesley said: *"I asked the Lord to set me on fire and let the people watch me burn."*

If you study revival history you can see a clear theme; burning evangelists being led by the Holy Spirit - without exceptions. The Lord has always had a people on fire. But in the last days the people of the Spirit will burn like never before. I am certain that just before Jesus returns the age of the Spirit will reach its climax. So our best days are ahead.

The Spirit took over what Jesus started. The rest is history. The Book of Acts is the book of the Holy Spirit, just as the Gospels are the books of Jesus. You can never read too much of these books. From the first outpouring of the Spirit, the disciples have been led by the Holy Spirit.

In the Book of Acts there is a unity that goes beyond congregational borders and goes above age, gender, and ethnicity. We are a people who have been born again through an amazing salvation. Now God has his own people on earth - the burning ones. A people filled with his Spirit.

What an amazing God we have; he wanted to create a family. A family with unity, much greater than any man-made bonds. Through the Holy Spirit it was possible.

When we want to create unity we often think that we first need to agree about

everything, and then we will try to become as much like one another as possible. But when the Lord creates his unity he says that we are different parts of his body. An eye cannot say to the hand: "You don't belong to this body". We are different but all attached to the same body, which is Christ. It is the differences that create the unity. Otherwise God would just have created an eye and a mouth. To me personally, denominations has been irrelevant. Ever since I got saved I have lived with people of the Spirit and I have found them in different denominations. We are one people, no matter the human labels.

The unity that Jesus speaks about in John 17 can never be created by our human efforts; only the Lord can give birth to that through his Spirit. Nor do I believe that the church needs to be united in one church or one denomination; that would just be a human solution to a human problem. Instead, let us be eager to keep the unity of the Spirit⁴, as it is written in Ephesians 4.

The Book of Acts is our history book. "The acts of the Holy Spirit through the disciples". They were always doing things they had never done before. They were led by the Spirit. And just as the Scripture says: "*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*"⁵

Today you and I write new chapters of the Book of Acts. The Spirit is not finished. Quite the contrary - the people of the Spirit constantly brings the fire to new places of the world.

He makes all things new

Jesus promised that the helper would live in us. The Father, the Son and the Holy

⁴ Ephesians 4:3

⁵ Romans 8:14

Spirit would live in us completely.

[John 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, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you **and will be in you**. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and **you in me, and I in you**.”*

[1 Corinthians 6:17](#) *“But he who is joined to the Lord becomes **one spirit with him**.”*

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#) *“Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you**, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”*

There are a number of scriptures in the Bible that emphasizes this. God lives in us. Can we truly understand that? Perhaps we won't until we reach heaven. In either case it is a mind boggling thought. Such possibilities, but also such a responsibility.

At one point a man named Nicodemus approached Jesus ⁶. He came at night when no one else was awake. He was interested in Jesus, and he started off by saying: *“We know you are from God, no one can do the signs you do unless God is with him”*. That's a clear confession from Nicodemus. But at the same time it is a little hesitant, because he came at night when no one else saw him. Perhaps he was afraid to be excluded from the Sanhedrin? Jesus' response was surprising: *“Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”*. After this he repeated himself three times in just a few verses: *“You must be born again to enter the kingdom of God”*.

⁶ John 3:1-21

Nicodemus then asked Jesus if he meant that the should go back into his mother's womb to be reborn. I don't think Nicodemus was ironic; he just wanted to know if Jesus really meant that it would happen in a human way. But Jesus said: *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* So the rebirth will happen through the Holy Spirit. In other words, it's a work of salvation by God himself.

One thing that Jesus says that really catches my attention is: *"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"* This means that all this was something that a teacher of Israel could know - perhaps Jesus meant that there are prophecies in the Old Testament that spoke about this. I believe one of the prophecies that Jesus referred to was the one in Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 36:26-28 *"**And I will give you a new heart**, and a new spirit I will put within you. **And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh** and give you a heart of flesh. **And I will put my Spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God."*

Here the Lord is prophesying that one day he will save his people with his Spirit. He says *"I will remove the heart of stone from you"*, and a little later *"I will put my Spirit within you."*

In the beginning God created Adam. He took soil from the ground. He was like a potter forming a jar. When he was finished he breathed his Spirit into him. And then it says that Adam became a living creature. Adam was made perfect, without defects. He was created in the likeness of his creator. A little later God noticed that it was not good for him to be alone, so he took a rib from Adam and created his equivalent, Eve. Together they were to rule over the fish in the sea and over all things created. Only one command was given to them: *"Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and*

evil; if you eat it you will surely die."

We know that they ate the fruit and the fall of man was a fact. But have you noticed that God said to Adam: "You shall surely die"? The way I see it Adam didn't die. At least not the way we think of death.

Eph 2:1 "And **you were dead** in the trespasses and sins."

Eph 2:5 "**Even when we were dead in our trespasses**, (God) made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved."

This means that before I got saved, God considered me dead. But what kind of death did God refer to when he spoke with Adam? I believe he meant a spiritual death. He would die on his inside. From the moment sin came into his life he got a deep dark hole on his inside. A hole that all people have had since that day. A hole of sin in us, of homelessness, of emptiness, of restlessness. There are many synonyms for this, but I believe you know what I mean.

In many different ways have we tried to fill these dark holes over the years. But it seems like the more we try to fill them, the larger the holes become. There is an emptiness in each of us, a death that only the Holy Spirit can fill. A void that is completely reserved for God. The greatest miracle we can experience is this, that the Lord moves into this large void, and he fills us with peace and we are born again. Paul summarized this so well when he wrote to the church in Corinth: "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*"⁷

Let me illustrate this with a few pictures. In the beginning God made Adam perfect. He was created to be spirit, soul and body. Adam lived in full harmony with the creator, his wife, and himself. Condemnation and inferiority complex did not exist. He lived what the Bible calls "righteous", meaning a life without sin -



⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:17

holy and perfect in the eyes of God.

God held nothing against him; he was clean. This was the divine plan for Adam's life and the entire human race. We were all supposed to live with our creator in his righteousness. But since Adam had been given a free will God also needed to give him the possibility to gain knowledge about evil. So God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. Adam and Eve chose to walk away from God's plan for humanity, and we all became sinners - spiritually dead. Ever since that day man has tried to fill that void.

The most common question that we all think about is this: "What is the meaning of life?". It doesn't matter which country I am in, they all ask the same question. If you ask different people you will get different answers. What are people in this world seeking? People living in Beverly Hills, Hollywood, are celebrities who have really been successful in life. They have cars, luxurious villas, people serving them, airplanes - everything that money can buy. They are good looking and have a good looking spouse. But the question is: Are they happy? No! Nowhere in the world do people eat as much anti depressives as they do in Hollywood. The other year the well-known comedian Robin Williams took his own life. He had it all; success, money, and a family but despite all this he died depressed and unhappy. So it does seem like that hole is big and dark in all of us, and the more money, success and glamor you add the bigger the hole gets.



Back to the question: "What is the meaning of life?"

Jesus said: "*I am the way, the truth, **and the life.***"⁸ This is the answer to the question that people from all countries through all times have asked themselves. "I am the very meaning of life". If you have found Jesus you have found life itself!

That is what we experience in salvation. To live in fellowship with the creator. To have fellowship with God - that is the meaning of life. Wherever I go I preach this message.

⁸ John 14:6

On the inside of every man and woman there's a "spiritual death" that only God himself can bring back to life. No matter how much we try we can never fill the void. In salvation we get back what was lost in the great fall. Sin and the black hole is removed and we come back to God's original plan again. We get reinstated into Genesis chapter 2 again, and like Adam we can live in fellowship with God.



Perhaps you are saying: "But Micael, I have never been born again the way you describe it". My advice to you is to go down on your knees and ask the Holy Spirit give birth you you again, and give you the Holy Spirit as a gift. Pray this prayer with me:

"Jesus, I'm coming to you now. I need you as my savior and Lord in my life. I ask you to give birth to me again according to your Scripture. Make me a new creation. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If you prayed this prayer in faith and sincerity he has promised to save you.

*"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*⁹

Remember, "everyone" includes you, whoever you are, whatever you have done in your life. The Lord's word is faithful. If you prayed this prayer I'm sure you will experience the same salvation miracle as I and millions of others have experience.

The Sanctifier came

Another important task that the Holy Spirit has is to form Christ's character in us. The

⁹ Acts 2:21

Holy Spirit is called HOLY Spirit. That's because he is pure, stainless, blameless, high, holy, the holiest of holy. There is no genuine sanctification without the Holy Spirit. Sanctification must come from our inside, where the Lord brings out a desire to be holy and pure. If this doesn't happen all we're left with is religion. He brings out a desire to be holy on our inside.

*Ez 36:26-28 "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.** You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God."*

Let's read Ezekiel's prophesy again: **"I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."** Who will do this on our inside? The Lord himself! How? Through his Spirit! When the Lord lives within us he wants to clean the house from all old idols. He will bring out a desire in us to be holy. That is why the Bible says that God works in us, both to will and to work.¹⁰

When God does his work he begins on the inside. When we want to do our religious deeds we begin on the outside. We stop smoking, for instance, because Christians do not smoke. We stop swearing because if you go to church you don't curse - and so on. Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as the "Helper"¹¹ who would help us in and through it all. Jesus said that he would not leave us as orphans but he would send the Holy Spirit to us. One thing that the Holy Spirit would do was to convict of sin¹². I personally remember early after my salvation that the Lord started dealing with things on my

¹⁰ Philippians 2:13

¹¹ John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7

¹² John 16:8

inside; things that were not pure, hidden thoughts, wrong motives, selfishness and so on. I remember how he would often whisper on my inside: *"Yes, perhaps others do this, but you don't."* Somehow I understood that my salvation and my sanctification was tailor made just for me. Because of that I have been very careful not to transfer my sanctification onto someone else. And not to let my sanctification measure other people's sanctification. Just as the tailor customizes the clothes for the person who will wear them, so the Lord customizes his salvation to whomever it is for.

To the church in Thessaloniki, Paul wrote in the end of his first letter:

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ***"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."***

Sanctification is the Lord's work on the inside. Of course we need to respond when the Holy Spirit wants to correct us. It doesn't happen automatically but is a cooperation between myself and the Holy Spirit. But to try to live in sanctification with the Holy Spirit is like washing a pig; you will go back to the dirt as soon as you can.

CHAPTER 3 - Our new identity in the Spirit

Can you imagine that we've been given a brand new life? An exciting life together with God here on earth. Before we lived in a constant chase for the wind. A wind we would never catch. Now we walk with the creator of the universe, and not only that: The creator of the universe lives within us.

To me the Christian life has always been exciting and in full speed. Life with the Holy Spirit has been an adventure I never thought I would experience. I have travelled to all the continents of the world and preached to hundreds of thousands of people, I've been on television that has been aired all over the world, I've met politicians, ministers and celebrities, I have baptised people in rivers and lakes, I have seen God perform miracles in thousands of people's lives. Yes, it has truly been an adventure. Some people believe that Christians have the most boring lives. I personally met life itself when I got saved. He gave me a life worth living. A life that's worth to go all in for - Jesus Christ, the son of God.

I remember receiving a vision from the Lord as I was applying for a Bible School. I saw my hand on the door knob and heard a voice from heaven saying: "Here begins your adventure". It was so powerful. I didn't know what was awaiting, but I understood one thing: It would be an adventure.

As I'm looking back at my years as a missionary I have so many memories. I remember a few years ago when I was on a domestic flight in India. Sitting beside me on the plane was a celebrity, only I did not know who he was. He was very polite and people came up to him to take "selfies". I was sitting there with no clue of who that man was, and I was a little too embarrassed to ask him about it. When we had landed I finally had to ask another passenger who that man was. He looked at me with big eyes and said: "*Don't you know who he is? That is A.P.J Abdul Kalam - the former president of India!*" Perhaps it was better that I didn't know or else I may not have been as relaxed

with him. It's a funny anecdote anyway.

Now that we are born again by the Spirit of God we are supposed to live by the Spirit and follow the Spirit. Paul spoke of this to the church in Corinth:

[1 Corinthians 2:10-16](#) *"These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, **but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. **The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.** The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

Through the new creation we have been given a new ability - a spiritual ability. We have received God's Spirit so that we are able to know what God has given us. We no longer live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Before this happened we lived as unspiritual people and our assessments were made in the soul. Through salvation our spiritual eyes opened up to a new world and a new dimension. I often illustrate this with a parable. Imagine a man who was born blind. His assessment of the world is based on what he has; scent, feeling, and hearing. What he cannot understand or assess is the visible, like colors. If you would try to explain to him how a yellow color is different from red you've got some problems. He would not have the ability to distinguish one color from the other because he has never seen what a color is. But if he would get his sight back through a miracle then his eyes would suddenly be opened up to a whole new world! Now colors would be a reality

and he would see the differences in nuances. The verse we just read about the spiritual and the unspiritual people describes exactly this. Those who have had their spiritual eyes opened will see things that they try to explain in a spiritual way but to the unspiritual people it will be foolish. Then Paul ends the text with these words: *“But we have the mind of Christ.”* We are now living with a new dimension in life - through the Spirit. That is why people who are not saved think our church language sometimes sounds a bit strange. Like when we try to explain our salvation by saying “I have been born again”, or “I have met Jesus”, and so on. We try to use spiritual imagery for people who lack that dimension.

So we now have the mind of Christ, and the same supernatural abilities that Jesus himself had. Jesus lived with the Spirit as his compass. He did not let the circumstances dictate his life. He was led by the Spirit.

Jesus needed the Holy Spirit for ministry

We read about Jesus’ ministry on earth in the gospels. His ministry lasted for a little over three years. In the gospels of Matthew and Luke we find just a little bit about Jesus’ life on earth before his ministry years. He grew up on Nazareth and was trained to become a carpenter. That was the natural choice since his dad Joseph was a carpenter. What else he did during those years we don’t really know; the Bible doesn’t say much about it. People referred to him as the son of Joseph and Mary¹³. God himself lived as a human being with human circumstances and human trials for 30 years. As he entered his thirties it was time for him to step into ministry. He went to the river Jordan where John the Baptist had a revival. It is written that all of Israel came out to listen to him. In that river Jesus is baptized and the Spirit came upon him, and he began his ministry. Now he received the miracle power, now he healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out evil spirits and preached in the power and fire of the Holy Spirit.

¹³ John 6:42, Luke 4:22

Baptism in the Holy Spirit made all the difference.

The disciples needed the Holy Spirit for ministry

The Lord did the same thing with his disciples. After Jesus' death on the cross they got one command: *"But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*¹⁴ In the beginning of the Book of Acts Jesus reminded them of his promise: *"And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'"*¹⁵ Then the fire fell on everyone who had gathered in the upper room. And what a difference, from being locked inside, scared to go out, they now went out and preached in the fire of the Spirit. No fear remained. Peter stepped up and preached and on the first meeting 3000 people get saved and baptized. Then the Spirit took these uneducated men on the adventure that we read about in the Book of Acts.

If both Jesus and the disciples needed the baptism in the Holy Spirit, how could we believe that we could ever fulfil our race without that same power? What we need is a genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit - nothing else.

In the Old Testament only a few people got the Spirit over their lives. Kings, prophets, and priests. They got a supernatural ability to do ministry. They were anointed by God. In the New Testament the Lord has poured out his Spirit over all people:

Acts 2:17-18 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and

¹⁴ Luke 24:49

¹⁵ Acts 1:4-5

female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

Since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been poured out over God's people. And from that moment the Lord has given his green light for everyone who wants to receive the Holy Spirit. When you are at a stop light and it turns green you don't wait, do you? If you have a fast car you give full speed. So hit full speed, my friend, because on the day of Pentecost 2000 years ago, the Lord gave his green light.

We often hear people say that we should "Wait for the Spirit". People who think like this will stay in their sofas. Smith Wigglesworth said: *"If the Spirit doesn't move, then I will move the Spirit"*, meaning that it was his responsibility to be ignited by God's fire.

So what does the Holy Spirit do? He does all the things that we cannot do. Miracles, convinces us of sin, gives us love for our fellow man, he leads us, he corrects us, he trains us - he does everything Jesus would have done if he still lived on earth today. The Holy Spirit has taken Jesus' place on earth.

CHAPTER 4 - How can you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?

We are all created to have a relationship with our creator. In the beginning God created man in his image. That means that we look like God. In what way? We are created with a body that has eyes, ears, nose, and heart. We have also been given a free will; he has given us the right to choose.

Some think that God is deaf, blind and lacks a heart. God is not deaf; his hearing is perfect. Many people cry out to God but they never get answers to their prayers. Perhaps that is because they have not understood that God has a name? If you want my attention you should call out my name. If you would say *"Bruno!"* to me I would probably not answer to it. Why? Because my name is Micael. If you would instead cry out *"Micael!"* when I am nearby, I would immediately respond and say *"Yes, what do you want?"*

God has given us the name that is above all other names, and each and every one that calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. I encourage everyone who have not yet prayed to Jesus to try it, because the Lord has a name.

So we are called to live in fellowship with the creator. We speak to him and he listens, he speaks to us and we listen. That is how all communication works.

Quite often I meet people who say that they cannot hear God speak. I usually say to them: *"You have probably heard God speak many, many times but the problem might be that you don't understand that he has spoken?"*

Everything has the ability to speak. Even a nice cake on the coffee shop has the ability to cry out with a loud voice: *"Take me! Eat me!"* and you follow the voice (but probably it's you speaking to yourself).

What I want to say is that there is a constant conversation going on in our heads. I don't know if it's just me that created "imaginary wars" in my head. I create a dialogue with myself. But often in those dialogues a certain word comes up. A word that shows a way out. Many times it is the Lord speaking to me. So what we really need is an ability to distinguish, so that we know which voice is speaking.

1 Samuel 3:1-10 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the **word of the Lord was rare in those days**; there was no frequent vision. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said,

"Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."

Samuel was born in a time when prophetic visions and words of the Lord were not common. The people of Israel slept spiritually like Sleeping Beauty. Many churches today are in a similar condition. They may have good looking and professional Sunday services, but still the gifts of the Spirit are not there. It is human, through and through. We're always in danger when we replace the most central parts of Christian life - the spiritual - with surrogate spirituality that is focusing on the right kind of emotions.

I think many churches around the western world are suffering from this now, but I am just as certain that it's just a matter of time before the gifts and the power of the Spirit is back, just like in the old days.

In times of spiritual sterility it's also difficult to distinguish the Lord's voice, just as it was for Samuel. You think what's from the soul comes from the Spirit, like Samuel thought the Lord's voice was from Eli.

Samuel was a young boy who got the privilege of growing up in the temple. His priest was named Eli. Now the Lord wanted to speak to Samuel. Samuel immediately went to Eli and said: *"Here I am, what do you want?"*

Samuel was not able to distinguish a human voice from the Lord's. But he did hear the voice - no doubt about that. Perhaps it's the same with you? Perhaps you have thought the Lord's voice was a human voice or maybe just "your own thoughts". For Samuel this does not just happen once or twice, but three times! Eventually even Eli realizes that it is the Lord who wants to speak to Samuel. Now Samuel learns to distinguish the Lord's voice from other voices.

There are people whose hobby is to look at birds. They travel the whole world to spot

different birds, they study what they eat, what they sound like and what they look like. They know everything about birds. If you and I, who might not be quite as knowledgeable about birds, would join an ornithologist into the woods we would hear a bunch of different birds. But it would be very difficult to distinguish which bird sounds like this and which bird sounds like that. The birdwatcher would however immediately tell us about all the birds he hears. He would describe their looks, what they eat and a bunch of other characteristics. What is the difference between a professional birdwatcher and an amateur like you and me? He has learnt how to distinguish the different sounds of birds. I don't know how much you know about birds, but I couldn't even tell the difference between a seagull and a crow!

