

Living in The Spirit
by Pastor Kurt Hoover

Holy Spirit Litany adapted from Psalm 51

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

All: and renew a right spirit within me.

Pastor: Cast me not away from your presence,

All: and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Pastor: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

All: and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Pastor: We worship You Lord in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Acts 1: 1-5 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴ 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; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Mark 1: 1-8 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,'"

⁴ John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Acts 1:5

There was a tangible difference in the way the first Christians lived their lives. When they, and we, receive the Holy Spirit it is not a one-time experience. When the Bible talks about the Holy Spirit it is talking about a way of life. Peter and Paul both go to great lengths to describe what it is like to live in the Spirit. John describes it as being born of God in the beginning of his gospel.

The Holy Spirit is a presence that moves and guides us throughout life. The Holy Spirit is an inspiration. Think about just how many decisions are not rational but actually inspiration.

You have been inspired by the Holy Spirit your entire life. And the Spirit loosens the chains of your hesitation and doubt more and more each day. You will take bolder leaps in this next year than you did this year.

And the boldest and largest leaps of faith that you have or will ever take in life can come at any time, because they do not depend on you. The best of who we are and how we contribute to the world is and always has been the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

This also means that - often the more thought-out or prepared your life and your choices are, the more restrained the opportunities of the Spirit. The more you try to control your leaps the less bold they become. This points to the stark contrast between the calculating Pharisees and the freedom of the early Christians.

Think about how a LEAP works in real life.

A musician or an artist, even a mathematician does their best work when they enter a *flow* state. The decision-making part of the brain literally shuts off. They can't get into the state on their own. They have come to realize that as they release themselves into the repetition of the movements and thoughts eventually something else takes over.

I remember working on the boat dock as a kid. My dad and grandfather had built a massive boat dock back in a bay of the lake where it was protected from the wind and the waves. It had 30-40 slips where you could park a boat. There was a gangway that connected it to the shore and at the very end a dock house and gas pump.

My brother and I would help pump the gas and clean boats. As we got older, we would get to drive the *John boat* out to pick people up from their boats. Half the boats at my grandparents marina were not in a slip at the dock but were out on buoys further back in the bay behind the boat dock.

On a dock you often leap from one place to another over the water. Sometimes just a short cut around a corner to avoid ropes, or pumps or storage lockers. And to get onto a boat you often have to jump because they are tied up in such a way as to make sure, they can't touch the dock in stormy weather. You get pretty good at jumping and leaping when you spend summer after summer on the dock.

And of course when you have a twin brother who is driving the *John boat* you find opportunities to jump into a moving boat before it leaves the dock. Our *John boats* were flat bottoms with 2 or 3 benches. Fairly easy to find a landing place. All the time you are jumping on to a boat, retrieving a line, and then jumping back off to tie the boat down as they get gas or are unloading.

There are two ways you can make these jumps. You can think about it. You can debate in your head which ones are worth it, and which are not. And often in your hesitation you don't quite make it and fall into the water.

Or you can just LEAP. You just don't think about it. And you find that your body and your instincts - they rise to the occasion. Often you find in the middle of the leap that you are going to have to find a different landing place.

This is what makes a LEAP of faith what it is. When the Holy Spirit inspires you to act ... the most significant acts of

kindness, sacrifice, compassion ... you and I have no way of knowing where we are going to land.

When the Holy Spirit makes you LEAP you do so not because it makes sense, or can see a good place to land. We don't leap because we know what the result will be... you leap because the moment inspires you to. The words or need of another compels you. There is no guarantee that you aren't going to get wet, or fall in, or lose something... But the Leap is worth the sacrifice. The risk, the chance that our words or our actions may impact another's life... it is worth it. And it may take 100 LEAPS before the situation changes.

If you lived your life in such a controlled way that you evaluated every decision you made to see if it was worth the risk, there would not be much to that life. Some of our proudest and most joyful moments come out of LEAPS we would not have taken if we took time to debate it in our minds.

Imagine a family or a group of people that day in and day out took unexplainable risks. Completely impulsive, responding to the world around them. LEAPing into one mess after another.

This is what the people of the way were known for. The early church captured the attention of the world and each community, not because these religious people got better at life, but because they lived their lives in a completely unexplainable way. With very little regard about their own personal reputation or prosperity or safety.

It was as if there was some other power at work in their lives.

And there was. And there is in you an I.

Do you know how many things you do day in and day out without even thinking about it. And when you do stop to debate a choice ... let me ask a bold question here. When you do stop to debate another's request for help, or what words to say... how often is that debate going on in your head excuses of why you should not act.

All this to say... the best of who we are. The best of who you are comes out of your faith, the joyful trust that sets you free to simply respond to the world around you. The best of who you are comes when you LEAP.

All this to say that you have the Holy Spirit. Day in and Day out you move and speak without thinking. And in faith you can trust that in those moments it is the Holy Spirit at work in you for the sake of your neighbor.