Back to Samuel. He grows up to become one of the most important prophets in the Old Testament. He becomes a spokesman between the people and the Lord. We need many prophets to become spokesmen today. The prophets have silenced and words of the Lord are not common.

At one point Jesus spoke in parables, saying he is the good shepherd and we are his lambs.

*John 10:1-5 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice**. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for **they do not know the voice of strangers**."*

Two voices: The good shepherd and a stranger. Jesus says that the sheep will follow him because they know his voice, but if there's a stranger they will not follow him. Instead they'll run away because they don't know the voice.

If I would tell my daughter, “Saga, come to daddy”, then she’d come right away. She knows my voice. She feels safe because she knows who I am. But if someone else would come and claim to be her dad she would immediately know the difference, both by the way I speak but also by the voice. She knows her dad’s voice. She can distinguish who is speaking. It’s the same with us. Jesus said: “My sheep follow me because they know my voice”.

I am often asked: How can we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit? Or how do you distinguish between all the voices around us?

1. The Lord always speaks through his word

Is it really that simple, you might ask? Yes, it is that simple. Every time we open up his Word we read his spoken word. It is his will in writing. It is the same as when we write our will, describing how we want things to be when we have died. Through all times people can read what I wanted with what was mine. It can never change; it remains forever.

This means that all voices and words should be tested with the Scripture. Everything must be in line with the Lord’s revealed will in the Scripture.

When I got saved I also met with his word. His word spoke right into my situation.

Since then I have thought of myself as a “preacher of the Word”. And you’ll never hear me just testifying about cool experiences; I will always share the Word of God.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 “**All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

When you read your Bible you should always pray that he will speak into your situation and reveal the Scripture. Then he wants to speak and correct, encourage, restore, and

shape you so that you can grow.

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit: *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your **remembrance all that I have said to you.**”*¹⁶

So one of the jobs that the Holy Spirit has is to *“remind us of all that Jesus has said”*. When we read the Gospels we read what Jesus said, and then we know that the Holy Spirit will tell us the same thing. He will remind us of what he has already said in his word.

This remains unchanged through all times. God doesn't change, the Scripture doesn't change - his word remains. Human opinions and thoughts come from emotions and times. But the Lord remains one with his word.

2. The Lord speaks through his peace

When I was still not saved I had to find a substitute for peace. I found it in drugs, others find it in relationships, hobbies, or through materialism. But all this lasts only for a moment. The first thing that happened after I got saved was that I became calm on my inside - we call it peace. I got peace with God, peace with myself and I got peace with people.

In most of the epistles the author begins with the words “Peace be with you”. In many churches we greet each other with words of peace. Still today the Jewish people greet each other with the word “Shalom”, which means peace.

Why?

Because God IS peace and when he speaks peace will come no matter how chaotic the situation is. There is a heavenly tune of peace when the Lord speaks; it is like

¹⁶ John 14:26

cotton around the soul.

Let me give you a good example from my life of when I listened to the peace on the inside, and not on the much different situation on the outside.

When my wife and I started seeing each other we immediately started to seek God for a joint vision and a place where the Lord could use us. We fasted and prayed for a long time. After a while we got a call from a very well-known pastor who wanted to speak with us. We were excited and convinced that the Lord wanted to show us where he wanted us to serve him. So we went to meet him. It was the first time I met him; I had heard his teaching and he was a very well-known pastor in this country.

Then he asked if we wanted to serve in his church. On the inside I just wanted to scream "YEEEEEEES!!" but being the well-trained Christian that I am, I calmly said "*I will pray about it*". When we had left his office both my wife and I celebrated. We were convinced that the Lord had prepared this way for us. We saw the platform, and the shortcut to immediate success in God's kingdom. It was like a nicely set table from the Lord. I immediately called my closest friends and told them about it. They all congratulated me and said "*This is the Lord leading you.*"

After a couple of days I realized that I had no peace about this. It all looked good but on the inside a distress was creeping up on me. I was convinced that it was an attack from Satan. So I prayed even more but the more I prayed the more distress I felt. The same thing happened with my wife.

In the end we just had to realize that this offer was not for us; God had something else in store for us. We called the pastor up and thanked him for the nice offer, but that God had not sanctioned it with his peace. He blessed us and didn't hold it against us; on the contrary he was glad that we followed our heart and our inner peace. We continued to pray for our future and a different city popped up in my heart. When I

prayed about it the peace and the joy came! The same thing happened with my wife. She too got the city in her heart and there was no doubt of where we were going. God called us to Gävle - a semi-big city in Sweden. There were no promises of platforms, no salary - nothing. On my inside I heard the Holy Spirit whisper: *"Go to the streets and preach, I will be with you."* I also got a Scripture that really struck my spirit. I just knew that I knew that this was the plan God had for us. We gave us to the city to 150%, we loved it, we loved serving there. For about seven years we were "street evangelists". That was the platform that we received. Week after week, year after year, we were faithful.

In hindsight I believe the Lord wanted us to work "from the bottom" in his kingdom, and learn to be pioneers and servants. God did not want to give us a shortcut to success. Today I am so grateful for the journey we've been on. It makes me really humble. Just myself, my wife, and the Lord know the price we've paid. And he sees our faithful hearts.

As we look back on this and see the results we would never trade it for anything. Through our campaigns we have reached hundreds of thousands of people, we have planted ministries (Bible Schools, a missions organization, churches) on many places across the globe. Through my wife's television ministry we have also reached the whole earth every week, and it's really difficult to say how many we reach.

If we had chosen to listen with our human ears we would for sure have taken the other route with prepared platforms. Things would have moved so much faster there. But we follow the peace. He is our peace and he will always sanction with his peace when he speaks.

On other occasions when I have felt distress instead of peace and still chosen to do it, and boy has it been painful. It can be all kinds of things; sending people out into ministry to preach the "wrong" message at the "wrong time". I think we've all been there. Afterwards it feels as though you've been soaked in mud. It is a journey to learn

to listen to the peace, and over the years you become more and more sensitive.

This is extra important if you want to go into ministry and learn this. You will need to make decisions that definitely does not look good from a human point of view. People will say you are taking too big risks or that you don't hear the voice of God, simply because you don't do things that they want you to do.

When the Lord speaks he never tells you things you can see in the physical realm. He will put you in a situation where you are forced to believe in him more than in yourself. People will sow disbelief about the things you face. But as a leader you should follow the peace and not the fear of man.

Perhaps you are in such a situation right now, when your family, pastor, or friends have misunderstood you. But on the inside you feel a peace for the decision you have made. Then I have a word for you: *The Lord is with you - follow your peace!*

3. The Lord speaks through dreams and visions

The well-known South Korean pastor David Yonggi Cho has said: *"The language of the Holy Spirit is dreams and visions"*. When he started his church back in the fifties in South Korea they were only eight people. Today he has a church of over one million members and he has affected the entire Christian world. Few people have had such an impact in modern time as he has.

I don't know if you've ever thought of how many scriptures that show how God speaks through dreams and visions? Here is what I think: When God wants to give a specific calling or an assignment, he will do it through a specific dream and vision. Let me give you a few scriptures to show you what I mean. Below you'll see scriptures that show how clear it is that the Lord visits people at night and speaks to them. I encourage you to make your own bible study based on these scriptures:

[Joel 2:28](#) *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;*

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, **your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.**"

Numbers 12:6 And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; **I speak with him in a dream.**"

Job 33:14-16 "For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. **In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men**, while they slumber on their beds, then he opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings..."

Genesis 20:3 "**But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night** and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."

Genesis 28:12-13, 16 "**And he dreamed**, and behold, there was a ladder[a] set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it[b] and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring [...] **Then Jacob awoke from his sleep** and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it."

Genesis 31:10-13 "In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and **saw in a dream** that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. **Then the angel of God said to me in the dream**, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'"

Genesis 31:22-29 *When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. **But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him,** “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.” And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm. **But the God of your father spoke to me last** night, saying, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’*

Genesis 46:2-4 *And **God spoke to Israel in visions of the night** and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes.”*

1 King 3:5-15 ***At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night,** and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an*

understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." **And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream.**"

[Matthew 1:18-24](#) "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream**, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). **When Joseph woke from sleep**, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife."

[Matthew 2:12-13, 19-22](#) And **being warned in a dream** not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Now when they had departed, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream** and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to

search for the child, to destroy him." [...] But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and **being warned in a dream** he withdrew to the district of Galilee."

Matthew 27:19 "Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for **I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.**"

If you want to find a Biblical doctrine you always need multiple scriptures that support it. To just find a single verse and build a doctrine upon is not a good way to go. The Psalmist says: "*The sum of your word is truth*".¹⁷

It is undeniably so that more than one verse in the Bible tells us about how God spoke to people through dreams at night. Without a doubt "dreams and visions" is the language of the Holy Spirit.

When you talk about dreams it's impossible not to mention a few words about Joseph. He was called "the dreamer" by his brothers - a nick-name they gave him because he had received some dreams from the Lord.

The Bible tells us that Joseph got two different dreams from the Lord. In the first one he was out binding sheaves in the field, and he afterwards he told his brothers about the dream: "*Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to*

¹⁷ Psalm 119:160

my sheaf." His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."¹⁸

A night or so later he got another dream. This time he saw twelve stars and the sun and the moon bend down before him. Again he shared his dream with his family. Now even his father thought he had gone too far.

When it comes to Joseph's dreams we first need to establish that it was not his own dreams; it was the Lord's dreams revealed in Joseph. There's a big difference between our daydreams and the Lord's dreams for our lives. When Joseph gets these dreams from the Lord he is hated by his brothers. They say: "So you mean that you would be our king and rule over us?"

We need to understand that not everyone will appreciate the dreams we get from the Lord. Even our own friends and family can turn their back on us. A little later we read that Joseph was visiting his brothers while they were out watching the sheep. They saw him coming from a great distance and they told each other: "*Here comes this **dreamer**. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.*"¹⁹

Notice that it is really the dreams that they hate; Joseph is not the object for their hatred. To any cost the brothers wanted to kill the dream so that they would not have to bow down before Joseph one day. They planned to kill him but last minute they came up with the idea of selling him as a slave to Egypt. And so the problem with the dream was solved. But what they didn't know was that the dream would live on in

¹⁸ Gen 37:7-8

¹⁹ Gen37:18-20

Joseph's heart. He was convinced that what the Lord had shown him would happen. Sooner or later it would happen.

If or when you get a dream about God's calling for your life, you too should expect attacks from all directions. It's a little bit like in American football or rugby. You can be small and weak and be a player without any major problems at all. But as soon as you get the ball you will face resistance! Now everyone wants to take the ball from you.

You must never forget: It is not you that they hate - it is what God has given you. That is what the enemy wants to take from you.

Perhaps you will also be accused of being prideful and believe more in yourself than they do. Joseph's brothers thought that he thought of himself as more important than them.

When Joseph came to Egypt he was sold as a slave to Potiphar. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh. God's hand rested upon Joseph and Potiphar let him oversee his entire home. But Potiphar's wife was attracted to Joseph. It says that Joseph was "*handsome in form and appearance*"²⁰. Surely she was also attracted to his purity. Every day she would flirt with him. But Joseph feared the Lord and was humble about the task that Potiphar had given him. One day when all other servants were away and only Potiphar's wife and Joseph were in the house, she demanded that he would sleep with her. Joseph refused and ran away, and while doing so he dropped his garment. Potiphar's wife lost her patience and accused him of attempted rape. Joseph was arrested and put in prison.

So Joseph was a convicted rapist in Egypt. A rapist is always the lowest creature in prison. That's how it is in Sweden today, and I'm sure it was the same back then. In that situation it would be easy to think that it's all over for him. But the dream was still alive

²⁰ 1 Mos 39:6

on his inside. I think it carried him through all suffering and hardship.

Even in prison the Lord's favor remained in his life. He got promoted to manager of the interns. Some time passed and two of Pharaoh's servants, a baker and a cupbearer, were imprisoned with him. At night they both had dreams, and Joseph, in whom God's spirit lived, was able to interpret them. Joseph told the cupbearer that he would be released and get his job back, and Joseph asked him to remember him before Pharaoh. Some time later Pharaoh got two dreams.²¹ Who was it that was speaking to him? The Lord! And Pharaoh was convinced that it was a vision from the creator. He gathered all his magicians and wise men but no one could interpret the dreams for him. Then the cupbearer remembered Joseph. When Pharaoh heard this he immediately ordered for Joseph to come visit him. Pharaoh told Joseph what he had dreamt, and Joseph told him what it meant. There would be seven good years with big crops, and then there would be seven difficult years of famine that would eat all that had been gathered. Immediately when Pharaoh heard this he cried out: *"Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"*²² And from being the lowest creature in Egypt he was placed as the second man in the entire nation! Such incredible redemption! My guess is that the entire process took an hour, maybe even less. A wonderful intervention by God. Sometimes we think that nothing is happening, particularly when it feels as though we are stuck in a prison and there seems to be no way out. But if the Lord has given us his dreams, nothing can take it away from us! Remember that, if you are carrying his dreams and think that nothing is happening. In the right time God sent his son. Everything has its own time, says the Bible. If the Lord has given you a dream - wait for it. The Lord's plans will come true in your life.

So Joseph's life was restored. The Lord's favor was still upon him. Joseph began administer the work of collecting crops. When seven years had gone the seven bad

²¹ Gen 41

²² Gen 41:38

years followed, just as the Lord had shown Pharaoh. There was a famine all over the world. Even in Israel where Joseph's family lived. They heard the rumor that in Egypt they had seed that you could buy, and so they went. When Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt he was 17 years old. Now he was at least 37 years old; Genesis tells us that he was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, and the seven good years had passed. That means that for more than 20 years the dream still lived in Joseph's heart. And now it would be fulfilled; the time had come when the brothers' sheaves would bow down before him.

Gen 42:6 *"Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and **bowed themselves before him** with their faces to the ground."*

Every single person who has had an impact on the Christian history all have one thing in common: They had God-given dreams for their lives and for their time. The dream has carried them. The dream has made it possible. That is why the Lord speaks through dreams.

If you still have not received a God-given dream for your life I encourage you to pray to the Lord about this. In Jeremiah 33:3 the Lord says: *"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."*

There are great and hidden things that the Lord wanted to share with Jeremiah. But that verse can also be applied to your own life. If you want dreams you need to call! Call is something entirely different than just a small prayer. There is something desperate about calling. If I was about to crash with my car I would not silently whisper "Jeeeeeessssuuuussss". Not at all - I would call out at the top of my lungs: "JESUS!! JESUS!! JESUS!!" I would be desperate for help, desperate for an answer to my prayer.

If you are content with your life and you have no plans to serve the Lord you do not need to pray that prayer. But if you are desperate to find out God's dream for your life, start calling and do not stop until you have seen into the future! Believe me, you will never regret this. It is worth it, even through attacks and misunderstandings.

I have been careful to write down visions, words, dreams and revelations that I have received from the Lord.

Hab 2:2-3 *And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay."*

My wife and I have made a visions document together. In it we find all word from the Lord and all the things that the Lord has spoken to us. Every now and then we go back to remind ourselves of what he has said. It has strengthened us. We should know that it may take a long time before it is fulfilled. God's time is not our time. We always think that he is too late. But *"if it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay."*

So whenever you hear the Lord speak, write it down so that it can easily be read. When you receive a vision or a dream from the Lord, then it will guide you. You will get a goal in your life. Unfortunately I too often meet Christians who have no clear goal with their lives.

Proverbs 29:18 *"Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law."*

The words "prophetic vision" means "a visible goal" or "a vision". And the Bible says that people will cast off restraints and be lost. That's the way it is in life, isn't it? If you have no goals you are not going anywhere. But with a clear goal you will set up a

strategy of how to get there.

I believe that the Lord will fulfill his work, but he will prepare you for the task. If he calls you to preach he will surely take you to a Bible school where you will get to know him and his word. If you are not living in the vision you are definitely in a time of preparing for it. I am enormously grateful for the years of preparation I got. In hindsight, I would not want to be without it.

As children we all had dreams. We wanted to become something, we wanted to make an impact in our time. Some wanted to be rock stars, others doctors - we all had a dream. We dared to dream and no dreams were too big for our childish hearts. Then the dreams died. Perhaps someone took the dream from you? Or perhaps you gave up on the dream. Having a dream for your life means having a goal, meaning and a plan for it. We all need to live with a goal - it gives our lives a meaning.

When we got saved we were children anew - God's children. Isn't it interesting that as soon as we got saved we started to dream again? We started dreaming about building a better world. Some wanted to give their lives for the children of the world, others wanted to become evangelists and go to the ends of the earth. Suddenly we were filled with dreams of spreading goodness, grace, and love. Of course that all comes from our new nature. God is good and there is no darkness in him, and his children all carry his DNA.

I know the big dreams I had (and still have) - I wanted to make an impact on the entire world. I wanted to see thousands of people being saved. Still today my dream lives on. And I have dared to dream big, because I believe in a big God.

Unfortunately this is not always the case. Many dreams are never fulfilled. I remember an elderly woman in a church where I served. She told me that when she was a teenager she had had a strong calling to go to China. But so many things came in the

way and now she was closing in on 80 and the dream had never been fulfilled. It hurt when she told me, and even today when I think about it. What made her stay? Why did she never pursue the dream the the Lord had given her? It could be many things. Comfort, fear, and disobedience to name a few. But most likely she simply didn't want to leave her comfort zone.

Step out of your comfort zone

I think a lot of people don't want to leave their "comfort zone". What then is a comfort zone? It is the mental area where we feel safe and in control of a situation. It is where we feel comfortable and at ease. We are in control of our lives and we know how we should act in most circumstances. Perhaps you have your driver's license? Do you remember that first time when you went out to drive a car? You were nervous and excited. You were thrown into a brand new world. You left your comfort zone and stepped into a new adventure.

We constantly create new comfort zones in our lives, in our homes, in our church, at work or around our hobbies. Let me give you an example: How many of you have a "fixed spot" in church or the lunch room at work? You sit on the same chair every time. You have created a comfort zone. If someone would take your seat it would bug you. We tend to get stuck in invisible walls that almost become physical in the real world. They hinder us from moving on. We walk around in a mentality of "*you know what you have but you don't know what you'll get*" and because of that you don't want to leave the zone you've built up.

When you become a follower of Jesus he will challenge us to leave our comfort zone. It is impossible to keep living in the comfort zone together with Jesus!

It is impossible to keep living in the comfort zone with Jesus!

Just look at the disciples. Before the Holy Spirit came they locked the doors *“for fear of the Jews”* (John 20:19). But look at the difference when the Holy Spirit took over. They went out and boldly preached the Gospel to all people. The Holy Spirit took them out of their comfort zone and brought them out on an adventure. An adventure that he wants you and me to embark on as well.

To leave the comfort zone we need to step into boldness. Hebrews 10:35 *“do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward”*. That means that we could actually throw away our confidence. We can lose our boldness. But it also means that we can bring it back and use it! And if we do, the Bible promises us a great reward, a big profit, or a lot of fruit in our lives. If you live in confidence you will become free, bold, and hot. That is the temperament of the new creation. Boldness in the Holy Spirit is what will challenge our comfort zone.

When Joshua was about to take the land he was commanded to be bold, not just ones but the Lord emphasized: *“Have I not commanded you to be strong and bold?”* Joshua needed to leave the comfort zone of the desert in order to take the land in faith. It's the same way with you. If the dreams that the Lord has given you are to be fulfilled you need to step out of your comfort zone.

Dreams must be a big part of our lives. It is the dreams that will guide you through life. When we stop dreaming we stop living. There are scientific research that show that you will live a shorter life if you don't live for a dream and a goal.

In Germany they conducted a test on mice. They gave half the mice something to be entertained with, while the other half had nothing to do. The mice who lived with entertainment lived six years longer (mouse years, of course). At the end of our lives

we will regret the chances we never took. And I want to be hungry for more adventures until the day I come home. Life with Jesus is an adventure. Look at the Book of Acts; not one of the disciples stayed in their comfort zone.

In closing I would like to challenge you with these questions:

- When was the last time you allowed yourself to dream?
- How long has it been since you tried something new?
- What kind of comfort zones do you need to conquer?
- Is it not time for you to be challenged in your faith?
- Is it not time for you to keep dreaming?

As the Lord told me many years ago: *"The life you have today, you chose yesterday. Because of that you know what you'll get tomorrow."*

What kind of tomorrow do you want? It's up to you. You can stay in your comfort zone, or you can choose to walk toward the goal of your dreams.

4. The Lord speaks in prayer and stillness

The Lord came to Adam in the evening. When the day's work was over and the calm would settle the Lord showed up. I love these words. Is there anything more wonderful than a lukewarm evening wind? I have had the privilege of going to Sri Lanka many times. I often spend some time at the coast. From time to time I go to one of the restaurants close to the ocean for dinner. The temperature is perfect, the waves roll onto the shore and then that lukewarm evening wind comes. I'd like to believe that is how the Lord showed up to spend time with Adam.

Earlier we read that the Lord speaks at night, in our sleep. When we sleep we still our soul. During the stressful everyday life, with all our troubles, it is simply more difficult

for the Lord to reach our inner beings.

Is 50:4 "He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed".

One thing that that has struck me is how present the Lord is early mornings when I've just woken up. Often in combination with the reading of his word. It is not rare that something pops up from the Bible with a prophetic message. It's probably the same principle here; that the soul is well-rested, and we can more easily hear the Holy Spirit whispering on our inside. I will come back to this in a later chapter.

5.The Lord speaks in the naturally supernatural

Another thing that we may miss in our everyday life is that the Lord also speaks in the naturally supernatural. Let me explain.

*Acts 10:9-14 The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, **Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat**, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "**Rise, Peter; kill and eat.**" But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."*

The Apostles had specific times dedicated for prayer. It was lunch prayer and it says that Peter was hungry and wanted something to eat. In that moment he saw a vision. It was the Lord who wanted to speak with him. I don't know if you've ever wondered why the Lord gave him a bunch of animals that were unclean according to the law? He

wanted to reach Peter in a relevant way. The Lord wanted to speak so that Peter could understand in the natural. Peter was hungry. The Lord gave a vision about food. So he spoke in the natural in a supernatural way. He used Peter's every day life to speak. I definitely don't believe it was a coincident that Peter was hungry.

This vision came about 10 years after Jesus left the earth. And still the Apostles had not understood that they were called to go to all people. They still lived under the law. Kosher was the only food Peter would eat. But the most important part of the vision was his attitude toward the gentiles. He had never visited a gentile home or even eaten with them! This was despite Jesus' very clear instructions that the Gospel should be preached to all people. It had become a religious stronghold to the disciples, and the Lord had to speak through a vision.

When he came down from the roof he was still thinking about the meaning of the vision. Someone knocked on the door and two men from Cornelius' house were standing there. They explained that their lord had an angelic visitation and that they had been told to go find Peter. Then the Holy Spirit said to Peter: "Go and accompany them without hesitation".²³

So Peter went to Cornelius and for the first time in his life he entered a gentile's home. Something in his life was broken. And then he exclaimed: "*I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism.*"²⁴ Finally the Gospel was made available for us gentiles - it took the disciples more than ten years to understand.

I believe Christians like you and I can also get stuck in religious patterns that keep us from reaching the gentiles. Perhaps there are places that we don't visit because they feel taboo. But if the Lord calls us then we should follow the Spirit, just as Peter did:

²³ Acts 10:20

²⁴ Acts 10:34

"Go without hesitation".

Perhaps there's an adventure awaiting anyone who dares to brake free from the norm Christianity - I'd like to think so. At times I have been in situations where I've thought *"Can I really be here? Can I be with these people?"* But on my inside I've heard: *"Don't worry - I am with you. Go without hesitation."*

Jesus was amongst the sinners, and that never made him a sinner. We are called to the world to transform it. We can live life in our full potential of holiness in the midst of decadence.

Let me give you an example from the Bible, where the Lord spoke in the naturally supernatural:

Jer 1:11-14 *And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "**Jeremiah, what do you see?**" And I said, "**I see an almond branch.**" Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it." The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, "**What do you see?**" And I said, "**I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.**" Then the Lord said to me, "Out of the north disaster[b] shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land.*

In Jeremiah's everyday life came a voice: "What do you see?" Jeremiah immediately answered, telling the voice that he was looking at an almond branch. And from this the Lord spoke. In the everyday life the Lord found a way to speak to Jeremiah. I don't know how many times this has happened to me. They are uncountable. The Lord has used a very natural event from my everyday life to speak into my life.

Several years ago I had a sermon series about fishing men - the best kind of fishing. I got all my thoughts and ideas when I was out fishing on a lake. I wrote them all down. And after a while I realized that it was indeed the Lord who had spoken into my

situation. Still today I preach what I received on that occasion.

I am convinced that you have heard the Lord's voice in your everyday life, in a naturally supernatural way. You may not have understood that it was the Lord who spoke; perhaps you thought it was merely your own thoughts.

CHAPTER 5 - The Spirit and the gifts

Mark 16:15-20 *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

We call this "The Great Commission". In Swedish it's translated "The call to mission". Our mission is to bring the Gospel to the very ends of the earth. We need to do it together as God's church. But we also need to do it in the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Without him we can do nothing.

Jesus said: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*²⁵. We need to understand that without the toolbox of the Holy spirit we will not be able to complete the mission. Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit and his gifts, and that is our toolbox.

If we bring our car to a car shop, the mechanic will need tools to carry out his job; he'll need wrenches, screwdrivers, hammers, and so on. With all those tools things will go so much easier, and he'll get a better result in a shorter time. What if he lacked the screwdriver and had to remove a bolt with his bare hands? It would be impossible. That's the way it is for us. We have spiritual gifts that will enable us to do our job in an

²⁵ Acts 1:8

easy way; or rather we will solve impossible things in a supernatural way.

The tools are not made just to be looked at and admired, they are made to be used. What if you would come to the car shop and the mechanic would just stand there and talk about his awesome tools, but he won't use them. Like a diploma they are just hanging on the wall. The spiritual gifts will not be beneficial until we use them. The Holy Spirit can only be manifested when we "walk on water" and trusts that he will take over.

The gifts of the Spirit will solve impossible things in a supernatural way

We can read about the gifts of the Spirit throughout the Bible. Even the prophets, the priests, and the kings of the Old Testament used the gifts in their ministry. Look at Samson, and the unquestionable strength that he had. The gift of miracles made him a superman and nothing could bind him. Or think of Salomon who had the Spiritual gift of wisdom. In Jesus' ministry we see all the gifts turned on all the time. The same thing in the Book of Acts. So the question is: Have the gifts of the Spirit ceased to exist today? Hardly; there is nothing in the Bible that supports it. On the contrary we see more and more people living with the gifts of the Spirit.

I have taught on the gifts of the Spirit for many years and I have stepped into all the different gifts from time to time. And with a rather simple teaching I get people to feel calm, and start to long for a life with the deeds and the life of the Holy Spirit.

The Corinthian church's way of life

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth he was a little more systematic about the gifts. So what kind of church was the one in Corinth? Corinth was a city like many

secular cities of today. Total decadence. Norms were gone and they lived according to the flesh; "if it feels right for you then it is right". Even the verb "to Corinth" meant having sex. Paul came to Corinth on his second missionary journey²⁶ and like he always did he first went to the Synagogue to tell the good news about the Messiah who had come at last. He was mocked and ridiculed by the Jews who lived in Corinth. Then he decided to go to the gentiles of the city. The Lord himself strengthened Paul with a vision: "*Do not be afraid, and do not be silenced*". Paul then decided to stay in the city. He lived there for 18 months and preached the Lord's word - perhaps it was a bible school that he started? Corinth became one of the great churches of the time. The church consisted mostly of gentile Christians²⁷, so they did not have a Jewish-religious schooling when they grew up. They had not learnt what was right and what was wrong. When Paul had left Corinth and moved on with the great mission, he was at one point visited by one of the church members from Corinth. This person had brought a letter from the church with a bunch of questions. After he had left them a lot of new situations arose, and they simply didn't know how to handle them. You can tell from reading Paul's first letter to Corinth. What kind of questions did the church have?

1. Fornication

A son had taken his girl's new girlfriend (1 Cor 5:1)

They were sleeping with the temple prostitutes (1 Cor 6:15-20)

2. Divisions and factions

They divided in groups under different leaders and preachers, and divided the church (1 Cor 3:3-5)

²⁶ Acts 18:1-11

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

3. Fighting among the believers

Christian brothers who sued each other openly in courts instead of solving the problem in an honorable way (1 Cor 6:1-8)

4. Marriage

To get married or not to get married; to live with non believers (1 Cor chapter 7)

5. Syncretism

In the holy communion they ate meat that had been sacrificed to idols.

They had not left the old beliefs behind but kept them and lived with several gods and religions (1 Cor 10:1-33, vers 20-21)

6. Alcohol

They not only drank wine; they got drunk and overindulged in communion and strife (1 Cor 11:17-22)

7. Unwise manners

They would scream in tongues and act very odd, so Paul had to give them some sort of order: "God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33).

Some women started asking questions in the middle of the sermon and publicly disturbed the services (1 Cor 14:33-34).

When you read about this church you really need to ask yourself: Which denomination would have invited the Corinthian church to their fellowship today? Probably none.

The church would for sure be kicked out and thought of as a weird sect that no one wanted to be close. But at the same time we need to remember:

1. They were gentiles from birth
2. They lived in the world's center of decadence

We are all children of the environment in which we grow up. We call it “children of our time”. They were children of their time. And their sanctification process took a little longer. There was much work to be done. This is a good thing for us “old Christians” to remember when gentiles give their lives to Jesus. Paul showed a lot of sympathy for the church in Corinth, and at the same time he was careful with instructing them how to live the new life in Christ.

In the beginning of the epistle Paul wrote:

1 Cor 1:4-7 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge – even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you – so that **you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul began his letter with thankfulness for the grace he had seen in the church. In this center of sin the word of God had been established and so many people had come to Jesus.

Then the most astonishing part comes: Paul said that the church was not lacking in any gift - all the gifts were in function! How many churches can say that today? Not many. So the church lived in the new life of the Spirit and it was a charismatic church where they let the Spirit move freely. And at the same time we see that the church was not very sanctified at all.

At one point I asked the Lord if the teaching about the gifts of the Spirit would fit better in Philippians. I mean, if you read that epistle it seems as though that was a perfect church without any flaws or failures. Surely that church would be better suited for the Spirit to move freely?

The Lord's answer to me was: *"They are gifts of grace, not of deed."*

I often meet people who look at the spiritual gifts as a ribbon on the chest, or a diploma for long and faithful service. When I go to Asia and arrange seminars they often pin a big badge on the right side of my chest. It can be in all sizes, from 10 to 30 centimeters, with bowknot and my name on it. I believe many think of the gifts of the Spirit in similar terms - like a big badge from God. They couldn't be more wrong.

And perhaps this is a fundamental problem for us all, me included, that we don't think that we are "holy" or "good" enough for God to use us? That we are never completely ready for the Spirit to use us. But we need to remember that they are gifts of grace, not of deeds or accomplishments. This stops many people from living in the gifts of the Spirit. They disqualify themselves. We judge ourselves by reading the world from the perspective of others.

Now that we will start looking more deeply on the different gifts of the Spirit, it's important that we have this foundation. The gifts of the Spirit are not a confirmation from God that we are good and perfect. Maybe that's why we are often so surprised when "big" men of God fall in sin? Because we think of the gifts as though they confirm the person's life and way of life.

All the gifts live in you

When I had just gotten saved I often heard teaching about the gifts and they always said that you could possibly have one gift, and you need to figure out which one. It could not be more wrong. The Holy Spirit lives in us, and ALL the gifts are in the Holy Spirit. That means that you have access to all gifts. That doesn't mean that all gifts are always active and in function. But the possibilities are there. Then I believe that one specific gift can be clearer and more obvious in your life. If, for example, you are a prophet you have the "gift of discernment" in function all the time.

In chapter 12, 13, and 14 of First Corinthians Paul teaches further about the Spiritual gifts. Maybe some are surprised when I include chapter 13 in that list - that chapter is more known as "the Way of Love", but I claim that chapter 13 is by no means misplaced. Quite the contrary. It fits perfectly in Paul's teaching about the gifts. I believe Paul was led to hit the stop button with the "spiritual" to show a way that's much higher than the supernatural and extravagant - namely love. There is no higher way than love. And the gifts of the Spirit come into function through love.

We will now study this a little more thoroughly. I will add to this teaching by giving you examples of when the gifts are in function in the Old Testament, in Jesus' ministry, with the Apostles, and also in my life, to make this as clear and real as possible.

1 Corinthians 12:1 *"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed."*

Paul did not want the church to be uninformed about the spiritual gifts, so he chose to spend a little extra time to explain how they work. In the following three chapters I will go through the gifts of the spirit, one by one. We'll start with the gifts of speaking in tongues and the so crucial gift of discernment. In chapter 7 we'll move on to talk about prophecies, words of knowledge, and words of wisdom. And finally, in chapter 8, we'll go into the extravagant gifts of faith, of healing, and of miracles. Join me in exploring these wonderful gifts from heaven!

CHAPTER 6 - Speaking in tongues and discerning spirits

Notice the headline - various kinds of tongues. It is in plural, not singular. The teaching about speaking in tongues is impossible to understand if you don't understand that basic principle. Let me give you three different kinds of tongues that the Bible speaks about. This gift will often lead you to the other gifts as well.

1. Human languages
2. Prayer language
3. Tongas to be interpreted

If you mix these three types of tongues into one joint teaching it will be incomprehensible. Instead I will now try to teach about these three as clearly as I can.

1. Human languages

When the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost every person in that upper room was filled with the Holy Spirit. They all started to speak in tongues as the Spirit enabled them. So they opened up their mouths and the Holy Spirit gave them the ability. It is very clear that these were human languages, for example Kurdish, Persian, and Arabic. Everyone around was surprised at this: *"We hear them telling **in our own tongues** the mighty works of God"*. So these were not angelic languages, or the secret prayer language, or a language that was to be interpreted.

This gift is very, very exciting! I myself have spoken human languages that I normally don't understand. When I heard about this gifts as a newly saved young man I was very eager to go after this gift. I responded to every altar call and took every chance I got to be prayed for. But nothing happened. I did what so many other have done before me; started to search in my life for faults and failures and sins. Didn't God like

me? Did he not want me to have this gift? I believe most of us face such questions at times.

So every chance I got I went up to be prayed for and every time I did not receive the gift I was disappointed. But at the same time I was extremely hungry for the gifts of the Spirit and fire. On one occasion I was at home praying from my heart and I cried out: "LORD, baptize me in the Holy Spirit, let me step into the fire and life of the Spirit - I am so desperate!" Suddenly I felt that there was something inside me. I could feel it physically. Even before I could ask "What was that?", new tongues started to flow from my mouth and I yelled it out loud and clear. A wonderful tongue in a language that sounded sort of Indian, perhaps Urdu or Hindi? I don't know, but it was a human language for sure. Since that day when God gave me the gift of speaking in tongues I have used it every day and I would not trade it for anything in the world.

I remember another time when I spoke in tongues in a human language. It was the summer of 2004 and my wife and I were going to host a Jesus festival in the Swedish city called Gävle. It was scheduled to begin at 6 PM, and if you don't live in Sweden you should know that in Sweden you are not late. If we decided on 6 PM you do not begin at 6.01 PM! That's important for us. Some say: "In other countries they have time, but in Sweden we have clocks". It was a big city festival and people came to Gävle from afar. When we came into the city we couldn't find a single parking lot available, and time went fast. We knew of a down-town parking garage that we often used and thinking it would probably be full I told my wife: "*No use going to that parking garage*". Right after I prayed in tongues and my wife called out: "*You just said that there were many parking spots available in that garage, in Arabic!*" I looked at my wife and said "*What? If there's even ONE parking spot available that would be a miracle!*" We immediately went to the parking garage and just as she said, when we got there there were many spots available. We parked and made it just in time.

Here the gift of speaking in a human language was active in a common every-day event. I truly believe that the gifts are for our daily lives and not just for the prayer sessions in church. As long as we are obedient and more importantly willing to step into the supernatural the Holy Spirit wants to meet with us.

A while back I was on a missions trip to Sri Lanka. We were going to have a seminar in a Christian rehab facility for former addicts. Just as I was getting ready to preach the manager of the place started talking in perfect Swedish: *"They have come to tell about the name of Jesus!"*. With me on that journey I had some newly saved friends from Sweden and they all heard what he had said. As I stepped up and told about this there was a wind of glory sweeping through the place, and many received Jesus as their savior and others testified of a strong presence of the Holy Spirit.

I also remember a prayer session with our leadership team many years ago. Suddenly we experienced a strong presence of the Holy Spirit. And a man fell down and he yelled out in tears and tongues; the atmosphere was electrified and we understood that God wanted to speak to us. My wife stepped up and said that he had just spoken in old Persian and he had said that God described his character as *"a Holy god, a consuming fire..."* and then came the word: *"And tell my people of the coming judgement"*. The entire room was filled with the fear of God and we understood that the Lord wanted us to focus on the message of judgement. That following Sunday I preached what the Lord had spoken. It was evident that this was sanctioned from heaven; the Holy Spirit was there so strongly and he confirmed the word with his presence. The man who spoke Persian was an ordinary Swede who had never been taught Persian - particularly not old Persian.

One of the most powerful testimonies about speaking in tongues in a human language comes from a good friend of mine, Rickard Lundgren. Rickard is the founder of the missions organization "Gå Ut Mission" (www.gautmission.org).

When Rickard was a teenager he got a vision/dream from the Lord to bring the Gospel to Albania. Back then Albania was completely closed for the Gospel and very few had been able to even get in to the country. Richard managed. When he was there he realized that he couldn't speak to the people. They didn't know English and he didn't know Albanian. Richard started crying out to God that he needed to learn the language. The next day when he woke up he spoke Albanian fluently! He received the gift of speaking Albanian permanently! Even today he speaks that language fluently. He is even authorized to function as interpreter for Albanian in Sweden, which gives him the right to interpret for the Albanian president or prime minister when they visit Sweden. I would never have told this story unless I could verify it myself. Rickard is a good friend of mine and he has given me this testimony himself.

There are many testimonies in the Christian history of how the Holy Spirit has used this gift to speak human languages. It all began on the day of Pentecost 2000 years ago, and it continues even to this day!

So the first thing that happened when the Apostles were baptised in the Holy Spirit was that they started speaking human languages. And when people heard this they were full of fear, because they realised that it had to be the Lord's workings. Over 3000 people got saved.

2. Prayer language

Let's lay a foundation for speaking in tongues by reading Paul's teaching in [1 Corinthians 14:1-5](#)

*Pursue love, and **earnestly desire the spiritual gifts**, especially that you may prophesy. **For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no***

one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. *On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. **The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself**, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.*

Paul begins so wonderfully by saying *“earnestly desire the spiritual gifts”*, and a little later in verse 12 he says: *“Since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”*

So we should be eager to seek the spiritual gifts, just as the church in Corinth was. In the original Greek translation the word he uses was *“zélōs”* which means *“to strive passionately for something”*, and it can also be translated as *“being zealous”*. With that in mind we understand that Paul really encourages us to get hold of the spiritual gifts.

So how do we get hold of them? The way to the gifts goes through asking him for them. And sometimes you need to ask again and again. Why is that? Because God is temperate or grumpy and needs to be fawned over? Hardly. I guess he is like most parents; he wants to see if we really want that gift that we are asking him to give. Let me give you an illustration. If a dad had two sons and the sons went to a bicycle store and both sons told their dad: *“Dad, dad, wow, can we have this bike?”*. The next day *one* of the sons walks up to him again and says *“Oh, dad, I want that bike soooo much!”*, and this goes on for weeks. The other son asked one time if he could have the bike while the other came and asked over and over again. Who would get the bike? The one who asked passionately (zélōt) for it. I think that’s how God works. He wants to know if we *really* want the bike or if we are just asking for things that we won’t truly appreciate. Jesus himself has promised to give us the Holy Spirit as a gift, in [Luke 11:11-13](#) *“What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give*

him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

I often come back to the story of the woman and the unrighteous judge²⁸ of whom Jesus told. The woman knew that she was right and she came to the judge every day. Eventually the judge got tired of it and gave her right, not because he was good and wanted well but because he was tired of her constant begging. Then Jesus says: *"Will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? This parable has only one purpose: We should learn to pray without getting weary. What if you would just make up your mind to get the gifts of the Spirit in abundance?"*

Let us go back to the teaching about the prayer language. In verse 2 Paul says: *"One who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit."* So this language is a direct communication between you, or rather your spirit, and God. Paul also says that no one understands the language, not you, not the spiritual world, not the people around you. And this language should not and could not be interpreted! It is a language that goes directly between you and God. No wonder the devil hates it when we speak in tongues. Paul also writes about this to the church in Rome:

Romans 8:26-27 "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

We don't always know what we should pray about. But the Holy Spirit always knows what is right and he knows exactly what we should pray for. And the Spirit helps us in

²⁸ Luke 18:1-8

our weakness. Think of how great it is that we can just let go of our own plans and strategies and even our own mind and just let the Spirit pray - so deliberating!

I remember when the Internet came to Sweden in the 90s. It was a "dial-up connection", a 33,6k modem that helped us connect. When you connected it had that strange sound - if you were around you probably remember the noise that the modem made. Someone told me that there was nothing supernatural about the Internet, but that's what communication on the Internet sounded like. To me that was an aha-moment. Imagine that there's a communication going on between my computer and the server, that I don't understand. It is the same way between the Lord and me when I speak in tongues. The Spirit speaks words that only he and my spirit understand. And I don't understand any of it.

Today's WiFi works in a similar way. We don't see the signals but they are there. We don't hear the sound but it's there. So we should see to it that we are always connected to the Lord's network in the heavenly realm. And thanks to the tongues that we've been given we can be connected 24/7, just as Paul says to the Thessalonians: *"Pray without ceasing."*²⁹

So why should we pray in tongues - what difference does it make?

We read earlier that *"the one who speaks in tongues builds himself up"*³⁰. This prayer language helps us to build up ourselves and our spiritual lives. It seems like God has given us a spiritual gym where we can do some workout. We go to the gym to build our muscles and we go out for a run to build up our body. When we speak in tongues we build ourselves up. Paul wrote in the epistle to Jude: *"But you, beloved, building*

²⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:17

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:4

*yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit*³¹. Maybe that is why Paul said to the church in Corinth: *"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you."*³² When I saw these verses and realised that speaking in tongues really matters - and that it matters to me - then I began speaking even more in tongues. During a certain period of my life I set a timer on eight hours and then I prayed non-stop without eating or drinking, and I only prayed in tongues. I don't do that anymore and I realize that I was given grace to do this in that specific time. It was a time of preparations before I stepped into ministry. So this type of tongues should not be confused with speaking in other human languages or with tongues that is meant to be interpreted. This is your personal prayer language that will help you to build up your spiritual life.

3. Tongues that should be interpreted

Now we've come to the third type of tongues - the one that is meant to be interpreted. We have already established that there is a type of tongues that *should never ever be interpreted* - our secret prayer language in tongues. But the Bible also speaks about speaking in tongues when we come together as a church. That is a tongue that is meant to build up each other. Let us read from the same chapter:

1 Corinthians 14:7-14 *"If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So with yourselves,*

³¹ Jude verse 20

³² 1 Corinthians 14:18

since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. **Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.”

Further down Paul continues to say that the church services should be orderly, despite the gifts of the Spirit being manifested. He recommends them to let everything “be done decently and in order”³³. He also says: “If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.” So during our church services there is a tongue that should be interpreted. But how do you distinguish that tongue from our personal tongue?

When someone starts speaking in the kind of tongue that is meant to be interpreted the atmosphere changes. You will notice a weight, holiness, and a fear of God as soon as someone raises their voice in tongues. The person will then pray intensively in tongues in a language that’s different from his or her normal prayer language, often but not always in tears. The person often raises his or her voice significantly. At the same time someone else gets an inner vision, a word, something prophetic, a picture or some kind of interpretation of the tongue. Sometimes the same person who prayed in tongues also interprets it. When this gift is in function the church is truly built up.

A few years ago I worked in a church, a traditional Pentecostal church. Sadly, the Sunday services could be really dry and without life. The services reminded more of a union committee than a Spirit-filled church service. But in the church there a few elderly heroes of faith who were always filled with the Spirit and who knew the Holy Spirit and his gifts. In prayer they often raised their voice in a wonderful tongue that really brought heaven down. From zero presence to a wonderful open heaven! And

³³ 1 Corinthians 14:40

right after one of the other elderly men stood up and had an interpretation. When this gift is in function in the church it brings words of encouragement, but more than anything else - a wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately many churches have neglected this gift. Perhaps because they don't really understand how it works and won't give room for the Holy Spirit? The Bible is actually very clear about this: This gift should be used when we come together.

FAQ about the gifts of speaking in tongues

Now that we have some background to these different types of tongues, let's do an FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions. Let's discuss a few common questions that usually pop up around this subject. I have been teaching on this subject for many years and I'm sure you too have been wondering about some of these questions.

1. Is speaking in tongues for everyone? And can everyone get the gift?

In the last verses of the Gospel of Mark Jesus teaches us that there are a few characteristics that stand out with those who believe. *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And **these signs will accompany those who believe**: in my name they will cast out demons; **they will speak in new tongues**; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."*³⁴

I think these are examples of signs that will follow those who believe. I am however convinced that it is not meant to be a checklist for us to see if we are believers or not. **And I really want to point out that speaking in tongues has nothing to do your**

³⁴ Mark 16:16-18

salvation. Speaking in tongues is an amazing offer available for all who believe.

But still Jesus points out that one of the signs that will accompany those who believe is speaking in tongues. Even Paul says that ***“I want you all to speak in tongues”***³⁵. Scripture is breathed by God and so we know that this is God’s will too. From God’s side the matter is settled. He wants everyone to speak in tongues.

A verse in the Bible that is often used as an argument against this is when Paul says: *“Surely not everyone speaks in tongues?”*³⁶ The problem is that the different types of tongues are being mixed up. What Paul is referring to here is the gift to speak human languages, or the gift to speak a tongue that is meant to be interpreted. And the answer to Paul’s question is: No, not everyone speaks in these types of tongues.

2. *But not everyone speaks in tongues today - why?*

There are several answers to that. The first one is probably lack of knowledge or lack of solid teaching on the subject. Many may have heard teachings that quote Paul’s question *“Surely not everyone speaks in tongues?”*, and that will become a lock in their heads. For who would not belong to that group, if that group would exist? I think we all have a tendency to disqualify ourselves. We think: “If not everyone speaks in tongues then I probably belong to that group.”

Another reason could be that you live in a context that neglects the gifts of the Spirit. And because you live in such a context no expectation for it is created, and you can even be in a context where people are against speaking in tongues.

Then of course there are those who simply don’t want to speak in tongues and they

³⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:5

³⁶ 1 Korinterbrevet 12:30

are therefore not seeking it. Paul teaches us that we should “eagerly strive” for the gifts. That means that it is our job to seek them. And if you don’t want it, no one is forcing you.

Finally there are many Christians who believe that speaking in tongues and the other gifts of the Spirit are for the ministry gifts; the leaders, priests and pastors. That is so wrong! Read the Book of Acts and see how the Lord used ordinary Christians.

3. How does speaking in tongues feel?

It is important not to get the baptism in the Spirit, which we read about in several different part of the Book of Acts, mixed up with speaking in tongues. Many expect that every time you speak in tongues there should be chills though your whole body, you should fall to the ground and shake. That’s not what it’s like at all. Usually when you speak in tongues you don’t feel anything at all. On the contrary, you can even be thinking about something else. Because it does not come with a specific feeling a lot of people doubt that it’s real. Others believe that they are just making up the words themselves, sort of like a “abracadabra” language. Maybe you have been speaking in tongues before but you’ve given up on it because you didn’t feel anything.

Unfortunately I think a lot of people have done just that.

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit, however, is a strong experience, as we can see in the Book of Acts chapter 2 verse 2 through 14, or chapter 10 verse 44 through 46. The same goes for being renewed and filled with the Holy Spirit, which we can read about in the Book of Acts 4:31. But that doesn’t happen all the time, not even in the Book of Acts. When it happened I’m sure they felt it from head to toe. I have been on church services when the Holy Spirit has filled his people again with his Spirit; renewed boldness and power.

So being filled with the Holy Spirit, either because you are baptized in the Holy Spirit or because you are renewed and filled up, is usually a strong experience. But don't expect to get these experiences every time you pray in tongues. I have also asked many colleagues who confirm that most often when they speak in tongues it doesn't feel very spiritual at all.

4. How do you receive the gift of speaking in tongues?

Now that you know that the gift of speaking in tongues is for you, nothing is stopping you. But as I said before, Paul tells us to "eagerly" strive for it, and it begins with praying for it.

[Luke 11:9-13](#) *"And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

Now we know that he wants to give us the Holy Spirit as a gift. When we pray we should expect it to become as he has promised. What's important to understand is that the Holy Spirit will give you the words, BUT you need to speak! Just as it was in [Acts 2:4](#) *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues **as the Spirit gave them utterance.**"*

So the Spirit's task is to give us the language and the words, but we need to open up our mouths and step out in faith knowing he will meet us. Some wait for the Spirit to take over their bodies and then they'll speak in tongues. Sadly, those who wait for that

will wait for a very, very long time. The Spirit will give you the ability to speak a new language when you open up your mouth. It can be as when Peter was in the boat and asked Jesus for a word so that he could walk on the water. He took a step in faith when Jesus spoke the word "Come!"; and it worked. Now you need to take a step in faith and open up your mouth, and the Holy Spirit will give you the language.

Don't let your feelings dictate or stand in the way; don't try to decide how you will receive the gift but let God do it the way he wants to. As I told you about my own way to this gift I went up on every altar call and took every opportunity. But it was when I was all alone at home that it was finally released. Sometimes we get can too fixated on the anointed preacher, and we forget about Jesus.

Open up your mouth and let the Holy Spirit form a new language - a prayer language - that will be a blessing to your spiritual life. I would not want to live a day without it.

The gift of discernment

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

The gift of discernment may be the most important gift in our time. When Jesus sat down on the Mount of Olives and the disciples asked him for a sign of his return and the end of this age, his first response was: *"Make sure that no one leads you astray."*³⁷

Being lead astray will be easy in the last days, according to Jesus. How are you deceived? The only way to deceive someone is to make sure the fake resembles the original, so that you cannot distinguish which is fake and which is the real thing. Let

³⁷ Matthew 24:3-14

me give you an example. Let's say I wanted to forge a hundred dollar bill. If I would go get a A3 sized piece of paper, made a drawing of a king or a president and then wrote "100 dollars" on it. Then I run down to Hassan's Pizzeria and try to pay with my fake bill. Of course Hassan would just laugh at me and say: "*Come on bro - you've made this yourself*". But if I had a professional printing machine that made the fake bill look so much like the original I could probably fool Hassan. Hence, the only way to trick or fool someone is to make the fake as similar to the original as possible.

We should keep that in mind when we read Jesus' teaching on the last days. It will be easy to be deceived. Something that looks like Jesus, something that looks like his teaching, something that looks like his Spirit, but really is not. To avoid deception the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit, and the gift to discern what comes from him and what comes from other spirits.

We also need to keep in mind that Satan can quote the Bible. When Jesus was tempted in the desert we can follow a dialogue between the two.

[Luke 4:9-11](#) *And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, **for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'***

Here Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12. So there is no doubt that he does quote scripture. However, that does not mean that he submits or abides to them.

Paul too wrote about this in [2 Corinthians 11:13-15](#) *"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.** So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to*

their deeds.

Over and over again we see Paul warn us for false prophets that intend to fool and deceive people away from Jesus. And since we live in the last days and Jesus has already established that it will be easy to be deceived, we really need to practice the gift of discernment.

What spirits are there to distinguish between?

1. Demons and Satan
2. Angels
3. The Lord's voice
4. People

Demons and Satan

The Bible is clear about the fact that there's a demonic world. We can see in Jesus' ministry that these demons have the ability to communicate. There are several examples of where the unclean spirits had a dialogue with Jesus.

And even if we don't always hear their physical voices we can often hear them speak. I remember very well how I was under influence of a suicidal spirit before I got saved, and I remember how it would always tell me: *"kill yourself, kill yourself"*. I also remember them telling me how I should do it and where I should do it. When I got saved I was set free from it, but even today I remember how clear that voice was. Let me give you a few examples where the unclean spirits communicate:

Itinerant exorcists

[Acts 19:13-16](#) *"Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the*

Jesus whom Paul proclaims.” Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. **But the evil spirit answered them**, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Demons speak to Jesus

[Mark 1:23-25](#) “And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”

Angels

We don't speak of angels that often, even though they are everywhere in the Bible. They communicate and speak several times in the Bible. Angels have many tasks but one of them is to bring messages to people. Let me give you a few examples:

The angel at Jesus' tomb

[Matthew 28:2-6](#) “And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. **But the angel said to the women**, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

The angel visits Cornelius

[Acts 10:1-7](#) “At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision **an angel of God come in and say to him**,

*“Cornelius.” And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” **When the angel who spoke to him** had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him...”*

The Lord's voice

In earlier chapters I have written about how we can hear his voice. We are created to have a relationship with him. And in a relationship you have fellowship. We speak to the Lord and the Lord speaks back.

People

We have one mouth and two ears and we need to communicate - we are created for it.

So we can see clearly that there are a bunch of different voices around us. Even the spiritual world wants to communicate with us. And that's why the Lord has given us the gift of discernment. Even unclean spirits can give us good ideas.

Jesus distinguished the source

Let us take a look at Jesus' ministry. He always distinguished the source of everything. And he exposed it.

When Jesus with very clear words told his disciples that he needed to go to Jerusalem to die and then to rise again three days later, here's what happened:

Matthew 16:21-23 *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” But he turned*

and said to Peter, **"Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."**

When Peter heard that Jesus was going to die he immediately understood that his life was in danger too. If they would kill Jesus they would surely kill him as well. He then started to "correct" Jesus. And it may seem as though Peter had a good intention. I mean, what friend would not have done the same thing? Jesus' response to Peter is almost unsavory. *"Get behind me, Satan"*.

Jesus called Peter "Satan", or does he? Well, I believe that Jesus spoke to the thoughts that Peter had downloaded from Satan. Peter probably didn't understand it himself - it just seemed like a good idea to keep Jesus from dying. But Jesus had the gift of discernment and immediately recognized the source of Peter's words. So Jesus commanded these thoughts to leave Peter.

I don't know if you've ever experienced how someone says something positive or that seems like a smart idea, but on the inside you've felt "yuck" and "no"? While you feel this several other people are joining the big choir and start applauding it. But you can't rejoice about it because there is something on your inside that finds it repulsive. As a leader you experience this a lot. In the early days of my ministry I thought it was really tiring and frustrating that the feelings on my inside didn't match what was happening on the outside. Unfortunately it happened that I ignored the inner feeling, and I've always regretted it.

I've learnt that God communicated through the gift of discernment and it's crucial that I don't ignore that inner testimony. As a leader you get lots of ideas from people, but all ideas don't come from the Lord.

Signs of the gift of discernment

All the gifts of the Spirit are more or less common. If you are called to be a prophet then the gift of discernment is always strong in you. The gift is connected to the ministry. But one thing that I've noticed about this specific gift is that people who are strong here have a capability to see very clearly into the spiritual world. They can see processes. They can see demons and angels in a way that others can't. Because of that they often have an intercessory ministry where they do warfare in the spiritual world.

Another thing I've noticed about the people with this gift is that they find it hard to listen to the radio or worldly music. They can sense the unclean spirits in the music in a way that others can't.

We need to protect the church

[Matthew 16:18](#) *"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

The Lord has given his power to the church. The church is supposed to rule in the spiritual world on earth. The church has always been and always will be under attack from the evil one. When we read the greetings to the seven churches in the Book of Revelations we can see how each and every church is being attacked. Attacks come in the shape of persecution, false doctrines, and false prophets. When the leadership of the church lacks the ability to distinguish between spirits, the evil one has an open door that he can walk right through.

Paul fought against false prophets and doctrines constantly. In the 20th chapter of the Book of Acts, Paul spoke to the leadership of the church in Ephesus just before leaving them. He knew that the Lord has said that he would not see them again. He

had also heard a warning from the Lord that he wanted to share with them:

[Acts 20:28-31](#) *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears."*

He reminded them that the Lord has placed them as leaders for his church and that they needed to guard the flock. Then he warned them for a division that would take place. But the attack would not come from the outside but from inside their own people. They will lure disciples to join them.

How often has this not happened in the history of the church. It happens constantly. I don't know how many churches I have visited that have been under an attack from a spirit of division. Paul spoke of them as "fierce wolves". Jesus also warned us for these false prophets: *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves"*. That means that they look nice and will make a good impression, but there is something completely different on the inside.

My experience of those who cause division is that they have not died to their own ego to become someone great. They often carry pride on their inside and think they are so much better than their leader. And they like when you compliment them.

Satan himself had that very problem in heaven. He couldn't stand the fact that God was on the throne and he wanted the angels to gather around him. We can read that he got one third of all the angels with him. How could this happen? Satan lured and fooled them. Somehow he sowed doubt in them and made these angels follow him

instead of God. When light was shed on his unrighteousness he was thrown out of heaven.

Divisions come in similar ways today. Spiritual armed coups, where someone wants to gather people around themselves and pull them away from the church. As leaders we should always give this to the Lord. Trying to pull people back or hit back only makes things worse. I have learned to just be silent and bring it to the Lord.

I often think of the story of Moses walking up on the mountain to be with the Lord. Moses had given the authority to lead the people of Israel to Aaron. He was the "assistant pastor", you could say. But while Moses was on the mountain there was a division going on in the camp.

"When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him".³⁸

So now the people gathered before Aaron. They spoke condescendingly about Moses, calling him "that Moses", and they gathered around Aaron asking him to be their leader. Aaron was weak to that kind of flatter and in the next verse we can read: *"So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."*

From these golden rings the golden calf was made. When Moses was on the mountain with God he was informed of what was happening down in the camp. He came down and confronted Aaron by saying: "What has the people done with you?"

³⁸ Exodus 32:1

Aaron had swallowed Satan's bait; he fell for flatter. He thought he was the leader but in reality Satan had taken control over God's people.

Many leaders have become victims of flatter. Flatter is one of the devil's most clever weapons. I don't know how many times I have come to churches and people have walked up to me to tell me how good my message was, and then added: "We don't get that great messages from our own pastor". People encouraging me, telling me that my message was good - that's not a problem. The problem is that they lift someone up by lowering someone else. It's easy to fall for such simple tricks, because we all have our flesh. And one of our basic needs in life is confirmation and commendation.

Aaron would have needed the gift of discernment. Then he would have heard the voice of the division master - Satan. And he would have rebuked him.

Church has always been under attack from Satan, both internal and external attacks. I want to share with you a story from the Book of Acts that speaks of the gift of discernment. Let us read the story:

*Acts 16:16-18 "As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a **spirit of divination** and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour."*

Paul was on his way to a new continent, Europe. It was a crucial moment, and Satan knew it. They were on their way to the place of prayer. But a woman was following them - isn't that strange? What is an unsaved girl with a spirit of division going to do on a prayer session? She seemed very bold and fiery. She called out loudly so that all

can hear. *"These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation!"*

So now there's a spirit of division in the middle of the church. The Greek word for spirit of division is *"python"* - python snake. What does a python snake do? It suffocates its victim, slowly but surely. That was the plan of Satan, to come into the church and then suffocate and control it.

We can also see that the woman was very bold. But what she said was only half the truth: *"They preach a way to salvation"* according to the Swedish translation. So not *"the way"* but *"a way"*. A false teaching and a false doctrine. Jesus will always be the only true way to salvation - there is no other way. But we also read: *"She kept doing it for many days"*.

I can imagine many people being impressed with her. She was probably the most *"charismatic"* person in that church - she cried out so all could hear. Surely many people thought she was saved. But there are many who hijack the Christian charismatic style and claim to be Christians. I have met such people all over the world. Satan himself and the worst kind of backslidden people hide behind lifted hands, speaking in tongues and charismatic expressions.

What few knew was that this was a sneaky coup from Satan to infiltrate the church. He wanted influence. But luckily Paul had the gift of discernment. I'm sure Paul felt that there was something wrong right away. Sort of like a small piece of pebble in the shoe. It's there, and it is always reminding you of its existence.

It says that it took a few days, so I believe Paul went into his prayer room and asked the Lord for advice. When he fully understood what he was dealing with he cast out the unclean spirit. Notice how Paul did not speak to the woman but to the spirit. Our fight

is not against people but against the spiritual world.³⁹ When Paul had cast the unclean spirit out you could think it was all over, but no. This is when persecution took off and Paul and Silas were imprisoned. We are fighting a spiritual war.

I have cast out spirits of division in my church. There's a big difference between a prophetic greeting from the Lord and a spirit of division from Satan. I will come back to that when we talk about the gift of prophesy.

The spirit of Jezebel

There is a spiritual entity that the Bible speaks of as "the spirit of Jezebel". The name comes from Jezebel who challenged and killed the Lord's prophets in the Old Testament. She runs the errands of Satan and lie. When we talk about Jezebel's spirit it's important to know that it is a spiritual power that we fight. We fight for people, against the spiritual world. But we also need to understand that the spirit of Jezebel needs a human being to operate.

In the Book of Revelations Jesus speaks about seven churches. In one of the churches the spirit of Jezebel has become influential. This can teach us something - let's read it:

Revelations 2:18-29 *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great*

³⁹ Eph 6:12

tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The church in Thyatira was for sure filled with life. Full of activities, a genuine love for Jesus and full of people who wanted to serve the Lord. When Jesus spoke to one of the other churches in the Book of Revelations, Sardis, he said: *"You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead"*.⁴⁰ Some people don't like it when we talk about churches as being "dead", but then you don't like Jesus' own words. He said that the church of Sardis was dead. It did not produce any fruit, life or deeds. It was just like a dead body - inactive.

But the church of Thyatira was living and produced lots of life. And Jesus commended the church for it. However, he also needed to correct the church and then he names a prophetess named Jezebel. She taught the people and led them astray and we can read that she was was a self-appointed prophetess: *"she calls herself a prophetess"*. Since we read that she taught and prophesied we also understand that she gathered people around her. They often do. They always have bigger revelations than the pastor and the leadership. People with Jezebel's spirit are often very manipulative and super spiritual - in a little while I'll come back to the typical characteristics of people

⁴⁰ Rev 3:1

with Jezebel's spirit. When Jesus spoke to the leadership of Thyatira and said that they needed to do something about this, it was the responsibility of the leadership of the church. The church's leadership does not own the church but they have been trusted with the responsibility to lead it. Jesus was very clear on this. Jesus then went on to say that he had given Jezebel some time but she has chosen not to repent and now a punishment awaited her. And he warned people from being close to her. So in the midst of a church on fire another spirit had become influential.

Let me now give you a few typical characteristics around Jezebel's spiritual power. This is from my experience:

- 1. The person is "super-spiritual"**
- 2. The person "prophesies" - manipulates, controls, adds burdens**
- 3. The persons' spirituality creates an unpleasant feeling**
- 4. The person often teaches about the "spiritual world"**
- 5. The person often has doctrines that go beyond Scripture**
- 6. The person gathers people around him or her; often weak people who are easily manipulated.**
- 7. The person often sets up her own prayer sessions and gathers church members around her, and thus becomes their leader.**
- 8. The person is the driver of the relationship; if she doesn't push it forward it dies. She calls all the time. She always has a new dream, or a vision, or something prophetic to say.**
- 9. In the beginning the person is genuinely spiritual. As time goes by things start to feel wrong.**

- 10. The person hardly ever walks her talk. Behind all spirituality there is often impurity, deceit, flesh, and a spirit of division.**
- 11. The person has an extreme need to be admired, seen and confirmed.**
- 12. The person likes it in spiritual surroundings, she tries to blend in. She is often the most charismatic of them all.**
- 13. If the person faces resistance all of Hell will come visit (read about the woman from whom Paul cast out the spirit of divination in the Book of Acts)**
- 14. The person has a real connection with the spiritual world and does not make things up. Outside the church she would be called a witch, seer, or sorcerer.**
- 15. The person is often very socially competent**
- 16. The person is often part of new charismatic movements that pop up**
- 17. The person is likely to be a woman**
- 18. The person often has psychopathic traits**

"The most dangerous attacks come not from the outside but from within"

Again and again we see how Satan plans and attacks the Lord's church. He wants to infiltrate and destroy from the inside. For that reason it is so important for the church to have a spiritual leadership that is awake and understands how the gifts of discernment works. Jesus said that being led astray will be easy in the last days. The most dangerous attacks do not come from the outside but from within.

How do you test the spirits?

1. You must start by testing yourself, your motives, and your own heart.

When your inner testimony tells you that something is not right, you always need to start with yourself. We all have a flesh. It is a part of the fallen nature that we will have to cope with until the day we enter heaven. That means that we first need to test ourselves before we test other spirits. I usually ask myself some questions. Why am I not at peace with this?

- ***Do I have anything against the person or the matter at hand?***
- ***Am I afraid to lose my place or position?***
- ***Am I afraid of competition?***
- ***Am I stuck in a "downward spiral" of finding faults in general?***
- ***Are there any factual errors, or is it just an abstract feeling?***

There are many more questions than these. But the most important thing is to be 100% honest with yourself, and that you are not afraid of finding faults within yourself. So it always begins with being honest with yourself. The gift of discernment is not the same as walking around being "sensitive" about everything and everyone. It is a gift of distinguishing - not a gift of "being suspicious".

Nor is it a gift of "surfing around on bad webpages" and finding faults on men and women of God, or churches or movements. Are you the type of person who likes

Christian gossip and slander forums? I am convinced that it does not please God to feast among such gossip, even though some of it may be true. That doesn't mean that we need to be afraid of the truth or close our eyes to it. On the contrary. But we need to watch over our own heart so that it doesn't go dark. If you have questions about a congregation or spiritual leader or a movement, then I suggest you go directly to the source and talk to the person first hand. The parts you see on the Internet can be taken out of context and it can be old stuff that the person has repented from. Perhaps it was sin, false doctrines, or something else. If they have repented you don't need to go fishing in the sea of forgetfulness. I think it's important to remember this in a time when the Internet and information spread faster than ever.

The gift of discernment goes so much deeper than just being suspicious or sensitive. It gives a testimony on the inside that the years will teach you to recognize. It is pure, honest, and genuine. It does not bring disgust, hatred, or condemnation toward the person or church. On the contrary, it brings love, grace, and mercy - but with an uncompromising truth.

2. Test it with someone else

The Spirit rarely gives the testimony to just one person - he often speaks to many. I always test things with my wife. I know that she is strong in the gift of discernment. Over the years she has been right so many times. I can honestly say that I should have listened to her more than once; then I would have spared myself many problems. I have spoken to many other men of God over the years and they say they too test spirits with their wives.

Church leadership needs to be open for the gift to distinguish between spirits. Few things are under as many attacks as the church. A little earlier I spoke about the spirit of Jezebel, which had gotten hold of the church of Thyatira. It is the responsibility of

the church leadership to keep the church clean from all other spirits! Because of that it is also the responsibility of the leadership to not only test prophetic words before it is spoken from the platform but also to test the prophets. We cannot just hand the microphone over to anyone who thinks they have the gift of prophesying or are spiritually strong. We have prophetesses who must never even get close to a platform. I also know from personal experience that you can be slandered if you are a leader who "silences the prophets". This is often used as a weapon by those who claim to be spiritually strong but in reality are merely spiritualistic. That's something spiritual leaders simply have to live with.

But I usually also test spirits together with colleagues, older men of God in Sweden. A few years ago there was a new movement in Sweden. I love the wind of the Spirit and the atmosphere of revival, but it needs to be genuine and honest. Many Christians travelled to this specific place and people said that this is what Sweden had been waiting for - the great revival. Soon there was a strange feeling - like "pebble in the shoe" - on my inside that told me that things were not right. My wife and I prayed about it, and the more we prayed the more our concern grew. I then called a few pastors that I respect and talked to them about it. I did not at all give away what I thought about it, because I wanted to ask for their view on the situation. All the leaders that I spoke to said the same thing: *"This is the work of a human, and not born by God. And it jeopardizes what the Lord wants to do in Sweden."* It did not take long before the whole thing cooled off and none of the great things that were spoken happened.

As spiritual leaders we need to place ourselves in a context where we can test movements together.

3. Is it in line with the Word of God?

It all goes back to the Word of God. That is always the starting point. If a doctrine is not in line with the Word of God you don't even need the gift to distinguish between spirits; then you just filter it through the Word.

4. Pray about it

Prayer is communicating with the Lord. Ask him your questions. Ask him to speak about what you experience. Then take the time to listen, open up the Bible and let the word speak. God often reveals his will through his word.

5. Does the person carry spiritual fruit, and does he or she have a good reputation?

We read about Jezebel who was a "spiritual" person in the middle of the church, but who was driven by other spirits than the Holy Spirit. Does the person function in the context of the church or is she a lone wolf? Is the person always misunderstood wherever she goes?

CHAPTER 7 - Prophecy, words of knowledge, and words of wisdom

The gift to prophecy

1 Corinthians 14:1, 3 *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy [...] The one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation."*

When Paul spoke about the spiritual gifts he encouraged us to seek all gifts, but especially the gift of prophecy. The reason he gave was:

1. Upbuilding
2. Encouragement
3. Comfort

A prophecy is a little greeting from the Lord. It is often short and to the point and it comes in the right time. It could be as simple as: *"I have seen your suffering and your grief but I am with you, says the Lord"*. It can be sort of general and not always hands-on, but it always brings us strength. It can also come in many different ways and not always accompanied by the words *"Thus says the Lord"*. I have received prophetic words through songs, sermons, and just through regular conversations.

I remember the first time I was prophesying. I was in prayer with a good friend. On the inside I heard a voice say: *"Tell him I love him."* I pushed it away in my mind. I thought *"He knows that already - that's no news!"* Again the voice came to me: *"Tell him I love him"*. This happened three times during that prayer session, but I just pushed it away. When we had finished praying we sat down and had a conversation and I couldn't let go of that inner voice that I had heard. Finally I asked him: *"I know you already know this but I feel that I have a greeting from the Lord to you. He says he loves you..."* My

friend immediately fell down and just wept and wept. After a while he stood up again and told me that while they were praying he had only prayed for one thing - a sign that God really loved him. I felt so stupid but at the same time thankful that I had delivered a love letter from heaven to him. It changed his life.

The soul's filter

What was the problem? It was my soul's filter. I started thinking and filtering what I thought he wanted, or in this case what I thought he already knew. This is an important key to functioning in the gifts of the spirit. When we start to decide what God should say and not say we will hinder both him and ourselves from being used in the spiritual gifts.

The people who function in the gifts of the Spirit are the ones who let go of all their filters and just become a channel for the Lord. After the time when I gave my first prophetic message I decided to never ever let myself decide what the Lord should say and not say. I always try to deliver what comes to me. Let me give you another example of how I could have filtered away what the Lord wanted me to deliver.

After a Sunday service a couple walked up to me and told me that they wanted prayer for a very important thing. They did not want to tell me what it was about. Immediately when I placed my hands on the I could see the man wearing a tie. It was a very odd vision, because I knew he was not a tie-person. I could have filtered it away by thinking: "This guy never wears a tie - this can't be from the Lord". But I chose to say it. *"I can see you wearing a tie"*. They both fell to the ground laughing. When they were back up on their feet they told me what it was about. The man had received an offer to start working as a bus driver. But they were hesitant, wondering if it was the Lord's will and also he would need to wear a tie which he did not like. Through the prophetic word everything became clear and they both knew that this is what the Lord wanted

him to do. As far as I know he still works as a bus driver, where the Lord also has given him a platform to reach out with God's love to Swedes.

When I teach on the gifts of the Spirit this is one of the most important parts: Make sure you do not let your own opinions or experiences filter away what the Lord wants to deliver. If you see it, speak it!

I have had the privilege of meeting and spending time with many wonderful men of God. One in particular who has impacted me is Roger Larsson. It's not a secret that the Lord has used him in Scandinavia. And most people know that he is a prophet to this nation. A prophet needs to live close to God, in purity, sanctification, and holiness. What makes Roger Larsson stand out from most other men of God that I've met is his filterless way of speaking. I think most people who have met Roger says the same thing: "That man has no soul filter." His spiritual channel is clean, holy, and peeled away from the opinions of his soul. That doesn't mean that everything he prophesies or speaks out is from the Lord. But he is indeed a genuine prophet and man of God, this Roger Larsson.

Prophecies are often interconnected

Prophecies often come in a series, and it's not unusual that you first hear a prophetic word through a sermon and then a few days later a word comes to you in prayer, and then it is further established when you read Scripture. That's how it often happens for me. Then I often live in that prophecy for a while. It becomes like a spiritual mantra on my inside.

When my wife and I were getting engaged we wanted Pastor Bros Spetz to bless us. We wanted to have a small spiritual ceremony in his office. When we came to his office he exclaimed: "*Micael and Kristin, I have prayed for you this morning and I have*

received a word from the Lord to you.” And then he read Jeremiah 31:9 over our lives and ministry:

“With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble.”

The word struck our spirit and we experienced a strong presence of God. Then we had decided that Bror Spetz would officiate the wedding ceremony, but unfortunately he had a heart attack a day before the ceremony so he could not do it. We had then decided to move to Gävle and work with World of Life there. Pastor Svante Rumar conducted the ceremony instead. When he blessed us and prayed for us during the ceremony the first thing he said was: *“So says the Lord: With pleas for mercy I will lead you...”* Immediately the Spirit of God came upon us and we were struck down in the middle of the wedding ceremony. Of course Svante knew nothing about Bror’s prophetic words over our lives. That is one example of how prophesies are often interconnected. I have many more examples of this.

Do not despise the prophecy

[1 Thessalonians 5:20-21](#) *“Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good.”*

When the Lord gives a prophetic word an anointing comes with the message. And when the anointing comes it feels as though you want to keep prophesying for hours. But I’ve noticed that the first words are often the message, and the rest is added on by the soul. Of course not always, but often.

So the Bible tells us not to despise the prophecies, but to test everything. That means that we have the right to test both the message and the messenger. A prophecy can be from the soul. The person who gives the message has good intentions and says a few encouraging words that are really not from the Lord but are a gut feeling. So let’s not despise the prophecies, but let’s test everything and keep the good.

Words of knowledge

God knows everything. Nothing is hidden to him. Sometimes he shares that knowledge; a word of facts. *I'm talking about a supernatural knowledge of plans, facts, things, and persons.* In the last chapter I wrote about prophesy. A prophesy is delivering something that will build up and comfort, but it doesn't necessarily reveal knowledge of what is, has been, or is to come. You usually don't get the full picture with all the facts - it's often just a fragment of knowledge, a word, or a sentence. I want to point out that we don't always need to go in and theologically explain and dissect the spiritual gifts. They often come hand in hand with each other. A prophesy can have pieces of words of wisdom and words of knowledge. It can be the same way with the ministry gifts; an evangelist may very well function as a teacher or even a pastor of a local church, and vice versa. Now I happen to believe that it's much better for the evangelist to just be evangelist and not step in as a local pastor, but my point is that sometimes the ministry gifts come hand in hand with each other as well.

Since the Bible teaches on the spiritual gifts and makes a distinction between them we should still spend some time talking about them. Unfortunately the teaching on the spiritual gifts has at times been flawed and caused some confusion.

Words of knowledge and the gift of discernment are the main gifts for the prophet. He functions more in these gifts than in the others. Let us see a few examples of when words of knowledge were used in the Bible:

[Acts 9:10-12](#) *"Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named*

Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."

The disciple Ananias received a word of knowledge from the Lord. It came to him through a vision. It can happen in many different ways but this time it was through a vision. Notice the knowledge in these words. He received facts about:

- 1. The street he should visit - the street called Straight**
- 2. The name of the person who owned the house that he should visit - Judas**
- 3. The name of the person he should pray for - Saul**

There is a lot of details here. It's not always like that, sometimes you just get a word. So when we receive the supernatural gift of knowing things, facts of things we do not know, that is a word of knowledge.

Jesus received words of knowledge

There is no doubt that Jesus had supernatural knowledge about most things. Whether he had all the knowledge, being the son of man, is widely debated. What we know for sure is that he received words of knowledge on several occasions.

Mark 14:12-17 *"And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.*

The disciples got a detailed plan from Jesus. He told them exactly what would happen. This is the list that Jesus gave:

- 1. Go into the city**
- 2. The first man you see that carries a jar, follow him**
- 3. Go in where he stops**
- 4. There they will show you to the upper room which has been prepared for you**

Then they went into the city and found that it was exactly as Jesus had told them. We see this happening often in Jesus' ministry. The same thing happened when he asked Peter to go fish and the first fish he got would have a silver coin in his mouth.

Words of knowledge is exciting. When you get them they come to you as a deposit of truth. It's a little hard to explain, but I often experience it as though time stops and I'm just filled with this knowledge/truth.

The wallpaper ruler

Let me tell you about one time when I received a word of knowledge. I helped my father to renovate his home and I was fixing the floor upstairs. All of a sudden I see a long object and I hear the Lord say: "Your father is looking for it, bring it to him downstairs".

On my inside I can see my father look for this tool that I had seen but didn't know what it was for. Now I know it was a wallpaper ruler. So I went down to give it to him and when I got down there my father said to my brother in frustration: "Isn't it strange that you can never find what you're looking for?" Immediately I responded: "This is what you're looking for!" He turned around and asked: "How did you know?" And then I told them about how the Lord had spoken to me as I was upstairs and how I saw a

vision of how my father was looking for the tool. Then I turned to my brother and said: "See? God does speak!"

Prayer with Jehova's Witnesses

Another time I received a very peculiar word of knowledge. It was just an ordinary day. I had not been saved for a very long time - a year at the most. Then I heard on my inside: *"Tomorrow two people from Jehova's Witnesses will come visit you, and I want you to pray with them."*

I remember how I stopped and thought about that strange idea I had received. This happened three times that same day. And the words came to me in the exact same way every time: "Tomorrow two people from Jehova's Witnesses will come visit you, and I want you to pray with them."

The next day I had completely forgotten about this and I remember I was home praying in my bedroom. Then the doorbell rang. I remember being a little annoyed over being interrupted when I prayed. I opened the door and two people from Jehova's Witnesses were standing there. I immediately remembered what the Lord had told me: *"Tomorrow two people from Jehova's Witnesses will come visit you, and I want you to pray with them"*.

Now they were standing at my door, wanting to share their faith with me. I then told them that the Lord had told me that they were coming and that I would pray with them. They hesitated and then I'm the one who forced them into my home. When we were sitting in the living room they took up a pamphlet that they wanted to give me. I immediately heard the Lord say: "Take that thing away and pray".

So once again I told them what the Lord had said the day before. And now we would pray. I said: "Since you claim to know God and I too make that claim it should be alright that we pray together, right?" I asked the oldest one to start praying. I heard a short and awkwardly silent prayer that went on for maybe 5-7 seconds and then it was

over. I remember how surprised I was and thought: "She really doesn't know you, Lord". When she was done I asked the other person to pray. That prayer was even shorter and even more religious. Then I asked if it was okay if I prayed. I cried out at the top of my voice and thanked the Lord for saving me and told him how much I loved him. In my prayer I testified of what he had done in my life. When I was done praying I went on to tell them about how I got saved and what the Lord had done in my life.

Why did the Lord want me to pray with two people from the Jehova's Witnesses? I think it was for two reasons: Number one was that I had just gotten saved and didn't know if the Jehova's Witnesses had the same faith as I did, but from this experience I understood that we most definitely do not share the same faith. They had a religion, I had a relationship. The second reason was probably because Jesus wanted them to hear about my salvation and that they would understand and realize that they needed to repent and make Jesus their Lord instead of Jehova. In either case this was staged by the Lord - it was what he had decided. And I just wanted to be obedient.

So that's a hands-on example of when the Lord gives a word of knowledge:

"Tomorrow two people from Jehova's Witnesses will come visit you, and I want you to pray with them." And that's exactly what happened.

The jug of water

Let me give you one last story of the most odd word of knowledge that I have ever received. This also happened when I was new in my faith. I was at a prayer meeting and the presence of the Spirit was strong. One of the elders walked in and I could see that he was in trouble. He walked slowly and sat down on a chair on the front row. The rest of us were praising the Lord loudly, but he just sat there. Next to him there was a large jug of water, and all of a sudden I heard on my inside: "Pour that water on him." I froze for a minute, wondering where that very odd thought came from. But then the

same words came to me again: "Pour the water on him". I hesitated again, but then the words came yet again: "Pour the water on him". At the same time I was filled with the Holy Spirit and I knew I just had to obey. So I took the water and poured it out on him. He snorted a little and then everyone stopped what they were doing and started laughing. There I was standing with an empty jug, thinking: "What did I just do?" I felt so stupid. Then I was filled with the Holy Spirit again. I had never experienced anything like this before; I became like a battery being quickly charged for usage. I understood that the power was meant for the elderly brother who just got water poured all over him. So I told him to receive the power, but nothing happened. I cried out even louder: "Please receive the power" but nothing happened. I got desperate and was so filled with the Holy Spirit I could barely walk, every muscle in my body was tensed - in fact my muscles were sore for three days after this. Finally I had to yell out at the top of my lungs: "YOU BETTER RECEIVE THE POWER, OLD MAN, OR ELSE I'LL DIE!!!" Then I felt how the power was transferred through my hands into him. He fell to the ground and met with the Lord so strongly.

After a while he came about and told us about this very odd event. When he came to the prayer session he had so many problems that he felt he couldn't pray. He was just sitting there wondering how to solve all the problems. Then I poured the water on him and he immediately forgot about all his problems. But now he had a new one. He tried to remember what his problems were. He was thinking about it when I laid my hands on him and cried out for him to receive the power. When he finally realized the power was for him, he received it. And God's Spirit transformed him completely! He closed by saying: "Thank you for being obedient when God's Spirit spoke!"

This is also a good example of me not filtering away what God wanted to do. If you look at it from a human perspective you simply don't pour water all over an old man. Over the years I have received many words of knowledge from the Lord, both on platforms abroad but also at home in my every day life in Sweden.

Words of knowledge in the Old Testament

All of the Lord's prophets in the Old Testament were filled with the Holy Spirit and there are many examples of them receiving words of knowledge - supernatural knowledge about plans, facts, things, and people.

2 Kings 6:8-12 *Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, "At such and such a place shall be my camp." But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there." And the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice. And the mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled because of this thing, and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."*

The king of Syria was convinced that there was a spy in his camp. I think we all would have thought that. But there was no spy, it was the Lord who gave words of knowledge to Elisha. That's why Elisha could always be one step ahead. He continuously got new information about what the king of Syria had planned. I am convinced that we can live like this today as well. And don't forget that Paul encourages us to seek the gifts of the Spirit in abundance - pray that the Lord will start giving you words of knowledge in your everyday life.

Words of knowledge reveals sin

I mentioned earlier that words of knowledge is one of the gifts of the prophet. And there's a reason why that is the case. If you are called into the prophetic ministry you are called to go a higher road of devotion and purity. You should be a pure channel

for the Lord's words. Prophets often confronts sin in the church. He does it because he is extra sensitive to sin.

The ministry of the prophet is needed today, when many pastors say: "All is well, all is well"⁴¹.

Churches rarely confronts sin today. They present an unbalanced picture of God, more like a nice little teddy bear than the creator and a high and holy God. The church today is more like the sugar of the world, than the world's salt. This could have its own chapter. Perhaps it is because of a long history of overemphasis on legalism?

There are so many examples in the Bible where the Lord's servant had received a word of knowledge that revealed sin. Let us take a look at an example from the Old Testament and another one from the New Testament.

In second Kings chapter five the prophet Elisha was visited by Naaman who suffered from leprosy. Elisha received a word from the Lord: *"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."* At first Naaman got angry, saying that surely there are better rivers home in Syria. But after some persuasion he chose to obey the words of the prophet. When he did his miracle was released, and he was completely healed. When he came back to Elisha he brought gifts, nice clothes, silver, and gold. But Elisha refused to accept any of it. When Elisha's servant Gehazi heard this he wanted it, so he snuck up to Naaman.

2 Kings 5:19-27 *"But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him." So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, "Is*

⁴¹ Jer 6:14

all well?" And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me to say, 'There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.'" And Naaman said, "Be pleased to accept two talents." And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before Gehazi. And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." But he said to him, "Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper, like snow."

Elisha couldn't receive money or honor for what the Lord did through him. That's a good lesson for everyone who serves him. Neither miracles nor salvations can be bought with money - it's all the grace of God.

But Gehazi could not stop thinking about the gifts that Naaman had planned to give Elisha, so he snuck away to get his share. When he came back the man of God was waiting for him. Elisha asked Gehazi: *"Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said: "Your servant went nowhere."*

Elisha gave him the chance to confess the sin he had committed but he chose to deny. Then Elisha said: *"Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you?"*

Elisha had received a word of knowledge about Gehazi's plans and now he confronted his servant. And not only that, he also spoke the judgement over his life. The same fate that Naaman had had now came upon him.

We see a similar story in the Book of Acts.

Acts 5:1-11 *"But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things."*

This text is not preached as often as chapter two of the Book of Acts. The story is about two people, Ananias and Sapphira. When the Holy Spirit had been poured out a generous spirit had come upon the church. People began to sell their properties and gave to the apostles, so that the kingdom of God could be built. Ananias and Sapphira had also sold a property but instead of giving it all they kept some to themselves. Of course they could have sold the property and kept all the money to themselves - there was no law that required that they gave it all, nor is there such a law today. The problem with Ananias and Sapphira was that they lived with no fear of God. They lived with a "faith" in God but in reality they lived as though he did not exist. Now they were confronted with their lie. The scripture doesn't say that they had come

across this information in a human way - no, they had received a word of knowledge from the Lord. This created such a fear of God among the believers. Fearing God is not a negative thing - on the contrary, it creates a genuine life. So we can see how the words of knowledge reveals sin in the church. Let us pray that the prophetic voices may come back and speak into the body of Christ again. Perhaps the Lord has called you into a prophetic ministry? Then don't expect the red carpet to be rolled out for you and for you to be friends with everyone.

[Luke 13:34](#) *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!"*

[Matthew 5:12](#) *"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

[Luke 6:23](#) *"Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets."*

[Luke 6:26](#) *"Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."*

These are your promises, if you are called to be a prophet. I recommend that you have your own Bible study about this - why not start with Jeremiah?

Controlling and manipulative words of knowledge

I wrote about the spirit of Jezebel a little earlier. People who are influenced by that spirit have an ability to use manipulative words of knowledge to get their will. I have seen this many times. Sometimes these words have become curses that we have broken in prayer.

I remember a man who had a curse spoken out over his life. A woman had spoken these words: *"If you don't pray more something bad will happen to you within short."* When he heard this he started to pray more than ever, he got terrified. But despite him praying more than he used to he got a severe disease six months later. Some time after that he told me what had happened. I immediately felt that this was a demonic attack that had been spoken out over his life. We prayed and broke it in the name of Jesus.

Another time a woman told me that a "great man of God" had received a word of knowledge that she would marry a man in her church and that it was the will of God. She had no feelings for this man - on the contrary every time she looked at him she was disgusted. She felt bound by these words by the man of God and she prayed to the Lord that he would change his mind about the marriage. When I heard this I taught her about prophetic words and the gifts of the Spirit. Then we set her free from these words. She was set free and could then live in freedom again.

Of course that was not a word of knowledge from the Lord. It was the opposite - it was a demonic word that bound her. Maybe you have words that have been spoken out over our life? Go to a spiritual leader whom you trust and break the curse that has been spoken.

This is much more common than you might think. There are entire churches that follow the words of a prophet. They hold his words almost as high as the Bible. We are in trouble when we let "prophets" guide and control us. It is the church's leadership that leads the church and it is also the leadership that is responsible before the Lord.

Another time we were trying to find new facilities for our ministry and a pastor wanted to help us. When we came to one of the facilities "the spirit came upon him" and he said *"this is the place for you, says the Lord"*.

But on my inside I just heard a loud "No!!!". Plus there was something about the whole situation that didn't feel right.

After a while he both called and e-mailed me about how strong the words from the Lord were. It was as though he tried to convince me that this was from the Lord. When people push me into taking decisions because "they" experience it, then I think about it carefully. After a while it turned out that he knew the owner of the facility he wanted me to choose, and could he also have gained a percentage of the deal? I don't know, all I know is that we didn't buy it and it was most definitely not a word of knowledge from the Lord - just pure and simple manipulation.

If there is one thing that gives me a holy wrath it is controlling and manipulative people who use the name of God and the words of the Spirit to make sure their will is done. The infamous murder in a small Swedish city called Knutby is unfortunately a good example of this; manipulative "words of knowledge".

Words of wisdom

We have now talked about prophesy and words of knowledge, and we can see that there is a difference between the two. Now comes the third, words of wisdom.

Words of wisdom give, plain and simple, wisdom. Wisdom is not being smart, intellectual, or well educated. It is just like the other gifts, a supernatural ability to come with a wisdom to a situation in the right time, and it is the Lord who gives it.

Let me give you an example so that you know what I mean. Solomon was the son of David and when he inherited the throne the Lord paid him a visit. In the dream Solomon prayed to get the gift of being wise. Reading about his life we can see that he kept this gift throughout his life. It even says that people came to visit him just to hear his wisdom. Kind of the way people come to see music idols today. At one point Solomon's wisdom was really tested:

1 King 3:16-28 *Then two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. And we were alone. There was no one else with us in the house; only we two were in the house. And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. And she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while your servant slept, and laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast. When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, behold, he was dead. But when I looked at him closely in the morning, behold, he was not the child that I had borne." But the other woman said, "No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours." The first said, "No, the dead child is yours, and the living child is mine." Thus they spoke before the king. Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead'; and the other says, 'No; but your son is dead, and my son is the living one.'" And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him." Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother." And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice."*

Two mothers in an argument before the king. Both claim the child that's breathing. Back then there was no DNA checks. The situation appeared to be impossible. But then Solomon got wisdom from the Lord and he asked for a sword. *"Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other."*

Solomon knew that it would be evident who the real mother was, and that's exactly what happened. No mom could bear watching her child get killed like that. And the child ended up with its real mother.

Words of wisdom is not a supernatural knowledge of plans, facts, things, or people - that's words of knowledge. And it's not a prophesy that builds up and encourages and gives comfort.

Words of wisdom is also special in other ways. Words of wisdom comes more often in your everyday life than in church services or other spiritual environments. It is not "charismatic" in its expressions but for sure just as spiritual. I personally have experienced words of wisdom many times when I have shared my faith with other people. I think to myself "wow, that was a smart thing to say" or "that was a real good parable" and I can even think I'm wise at times, until I realise that it's the Lord at work in our conversation. I'm sure you have experienced this as well?

I usually see it like a stop light. When you are out driving there are stop lights all around. If it's red you stop. Then there's a shift from red to yellow. That's a signal for you to get ready to go. Once it's green you go! Sharing my faith with others usually works just like that. If it's red I don't share my faith. Then it can be anointed just talking politics, the latest news, sports, or hobbies. During the conversation the Lord is at work getting that green light. And once it's green that means it's time to share your experience of Jesus. I have met many people who have never learned this wisdom. They start driving even though the light is red, and then they stop when it's green - completely unwise about how to share their faith. That's why I think it's extra important to pray for wisdom when you want to share the gospel with non-believers.

I have also noticed that I have received words of wisdom during deep and honest conversations, especially during counselling. When people open up to get advice or

be corrected and encouraged the Lord comes to me with words of wisdom in a clear way. I can often sit and just think: *"I have no answer to this" or "I have no solution to this problem"*. And then a very wise suggestion comes to me, or an idea or a solution. It surprises me every time.

Jesus met the woman at Sychar's well

When Jesus met the woman at Sychar's well⁴² both words of knowledge and words of wisdom came to him in a very clear way. I encourage you to read the whole passage to see how Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit in his conversation with the woman.

[John 4:16-18](#) Jesus said to her, **"Go, call your husband, and come here."** The woman answered him, *"I have no husband."* Jesus said to her, *"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for **you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.** What you have said is true."*

First there was a super clear word of wisdom: *"Go, call your husband, and come here."* And then there's an equally clear word of knowledge: *"You have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband."* When Jesus asked the woman to go get her husband the conversation took a whole new direction. Before this they had been talking about water. The woman had talked about physical water and Jesus gave parables to the Spirit's water. Right after this the woman called out: **"I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE A PROPHET!"** As you know, Jesus won her heart over and she won the whole city over to the Lord.

Words of wisdom - the gift of the teacher and preacher

Words of wisdom is the teacher's number one gift. If you have ever listened to a really

⁴² John 4:4-42

anointed Bible teacher you will know what I mean. They make Scripture so living and every time you listen to them you think: "I have read that Scripture a hundred times but I have never seen this before". If you have a calling to be a teacher or a prophet this is the gift you should seek - zealot.

CHAPTER 8 - Faith, healing, and miracles

The gift of faith

Jesus taught a lot about faith. He spoke of what faith can accomplish, sometimes he mentioned people with much faith and sometimes he corrected his disciples for their lack of faith. The Bible says that we all have a certain amount of faith that the Lord has given us.

Romans 12:3 *"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned."*

Some people think that God hands out different measures of faith, but I'm not so sure. I personally believe that God gives us all the same amount of faith. Then it is up to us to use it. If we use the faith that we have received it will grow.

The kind of faith we are talking about is based completely on his promises. We choose to respond to what the Lord says is true, and we take a step in faith, we act on his words. Faith comes from the word of God. The word has several synonyms, perhaps the best one is "trust".

We trust him. We trust that what he says is true. We trust that he is with us, we trust the he provides for us. We trust that his word is the true and that he cannot lie. Faith is trusting the Lord.

Romans 10:17 *"So **faith comes from hearing**, and hearing through the word of Christ."*

Let me give you an illustration so that you understand what I mean. If I give you a

promise, for instance “I will give you my cell phone”, then I have just given you a promise. In that moment the cell phone is practically yours, right? A hope that the phone can be yours comes into your heart. But it will not be yours until you *act* on the promise. It is up to you to release your faith on the promise that I just gave you. If you just sit still the promise will remain a mere hope. But if you start to *act* you will release your faith and the phone will be yours.

There are many Christians who live in hope of God’s promises, but then there are those who live in faith on those same promises. They choose to believe and act and then live a supernatural life. This faith should grow in every Christian person’s faith. It grows when we are aware of the promise, but it also grows when we use it. I have chosen to dedicate my entire ministry and life to the word of God and the promises that he has given me. Just like Paul said to the church in Rome: *“The righteous shall live by faith.”*⁴³

But what distinguishes the gift of faith from faith?

That’s a very good question. Because there is a big difference. The first “faith” that I described was about what *faith can* accomplish. But the gift of faith is a gift that is given to anyone when it needs to be released, and it is the Spirit who gives the gift. In other words, it cannot be trained, it cannot grow.

The gift of faith is simply God’s own faith that he gives to us in special times and moments. Our faith is limited, but God’s faith is unlimited and sometimes he can work through us, through the gift of faith. God uses his own faith through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

[Hebrews 11:3](#) *“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of*

⁴³ Rom 1:17

God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth - his words created. What was inside God's heart was put in words and the words were spoken. He dreamed and cast vision until the day when he finally spoke the words that created everything. Jesus is both the author and the perfecter of our faith.

Some people say that we always live by God's faith, and I understand what they mean and can agree in part since all faith originated from the Lord. But if our faith cannot grow and if we are just objects of God's faith working in us, why then did Jesus on so many occasions say: "Your faith has healed you"? The woman who had a discharge of blood, and Bartimaeus are just two examples. Paul even spoke of people whose faith was shipwrecked. Why did he show them a path where our faith could grow, if it was only faith given to us by God's grace?

However, when we talk about the gift of faith it has nothing to with us, it can come to someone who just got saved and it can come to a theologian who has been a Christian for 50 years. It is not based on knowledge but grace - it is a gift of grace.

I remember so clearly the first time I was given the gift of faith. Then and there I had no idea what happened, but afterwards I understood that this was the gift of faith. In 2006 I was in Indonesia with Mikael Boman and Svensk Pionjärmission. I preached the third night if I remember correctly. I had had a strong encounter with God during the day and the Lord was so close. When I was done preaching and had brought in the harvest I was going to pray for the sick. Immediately during prayer FAITH just came upon me, and I just "knew-that-I-knew" that miracles would take place. I pointed out certain spots where the Lord was working mightily. Then the faith "disappeared", just to come back even stronger somewhere else. It went on like that for some time; waves of faith just came upon me. Doubt and disbelief did not exist. I don't remember all the

miracles that took place, but I remember one specific family where the dad was deaf on one ear and the son was blind on one eye, and both were healed.

Like I said, I didn't know at the time that it was the gift of faith. After this it has happened to me on many, many occasions. And I can tell you it has nothing to do with me. The Lord has poured out his gift and for a short time I have had access to God's faith.

So when the gift of faith is poured out there is no room for doubt or disbelief - anything is possible. It is when you have that gift that you understand Jesus' words: *"Anything is possible for he who believes"*. Only possibilities and faith exist - nothing else.

Another thing that also separates this gift from the others is that it can come upon several people at the same time. I have seen this several times, when the spirit of faith has just taken control. How many churches have been built because the spirit of faith was released? When the spirit of faith has been released, then faith has come upon people in union and they have done something that would not be possible in the natural. Take Filadelfia church on Rörstrand as an example. Or the Word of Life churches. Word of Life got faith to build a church that was unique for its time. And in the middle of this project of faith the Lord spoke and said "sow 40 million Swedish kronor into Russia". And then the spirit of faith came upon the entire church and they managed to collect more than 40 million. This was not the faith of Ulf Ekman, it was the Lord who poured out his faith over his church.

So the spirit of faith and the gift of faith can come upon a people, a movement, a church, and for a specific project or time.

The apostle of faith

When we talk about the gift of faith we really need to say a few words about the apostle of faith, Smith Wigglesworth. Smith had a personal faith that was built on the promises in the Bible - there's no question about that. He read the Bible like few others. In his home he would allow no other books than the Bible. I've heard a story of how Lester Sumrall was visiting him at one point. Under his arm he carried the newspaper. When Smith opened the door he asked Lester what that thing under his arm was, and he answered: "It's just a newspaper". Smith immediately responded: *"Throw that thing in the bush if you want to come in - I don't want the propaganda of Satan in my house."* Today Smith would probably have been called legalistic or religious, but I would say he just really loved the Lord. And he didn't want any other seeds to be sowed in his heart than the Bible. It is told that Smith brought 23 people back from death during his lifetime.

There are so many testimonies about Smith's life and ministry. Let me give you a story that has really stuck to my heart.

An acquaintance of Smith called him up and asked him to come right away because a friend was dying. Smith replied: *"I'm coming!"* The hours went by but Smith never showed up. So he called back and asked why he had not showed up yet, and again Smith answered: *"I'm coming!"*

A day went by and Smith never showed up, and the person died. So they called Smith up again and told him that he didn't have to come anymore because the person had passed away. Yet again Smith answered: *"I'm coming!"*

They started preparing for the funeral and Smith never showed up. When it was time for the funeral and everyone was on site - then suddenly Smith showed up. He walked right up to the coffin and lifted up the corpse. He put it toward the wall and spoke these words of faith: *"In the name of Jesus, come back to life!"* and then he let go of the corpse and it fell down to the stone floor. Nothing happened. People started telling Smith to just stop what he was doing and let them have a dignified funeral, but

he just yelled "QUIET!" and picked up the corpse again. He put it against the wall and spoke life into it the corpse again. The same thing happened and the corpse ended up back on the floor. Now they tried to physically stop Smith but he just pushed them away. He took the corpse a third time, pushed it hard against the wall and cried out at the top of his lungs: *"In the name of Jesus, come back to life!"* And then the man comes back to life.

How was this possible? I am convinced that Smith was completely filled with faith, wisdom, conviction - yes, the gift of faith! There was no doubt in him, only possibilities. When we read about all these different gifts of the Spirit we can see that some have had the gifts more persistently than others. And I am convinced that we can all seek the spiritual gifts so that we will function even more in them. Why else would Paul encourage us to seek the gifts of the Spirit?

When you read about Smith there is no doubt that the Lord used him strongly in the gift of faith. If you want to know more about his life I would recommend that you read about him. There are different biographies and stories about him. Search online and you will find it. When you read about his life a desire to seek this gift of faith will come upon you strongly. Zealot.

The gifts of healing

Healing was one of the most prominent gifts in Jesus' ministry. If you would do a study on his healing ministry you'd see that he healed people in many different ways; in other words, the gifts of healing came in many ways. Sometimes he just laid his hands on them, sometimes he spat on them and on other occasions he told the lepers to go and be examined by the priests in Jerusalem, and on their way there the healing manifested, and other times he spoke to the diseases.

That shows us that healings can come in many different ways. We often just think in terms of the laying on of hands. But the gifts of healing are much bigger than that. I encourage you to do a study about Jesus' healing ministry and focus especially on how he did it.

The gifts of healing can often cross over to the working of miracles and the gift of faith. And just as I mentioned before we shouldn't always theologically dissect the work of the Spirit.

Healings on the streets and market places

When we were working as street evangelists on the market place in Gävle we would often pray for the sick. We saw the mighty works of the Lord many times. Today the Lord has released a new movement where young people go out to the streets to pray for the sick, and in this bold movement the Lord heals many sick. They don't pray for the sick - they heal them! This goes on all over the earth; a new generation that just follows Jesus' instructions, and it works. I am convinced that this is something the Lord has initiated in our time. Healing does not belong to the platform preacher but on the streets and in alleys. What makes it even more interesting is that the movement doesn't have a frontman. It's just ordinary Christians who go out and pray for the sick, and the results are astonishing.

The gifts of healing in "The voice of Healing" revival

I don't know if you've heard of "The Voice of Healing" revival? It was a healing revival that was spread across the USA. The Lord used several men of God, like A.A. Allen, William Branham, Gordon Lindsay, TL Osborn, and Jack Coe, and many others.

In this revival it was clear that the gifts of healing were poured out in a very special

way. The preachers had very little knowledge of the Bible. Some came up with their own false doctrines - Branham for instance. But still the gifts of healing were upon his ministry. Branham could even be the person who has had it most strongly in modern time.

For some reason he thought that he was the one who would one day speak out God's name "*Jehova*" and then Jesus would come back. He meant that only he had been given the right shape and size of a mouth that would enable him to pronounce the name correctly. He also had a very strange view on women which shaped his theology; he said that women were below animals in value. And on several occasions he said of women, literally: "*In every funeral there's a woman responsible for the tragedy.*" Those and many other false doctrines were spread by Branham, but despite this the gifts of healing were strong in his life. It is called gifts of the Spirit - "gifts of grace" in Swedish - because they are given by grace, through the Spirit.

We mentioned earlier that Jesus had a healing ministry. That ministry was then transferred to his disciples. In the Great Commission Jesus said: "*They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.*"⁴⁴ One of the things that will show that we actually follow Jesus is that we are doing what he did. When Jesus had left the earth we can see that the disciples went on to do exactly what Jesus told them.

As an evangelist I have had this gift in my life many, many times. Both on the big platforms abroad, but also in my everyday life in Sweden. This gift is described in plural. There are different ways to receive the gifts of healing. I have often felt how something has flowed through my hands when I have received the gift, and when I then have laid my hands on the sick person I have felt how that current leaves my hands and is transferred. We can also read about how Jesus felt that a "power had

⁴⁴ Mark 16:18

gone out of him”.

Luke 8:43-48 *“And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!” But Jesus said, **“Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.”** And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”*

The workings of miracles

The workings of miracles can also be called the gift to perform miracles. When this gift is poured out it is not just about people being set free from pain. When this gift is in function unusually large miracles happen. They are not “ordinary” healings such as back pains; it’s usually miracles of creation; new body parts, lame walking, deaf hearing and dead people coming back to life.

As an evangelist I have stepped into the gift of performing miracles on several occasions. In 2012 we had a campaign in San Juan, Argentina. We cooperated with a large church in the city. The preparations had gone on for over a year and the city was filled with expectancy. Already on the first night many received Jesus as their lord and savior, and many were healed. I received several words of knowledge - to mention one I remember that I said that someone would receive a new heart. A woman heard this and she ran home to tell a close relative who had just learned that his heart was so bad that he needed a new one to survive. The man refused to believe the woman and

said: "I hate God, for it is he who has given me this bad heart in the first place". But the woman forced him to go to the doctor. The next day they went to the hospital together and when they examined the man's heart they saw that he had a completely new heart! On the night they brought pictures from the hospital showing pictures of the old and the new heart and they showed it to all of us, and there was no end of the joy on that field. People cried out to God and there was an amazing presence of God. The same night there was young man who received a new lung! I also remember another time when we had a campaign in Pakistan. A mother ran up to the platform and cried. Her son was born with no eyes, but when we prayed for the boy new eyes were created.

Another odd miracle happened when we were working as street evangelists. We had a project that we called "the Jesus bus" and one night a very drunk man walked up to us. "The Jesus bus?" he said, over and over again. I asked him if he had a relationship with Jesus, and his answer came quickly: "I was walking the streets of this city, asking myself if Jesus really loved me, and if he did I wanted him to give me a sign." Now the Lord had given him a sign - the Jesus bus. I asked if he wanted to receive Jesus as his savior. He told me that he had received Jesus a long time ago and he had lived close to Jesus but then slipped away and left the church. Now he wanted to come home again. We went into the bus and I prayed for him. He cried out with a loud voice: "JESUS I WANT TO COME HOME AGAIN!" Suddenly the Spirit just fell and the entire bus was filled with his presence. The man cried like a baby and said only one word: "Daddy, daddy, daddy..." After a while he started to cry out in tongues, and I later heard that he had been baptized in the Spirit for many years. A little while later he stopped and said with surprise: "I am sober!?! I AM SOBER!" In an instant his drunkenness had let go and he didn't even smell of alcohol anymore. I remember that he ran out to the youth outside the bus and began to witness of what the Lord had done with him. That was the first and only time I have seen anyone become completely sober after prayer. Thinking about it afterwards I believe it was the gift of

working of miracles - it was a genuine miracle for sure.

So the working of miracles is not just a healing or a pain going away - it is a miracle that exceeds all the normal healings.

It's obvious that Jesus had this gift in his ministry. He rose people from the dead, and he gave sight to the blind. He fed 5000 hungry men plus the women and children with only five loaves of bread and two fish, he walked on the water, he calmed the sea, and gave strength to crippled legs.

Jesus clearly declared that his disciples would do the same things that he did.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."⁴⁵

When Jesus said *"whoever believes in me"* we are all included. In the Book of Acts we can see how the disciples continued the ministry that Jesus started. Already in chapter 3 we can read that Peter and John were on their way to the afternoon prayer. When they came to the Beautiful Gate there was a lame man. He expected a gift from them but then the Holy Spirit came upon Peter and he said: *"I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."* Immediately the man got strength in his feet! This man had never ever walked, he was born lame. But the apostles got the gift of miracles over their lives. The same gift that their master had had, and the same gift that even today is working through those who believe in him. A little later in the Book of Acts we can read that Peter woke up

⁴⁵ John 14:12

Dorcas⁴⁶ from the dead, and then the same thing happened with Eutychus⁴⁷. Many times we see the gift of miracles in function in the disciples' lives.

The old testament and the workings of miracles

I wrote early on that the spiritual gifts were not invented by the Lord in the New Testament, and they did not see the light of day when Jesus began his ministry. The spiritual gifts can be found throughout the Bible. When we talk about the workings of miracles we really do need to mention Elijah and Elisha - has ever a human being been used by the Lord in this gift the way these two were? They rose the dead, the created an unlimited amount of oil, they stopped the rain from falling, made sure the rain did fall again, made an axe float, cleaned the water of Jericho, healed leprosy, made a barren woman a mother, made poisonous food eatable, and in the end Elisha's dead bones made a dead man whose corps was buried in the same tomb come back to life. The gift of miracles was even in his bones! I encourage you to read these chapters about their ministry:

1 King chapter 17-22, and 2 King chapter 1-13

Samson, the strongest man in the world

When I was a little boy I loved stories of various heroes, such as the Hulk, Superman, and Batman. They had abilities above that of a normal human being. They had supernatural strengths, could climb on walls, and fly. And they all wanted to save the world from evil.

One who could fit that description was Samson. His power was above a normal person's strength. He had been given this miracle gift from birth. The Lord had placed

⁴⁶ Acts 9:40

⁴⁷ Acts 20:10

this anointing in Samson's hair. As long as he let the hair grow the power would be with him. Unfortunately Samson is not only known for his enormous strength but also for his weak character. And in the end it was his bad character that killed him.

A modern man of God who really lived strongly in the gift of miracles is R.W. Schambach. He went to be with the Lord in 2012. But if you want to understand how a person can be used in this gift I recommend that you read his book "Miracles". An insanely good book that makes everyone want to seek this gift even more eagerly. You must not forget that Paul encourages us to seek ALL the spiritual gifts, and you can have this gift in your life! The world needs miracles more than ever.

CHAPTER 9 - The fire must never go out!

Leviticus 6:12-13 *"The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall arrange the burnt offering on it and shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out."*

The Lord is a consuming fire⁴⁸. The fire comes from the Lord but we need to put more wood to the fire. It was the responsibility of the Levite priests to collect wood and place it on the fire. It can be both spiritually but also physically hard to collect fuel. A few years ago the Lord spoke to me about this when we were placing wood on the fire in our sauna by the beach. There was just a small ember left when I placed some new sticks on it and the fire immediately came back and I heard on the inside: *"It is you who add the fuel but I give the fire and supply the oxygen"*. That was not really news to me but then and there it became a strong revelation. We will never continue to burn on yesterday's wood that has become ashes - we need to collect new wood every morning. The fire must never go out!

Roger Larsson shared this text on Facebook a while ago: *"When I was a child we had a fireplace in our bedroom. There was fire. I remember how carefully my mother made sure it was nice and warm when we went to bed. SHE SHOWED HER LOVE AND CARE. It is a duty in our calling to be witnesses on fire, to have a warm heart and be filled with care for others - and that the flame of love burns bright and warm. My prayer: More love, more fire!"*

We know that the old testament is full pictures of the new testament. If you want to know what God will do today - look at what he did yesterday. He is the God of history.

⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 4:24

In the old testament it was the Levite Jewish tribe that would do ministry in the temple and the tabernacle. Their task was to sacrifice animals, pray, worship, and keep the fire burning on the altar so that it never went out. Today we are his royal priesthood⁴⁹ and our task is the same. The only difference is that we are a whole people who are now priests, and our ministry is not physical but spiritual. We should keep our spiritual nature fresh and on fire.

Why do people who used to stick to the Biblical truths begin to compromise and even live in open sin? Why do spiritual leaders lay down their calling? They stopped nurturing the fire and eventually the fire died, and only grey ashes remained. It's like William Booth once said: *"Be careful with the fire in your hearts, for fires have a tendency to go out."*

Philippians 2:12 *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."*

So how do you stay on fire in the spirit? I want to tell you about a few things that I make sure to always add to my fire:

1. The Word

The first thing that we need to keep alive is our relationship to the Bible. Through the Word we add wood on which the Holy Spirit can burn in our hearts. Just like two men on their way to Emmaus who, once they understood that it was Jesus that had spoken to them, said: *"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road,*

⁴⁹ 1 Peter 2:9

while he opened to us the Scriptures?”⁵⁰

The Word of God is food for our inner being. Without food we starve and in the same way we will starve and die without spiritual food.

When we are born in the natural breastmilk is our food. But as we grow we start eating solid food.

Hebrews 5:12-14 *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”*

The Lord has given us promises in the Bible. Those are the promises that we trust - those are the ones we believe in.

2. Prayer

Prayer is our conversation with God. We speak to him and he speaks to us. A little later in this book I will talk about the number one source to a life that bears fruit, namely the relationship with Jesus. Prayer is not hard, or difficult, or weird. It is as natural as having a relationship with a friend, a wife, a husband, or your children.

I have counselled in many marriages. I often hear the words: “We have grown apart”. What they are really saying is that they quit spending time with each other. I always recommend them to go back to the first love and start spending time with each other. I encourage them to find their way back to that first relationship when they were just

⁵⁰ Luke 24:32

wonderfully in love. I believe it is all about making choices. No relationships are automatic; we need to work with our relationships to our spouse, children, and friends. The same thing goes with our relationship with the Lord. In prayer we maintain our relationship; I speak to him and he speaks to me. It takes time in prayer to keep the fire alive in our relationship.

3. Fellowship

I choose to call it fellowship. We often call it the local church. But I think that word limits it and what it is really about - the relationship with others who share our faith. And that goes beyond the fellowship of the local church.

[Acts 2:42](#) ***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”***

When we got saved we became God’s children and we now belong to his family. And in this family there are other siblings. Siblings don’t always live in complete harmony. I remember how my younger brother and I used to fight, but that did not mean we were no longer siblings. We were still brothers even though we weren’t best friends then and there.

I think about the Gospel of Luke chapter 15 where Jesus talks about the prodigal son, or perhaps we should call it the prodigal sons? But that’s another story... When the son had been out in the world and gotten filthy, he came home and was met by the loving arms of his Father. The family came together again. The son was immediately put back into the family as one of the sons of the house. But when his brother heard that he was back he got angry and refused to call him “brother” - instead he just called him “that guy”.

So in God’s family there will be disputes, we will have different opinions, we will think of things differently, and there will be cultural problems. Being saved doesn’t mean

that we come into the perfect fellowship where everyone is perfect friends and love just overflows. No, God's family on this earth is just like any family - there will be different opinions and because of that we need hearts that are big enough for each other's flaws. Unfortunately I often meet people who choose to leave the church because they feel that the pastor or a leader has flaws. For some reason they think a leader should be perfect. Unfortunately there are no perfect people, only a perfect Jesus. And surely you don't despise a whole tree just because you find one rotten apple on it?

The fellowship is for our protection. It is when we live in a transparent relationship that we can lift each other's burdens and come together as a family. The Bible tells us that *"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."*⁵¹ A few years ago I was watching a documentary about lions. I learned that the lion does not run around hunting all the time - quite the opposite. The lion is lying down resting most of the time. The lion is lazy by nature. It lies down waiting for the right prey. If he sees a herd of zebras he doesn't care, but if he sees one zebra that leaves the flock the lion gets interested. Then the whole flock of lions come alert. If the zebra goes even further from the herd the lions will attack and kill it. As long as the zebras are in the flock there is a protection, even for the weak ones. But when the zebra leaves the fellowship it's an easy prey for the lions. Satan's number one priority is getting you away from the fellowship with the other believers. He prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

I don't know how many people have left the fellowship, only to lose their faith. Sadly they are too many. If you want to keep the fire in your life you need to stay in the fellowship with your Christian friends.

⁵¹ 1 Peter 5:8

4. The mission

Jesus gave us all the great mission to reach all people with the gospel. We call it our mission; another word for it is evangelization. I don't really like that word because it sounds like an activity that we do every now and then. Instead I think we should consider ourselves to be "missionaries where we are". It's so easy to lift evangelization out of our ordinary lives and into an event or an activity that we do on Saturday at 6 PM. We are supposed to have a lifestyle of sharing our experiences with Jesus. Jesus invested everything he had in this mission; he gave us his entire ministry and his whole life. And that is what we call the good message. Jesus didn't just come with a new political system and he didn't bring a new ideology - he came to remove the root error in our nature; sin. That's what his whole life was about. When he took our sin upon himself and crucified it he gave us his salvation, his purity and his righteousness. We are now declared free because of what he did for us.

Everyone who is on fire for Jesus will live in the great commission. It creates a fire on our inside like nothing else! I don't know a single Christian who is lukewarm and testifying about him. But I do know many lukewarm Christians who do not testify.

So we are called to the same priesthood that the Levites lived in during the old covenant. Today we must make sure the fire never goes out on the altar. It is our task to collect wood and it is the Lord's task to bring the fire, and the Holy Spirit will bring the oxygen. Then we will not burn out but we will be like the burning bush that Moses encountered. So let us continue to burn with love for Jesus and our neighbors.

The Lord gives the fire and he blows with the oxygen of the Holy Spirit over the things that we put on the altar. As long as we put the word, prayer, fellowship and the mission on the altar we will keep burning.

But without his oxygen - without the Holy Spirit - it will just be religion. If we only have the word we will become legalistic. If we only have the fellowship we will become introvert. If we only have evangelization we will become shallow. And if we only have prayer we will be weird. That's why it's so important that the Holy Spirit goes through all of this; then life and fire will be produced in our lives.

I was born in the fire and I can't stand a place with just some smoke. I always thank the Lord that I've never had the time to be backslidden or become lukewarm. I am grateful for his grace. But I have also been careful about the firewood, and made sure that there is something that can burn. It doesn't happen by chance. Even a Levite of the new covenant must make sure that *"the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out."*

When we burn together we burn bigger

It is not just as individual believers that we need to keep the fire. The same thing goes for the church. The church must once again take its position as the pillar of truth on the earth. We are called to be the salt of the earth, not the sugar of the earth, even though the two look very much alike.

Today spirituality is replaced with a soul centered philosophy. Things that speak to our minds. A salvation that doesn't go deeper than to the soul. Or what the Bible might have called the fire of the world, or "unauthorized fire".

[Exodus 3:2-4](#) *"These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests. But Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai."*

Nadab and Abihu were second generation leaders. They had inherited their father Aaron's position. They didn't know how to handle what was holy, so they took fire from the world - an unauthorized fire.

The Lord's altar is holy and only what pleases him is allowed there. It is that way even today. When the Lord's fire is not in the churches it is replaced with what appeals to the soul; light shows, smoke, cool music. The church attendee is meant to think that church is a modern thing, and that nothing is so holy that it cannot be removed. They call it "seeker sensitive".

The church has become every man's property; everyone should fit in and no one must be left outside. Because God is nice. That sort of thinking has created a church that lives in compromise and that no longer speaks of the great root problem of sin. The way out of sin is called repentance. How often do we hear a clear, honest, to the point teaching about this today? I fear that there are too many unauthorized fires burning in our churches today.

What I mean is that the church is not owned by the non-Christians or the world - it has been purchased by Jesus for his people, and it is not for sale. Sunday services should never compromise, neither in the preaching nor in the liturgies. I am more than open to create other services and events where we only want to tell about Jesus to people who have not heard. Back in the days we called it revival meetings.

I know many will think I'm an old, grey man looking back at how things were and being annoyed with all the new things that the young generation is doing. The Lord knows my heart. I am more positive to changes in church than most people. I have no need of getting stuck in an old pattern or a certain style of music - on the contrary. In my house we listen to the same kind of music that is played in the most modern of today's churches.

You often hear preachers who sigh over the legalism that the churches of before was full of. There were strict dress codes, specific hairstyles, instruments with no electricity, and certainly no drums. People who had sinned were excluded and publicly executed. And of course there was a legalism that was not good at all. But at the same time we can read that the Lord's fire was always present, the atmosphere was electrifying. There was a clear message of repentance from sin; there were you're-either-in-or-out messages, or heaven-or-hell messages as we might call it today. They helped people live a holy life with Jesus. There was a desire for holiness. There was a fear of God resting upon the church, which pleased the Lord.

CHAPTER 10 - Get to know the Holy Spirit, not just the gifts

There is however a down-side of the power of the Holy Spirit and God's fire, and that is that we tend to be completely consumed by the mighty manifestations of the Spirit. When that happens we stop seeking God, and start to seek his gifts, power, and manifestations. The Holy Spirit is not manifestations - he is a person. It is a dangerous path to just seek the manifestations, because you open up for all sorts of spirits and spiritism. Many end up in that ditch sooner or later. It is just like someone who wants to marry a person who is very wealthy; she wants the man's money and doesn't care about the man.

The Holy Spirit is not manifestations - he is a person

When you end up in that ditch you become shallow in a way that grieves the Holy Spirit. The manifestations become a spiritual show, like a circus. Sadly I too often meet preachers who commands the Holy Spirit do things, as though he commanded his dog to do a trick. The fear of God is completely absent. God has no interest in

shallowness. He lives in the deep and he is rooted in love.

Jesus never wanted to become a circus where he'd have the chance to prove how anointed he was. He did the opposite - when there was too much of a show around him he just left. How many evangelists would do that today?

In the gospel of Mark there are several good examples of this. It says that Jesus came to Capernaum and started performing miracles, and in the end it says: *"The whole city was gathered together at the door."*⁵² What an amazing revival and what an opportunity to build a platform where he is admired and served. Then it says that the next morning Jesus went up to a mountain to be alone. When the disciples woke up there were thousands of people waiting for him. They went out to look for him. They were all excited, and when they found Jesus they said: *"They are all looking for you!"*

They expected Jesus to say: *"Yes! This is our chance, guys - I've been waiting for this for 30 years!"* But his answer was very different: *"Let's go to the other direction"*. Jesus never needed to prove himself for people. He never needed to build a ministry with a cool newsletter with pictures that were appealing to the flesh. He never promoted himself. He was driven by something completely different - love and passion for people. Not a single time did Jesus perform a miracle without his heart completely going out to the person who needed to be healed. We find what may be the best example of this in Mark chapter 4 and 5.

Once again crowds are gathering to hear him preach. He stepped into a boat while the people were standing on the shore, listening. He taught about the importance of being a good soil so the word of God can take root and give a thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and hundredfold harvest. When it became night Jesus said to his disciples: *"Let us go*

⁵² Mark 1:33-38

*across to the other side.*⁵³

Why leave in the middle of this revival? What was so important that he had to do it just then?

On the other side of the lake there was a man who lived among the tombs. He shouted and hit himself with rocks. People had tried to bind him with big chains but he came loose every time. He was possessed by a legion of unclean spirits - that's about 6000 of them. He also had a supernatural strength through these demons, so no one was strong enough to take him on. He was probably widely known. Did he have a family, relatives, friends? Well, at the end of the story Jesus told him to go home to his family and tell them what the Lord had done in his life.

The man's family had probably done everything they could to get him well. But eventually they too had given up. How many people have walked in his shoes after him, where in the end there is just one hope left, and that's the creator himself.

So Jesus came to him. In the midst of his humiliation and need. He probably smelled bad - I assume hygiene is not on the top of the to-do-list for people who live among the tombs. He had almost erased himself as a person. But Jesus saw something different. He saw a person who suffered under the yoke of Satan. Without hesitating Jesus called out with authority: "*Come out of the man!*"⁵⁴ The unclean spirits came out of the man and went into a herd of pigs that was feeding close by.

In an instant the terror of Satan was gone! The man came back to life. He got a new chance to live. It's written so beautifully that "the man who had had the legion, sitting

⁵³ Mark 4:35

⁵⁴ Mark 5:8

there, clothed and **in his right mind**⁵⁵. His mind was reclaimed. Once again he had the control over his own life - Jesus set him free.

A question for you: If there was someone close to you, or someone in your city or region who was known for one thing: He was aggressive, strong as an ox, living among the tombs, hitting himself, had bad hygiene... Would you ever just go: *"Well, it would be nice pay that man a visit"*. Hardly, I doubt anyone of us would think that. But don't forget, Jesus went across the lake just for this man! How do we know? Because in the gospel of Mark chapter 5 verse 21 it says: *"And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side..."*

So when you read this chapter you mustn't miss this: Jesus left the revival and the multitude of people to cross the lake. And when he was there he showed his huge heart and love for a man whom no one cared about. When the man was set free he went back to the other side again! Jesus did not only talk about leaving the 99 sheep to find the one that was lost - he really did it.

This is another evidence of how Jesus never needed to impress people by showing them how anointed he was. He didn't build his ministry on how many people he could get to the services - he went where the Holy Spirit led him. He loved people from the depths of his heart.

So in our strive to gain more fire, more anointing, and more power we must never forget the core - Jesus' heart and passion for people. If we do, we become like Christian shamans who need to deliver hocus-pocus so that people will get a spiritual light-show with strange manifestations that we call "signs and wonders". I definitely do not belong to those who indulge in "gossip websites" or send movie clips of men of

⁵⁵ Mark 5:15

God who has said or done something ungodly. But even I have stumbled on some horrible videos of charismatic services. I grieve when I see movie clips of people showing off how spiritual they are or how cool it is when they pray for the sick. How excited they are over all the manifestations. To me it's just superficial. Yes, I want the power, but not if it means that my love for people will decrease. And believe me, I have been shown so much grace from the Lord - I have seen everything that the Bible speaks of. I love it when the Holy Spirit touches and moves among people, when unclean spirits are cast out, when lame walk and deaf hear. I love it when it's genuine but I really do hate it when it becomes an act. I'd rather genuinely know the Holy Spirit, than know the gifts of the spirit and just chase the manifestations.

Many people think signs and wonders are a sign that the Lord is with them, but that is wrong.

[Matthew 7:21-23](#) *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"*

Sometimes the Bible is brutally honest, just like Jesus. He wasn't afraid to tell the truth. The truth may hurt, but the truth originates in love. Jesus said *"Many shall say..."* I've got a question for you: How many are "many"? It can't be counted. But he means what he says.

The truth may hurt, but the truth originates in love

There will be a lot of people who claim an eternal life because they have performed great miracles and cast out unclean spirits. They may have had a mighty and well-

known ministry on earth. On the outside people will have believed that they are great men of God who really know God deeply. But they couldn't be more wrong. What Jesus says in the end of the paragraph explains it. Jesus says: *"I will tell them the truth: **I never knew you.**"* What truth is Jesus talking about? The Greek word for "knew you" is *ginósko*, which means "to get to know someone and have a personal relationship with the person". So what Jesus is saying is: *I have never had a personal relationship with you - I have never gotten to know you.*" Just because we read of different celebrities; what kind of food they like, how many children they have, that doesn't mean that we have a relationship with them. You can know a lot about a person without having a personal relationship.

What a tragedy, to be so close but still not come all the way. These people have hidden behind a ministry that on the external appears to be friends with Jesus, but in reality they have just hijacked a name and created a ministry. How did that happen? Perhaps it all started out right, maybe they had a genuine meeting with Jesus? But maybe then something else came sneaking in, maybe the ego did not want to die because it liked the spotlight too much. I don't know, I can only speculate but also test myself and my own motives. One thing is certain: Jesus calls these men of God lawless.

Perhaps they saw the opportunity to live the way it pleased them, live for the flesh⁵⁶ in impurities, love for money, adultery, and yet claim the grace. When I read these lines my heart is filled with a fear of God. I live with signs, wonders, miracles, and I cast out unclean spirits in my ministry. Because of that I am more and more careful in my pursuit of the Lord, and I spend more and more time getting to know him and letting him get to know me. No relationship grows by accident - all relationships require care. Jesus says in [John 17:3](#) *"And this is eternal life, that **they know you**, the only true God,*

⁵⁶ Galatians 5:19-21

and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

“No relationship grows by accident - all relationships require care”

When I travel and teach leaders there is one particular teaching that I speak on more than anything else, and that is *becoming God’s close friend*. When I start talking some pastors may think: *“We know that already, give us something more, something new and fresh”*. But when I’ve talked for a while about nurturing the relationship with Jesus I can see the spark of fire coming, and a desire to get to know Jesus even better. I often say that *“when I work the hardest I am close to the Lord and seek him”*. I think of it as one of the most important tasks for me as a preacher and spiritual leader.

There are many “God seekers” in the Bible. They were men and women of God who lived their lives to be close to the Lord. Let me give you a few examples.

Enoch was a man known for only one thing: he spent time with God. It says about him in [Genesis 5:21-24](#): *“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”*

He walked with God for 300 years on earth. What a wonderful expression, “walking with God”. When I think about that I see an old couple walking hand in hand through life, kind of like a marriage. You spend time with each other, have dinner together, do things together, and so on. A little later in the new testament we can read about Enoch a second time:

Hebrews 11:5 *"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God."*

It even says that Enoch did not even have to die, the Lord just brought him home alive. I can imagine how the Lord said to Enoch: *"I've been in our house for almost 300 years, I think it's time for you to come to my house, so that you'll see how I live."*

Notice that it was the 11th chapter of Hebrews that we just read. What is significant about the 11th chapter, you wonder? That's the chapter that is all about the "heroes of faith", people are mentioned in this chapter because they did something in faith - they lived in faith. It is the Bible's "hall of fame" chapter. There we can read that Abraham became a father of faith when he obeyed the Lord's word and left his home without knowing where he was going - he trusted the Lord. There we read about Noah, who built the ark in 100 years and thus saved his whole family. There we read about Moses who through faith took his people out of Egypt, because he trusted the Lord. And there we read about Enoch. He didn't do anything else than spend time with the Lord. Can you imagine - becoming a hero of the faith just by spending time with the Lord.

I have said it a few times; when I enter eternity I want to be described as someone who knows the Lord AND whom the Lord knows and confesses. That is my greatest desire.

Another example of a "God seeker" is **Paul**. What an amazing hunger he had for getting to know Jesus more.

Philippians 3:7-9 *"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them*

as rubbish, **in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him**, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.”

Paul’s hunger for Jesus was commendable. Even though he had a strong apostolic ministry his relationship with Jesus was intact. He just wanted to know Jesus more - that was worth much more than anything else. He wanted to “gain Christ and be found in him” - just taste those words. Spiritual poetry, like a symphony by Johann Sebastian Bach. We need the same passion that Paul had.

So it’s important for us not to seek the Holy Spirit as a manifestation but as a person. That pleases God. Even Jesus needed to take a break from his every day life and ministry to just be alone and pray. Listen to these verses:

Mark 1:35 *“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”*

Luke 5:16 *“But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.”*

Matthew 14:23 *“And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone...”*

Jesus is our example in everything. In all the gospels the authors notice that special quality with Jesus, that he would “often withdraw to desolate places”. He needed to be alone. How much more do you and I need to be alone with the Lord; to nurture our relationship with him. I think of it as the most important task in my leadership to take the time in contemplation and spend time with the Lord.

Jesus wanted to pass this on to his disciples. In Matthew chapter 6 he speaks about

how to pray.

Matthew 6:5-6 *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, **go into your room** and **shut the door** and pray to your Father who is **in secret**. And your Father who sees in secret will **reward you**.”*

He is talking about a hidden life with the Father. He is also very practical - he tells us exactly how it should be done.

1. Find a place where only you and the Lord meet.
2. Close your door.
3. Then he will reward you.

The time we live in is very different. We live in the so called IT revolution. The Internet is taking over our ordinary lives, more and more, for good and for bad. We need to learn to shut the world down from time to time.

Jesus said: *“Shut the door.”* We need to shut down everything that can bother us, Facebook, Instagram, e-mails, news, chats, youtube, and games. Everything around us is fighting so hard to get our attention and our heart.

When we follow Jesus' advice of the right kind of prayer by finding a place where **ONLY THE LORD** and you have time for each other, then he will reward you. That means that there is a reward program hidden in this type of prayer. And then you wonder: *“What is the reward?”* Try it and you'll see.

I told you before that this is the most important part of my ministry. I often go away, alone. I have had an island in the river Dalälven that I've often gone to by boat. There I

have been all alone, reading the Bible and listening to the whispers of the Holy Spirit. I have seen visions, had dreams, received teachings out on that island. Then I've had the privilege of travelling by myself a lot. I have enjoyed it every time, because I'm not really alone. I always go with the Holy Spirit. I have met with God in hotel rooms around the globe, and I would not trade it for anything in the world. It has happened when I was alone. Too many people miss this because they only seek the Lord in the open services, on the conferences or in line for prayer. Perhaps you are one of those who never really go deep with the Lord? Even though you have a genuine desire. My advice to you is to spend a lot of time with the Lord, seek him, give him time to speak to you, take deep breaths, let go of all your "musts", turn everything else off. Then you will restore the hidden life with the Holy Spirit. There is a place, a hidden life, and the Lord wants to make an appointment with you.

There is a place where no one else but God has visited me,

There is a place on the inside where I'm naked and transparent before God,

There is a place where I never explain anything to him

There is a place on my inside, where I am myself, where there is no room for acting.

*There is a place in my inner room where God and I spend time with each other, near,
close*

*There is a place on the inside where God and I travel, he takes me to memories and
places and reminds me of what he has already said.*

On the inside there is a place where his Word blends into me, there is no conflict.

Where I am one with his Word.

*On the inside there is a garden, where the Lord visits me at the evening breeze. Him
and me, for ever and ever.*

The hidden life becomes like a root system in a man's life. The root system is the most important part of a tree. If the roots are rotten then the tree is dead, even though it appears to have life. In time it will die. The roots are not visible but they work under

ground. We often focus on the fruit, and of course that's the spectacular thing about a tree. But we forget that without a root system the tree has no balance, and it would fall even for a breeze.

The Swedish oak grows to be very strong. It takes a long time for it to reach its full height, often a few hundred years. But once it's fully grown there is basically nothing in the world that can make it fall. The oak will stand whether hot or cold, wet or dry, because of its strong roots. It's the same way with our root system. When we choose to develop our inner lives with the Holy Spirit, then we will build a strong life that can take on the storms of this world.



[Luke 10:38-42](#) *"Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.'"*

An ordinary day in Martha's and Mary's house. In a house there's always chores - they never end. There's laundry, dishes, cooking, and much more. Now Jesus was visiting them. Martha was fully occupied getting everything in order. Perhaps cookies was to be baked, food was to be cooked, and tea to be boiled. Mary sat down at Jesus' feet. Martha thought Mary was so lazy that she finally went up to Jesus and told him to correct her sister. She expected Jesus to agree with her. But Jesus flipped it around and said: Nothing is as important as to sit in stillness at my feet.

We all have an everyday life. And we can all be like Martha, busy with all the chores. Time to sit at Jesus' feet doesn't exist - or, should I say, is not prioritized. But we actually do need to learn to let the dishes and the cleaning and the cooking go for a little while, and just spend some time in prayer, in his Word, or why not just to worship him in your living room?

In closing

Hebrews 1:7 *"He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire"*

Luke 12:49 *"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"*

We live in the very last days before Jesus comes back for his bride - the church. We see all the signs of the time - his return is very close. We are now standing in the greatest revival the world has ever seen, millions of people are being brought into eternity. At the same time we see an apostasy that the Bible also speaks about. Many slumber. The fire goes out, the zeal to bring the gospel to people decreases, and a false and human unity is spread like a hurricane through Christianity.

But God has lit a fire. Do you want to be part of the heat? Do you want to be in the fire? Do you want to be one of those who spread the warmth? Do you want to lit a fire in people? Do you want to belong to the burning ones? I do, so let us be even more devoted to Jesus. Let us run the last stretch before the return of our king!

For the king and the kingdom!

Micael Lahtinen

PICTURES FROM SOME OF THE STORIES MENTIONED IN THE BOOK

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