

# What Spirit Are You Of?

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at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.  
by S. Michael Durham  
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Luke 9:51-56

*Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.*

The question I am about to ask you requires something that is rare for human beings—self-honesty—being honest with yourself. We lie to ourselves and seldom face the truth about who we are and what we are. So, I'm asking you to do the unusual and talk straight to yourself. My question is, how do you think and feel about being criticized, disrespected, ignored, insulted, injured, maligned, mistreated, misjudged, rebuked, rejected, put-down, shut-down, or let-down? How do you respond when you are belittled or spoken to harshly or misused or even abused? This is a really important question.

Your answer will tell you a great deal about what spirit you are of; that is, what manner of spirit you are and the motivation behind your spirit. When you believe you are ill-used, what do you think and how do you feel? When is the last time that you did not feel honored? How did that make you feel?

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to die on the cross for our sins and salvation. He and His entourage passed through Samaria rather than go the customary trip around Samaria. He sent two of His disciples ahead but when the Samaritans found out they were Jews, they were angry. The Samaritans hated the Jews and considered the Jews heretical in their insistence of worship at Jerusalem and its temple. Samaritans believed that Mt. Gerizim in their province of Samaria was the only place to worship God. In spite of Jesus' earlier ministry successes in Samaria recorded in John 4, the Samaritans refused to welcome the Lord seeing that He was determined not to turn aside and worship at their holy site but go on to Jerusalem. They rejected the idea of He and His followers spending the night. They rolled up their hospitality and their sidewalks; they closed their shops and their homes and put out the no welcome sign.

No doubt, the Samaritans were wrong.

## I. The Offense of the Samaritans

There are some places you don't care to be or groups you don't want to be a part of. I remember what I felt when I received the first mailer from the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) wanting to recruit me into the organization. They start sending their tentacles out when your 49 not yet turned 50. I guess they believe snatching you as quick as they can. Well, I haven't joined and I have no plans of joining. I'm not too eager to be classified senior citizen, yet, that is.

And I'm not too interested in joining the folk buried at the cemetery either. There are some groups or places you don't want to enter. There's an old song titled, *Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven, But Nobody Wants to Die*. I guess I'm in that group.

Jesus wanted to rest at the end of a long day's journey in this particular Samaritan village. Verse 52 tells us that our Lord sent two of His disciples on ahead. It was nearing Passover time and undoubtedly the Samaritan's either asked or the two disciples let the "cat out of the bag" that they were only spending the one night because they were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. That was all it took for the Samaritans to suddenly have no vacancy.

They rejected Jesus. Not just Jesus the man but the Lord; this is God in flesh. Can you imagine saying to the Lord, "Sorry, there is no vacancy here. You have no place here. You have no right to rule over us and we are not giving you the opportunity to do so"? They closed their hearts as well as their doors to God Almighty. This, my dear friends, is a great offense.

This doesn't need to be overlooked as if not significant to the story. They rejected Him and said they would not have Him ruling over them. People today are still putting up no vacancy signs on the door of the hearts. Today the crime is committed over and over again. Millions and millions of people have put up a "No Vacancy" sign and said to Jesus, "No welcome here. You will not rule over my life."

I wonder if there are any in this room who has Jesus standing at the door of your heart waiting for you to make the next move. What will that next move be? Will you be like these Samaritans who welcomed not Jesus? I'm not talking about praying a prayer and becoming a member of a church. I'm talking about fellowship and communion with God, beginning at this moment, that's what He desires. Yes, you must accept Him not just as Savior but as Lord. As it's been said through the years, "If Jesus is not Lord of all He is not Lord at all." That is what He demands of all of us. What will you say to Him, as He beckons to give you life eternal, peace that is unending and incomprehensible? I pray there will be a vacancy in your heart.

Jesus was rebuffed, but that's not the sin I want to deal with in this message. I want to deal with a sin equally as guilty.

## II. The Offense of James and John

## **A. James and John's Problem was a Problem of Mistaken Righteous Indignation.**

They thought they were justified in the way they felt toward this Samaritan village. Let's look at what happens here.

First, they became angry.

*"And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?'" (Luke 9:54)*

They were angry. Jesus had been insulted. Their Lord had been rebuffed, maligned, mistreated, certainly you can see why they were angry. Doesn't it make you angry when you see people dishonor Jesus? It grieves me to hear somebody take the Lord's name in vain. It bothers me when I see people acting in a way that brings shame and reproach to the name of Christ. I understand why they were angry. Jesus had been insulted. But it just wasn't Jesus who had been insulted. All of His group and followers had been insulted. They were together, so, to insult Jesus was to insult the disciples and to insult the disciples was to insult Jesus. They were angry.

Please pay attention. This is information relevant to every person, whether you are a Christian or not. Anger is an emotion given to you by God. Yes, God gets angry. When God made man, He gave us the capacity to feel, to have bodily sensations and moods, and one of those is anger. But of all of the emotions that God has given—joy, happiness, elation, peace, sense of wellbeing, security—anger is the most dangerous of them all. This is the one emotion that carries with it biblical restrictions and cautions against.

*"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (anger); 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)*

When you are angry, you are not capable of doing God's will. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. There is a righteous indignation, but that is not what James and John had. They thought they did but they really didn't. When can you express anger and when is it proper to do so? When God is in that anger. When you're angry about the same things God is angry about, but you do not unleash that anger, you use it to motivate you to do God's will. But again, I'm not here to talk about righteous indignation, I'm here to talk about man's anger, the anger we all naturally have.

As I said, anger is an emotion given to you by God but, as you all know, every emotion and everything about us has been corrupted by the fall and therefore is perverted, including this emotion of anger.

In Ephesians 4:26-27, the Apostle Paul gives us three restrictions about the expression of anger.

*“Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil.”  
(Ephesians 4:26-27)*

First, be angry and do not sin. You never read, “Be happy and do not sin.” “Be joyful and do not sin.” “Be elated and do not sin.” “Be sad and do not sin.” No, it is specific to anger, “be angry and do not sin.” Why? Because anger is at the very doorstep of sin. It is the one emotion that is a hair’s breath from falling over into the other side in sin. So, the only way you and I can be angry is not to sin. When you’re angry you must remain in self-control. You cannot lose it. You cannot blow your stack. You cannot lose your temp, in other words, your temperament must remain in self-control. If you do this, then you have been angry and have not sinned. But the moment you lose control, and I don’t mean just an emotional outburst, but any kind of response that is not Christ-centered, you’ve have sinned.

Secondly, do not let the sun go down on your anger. That does not mean that if you and your wife have a spat about 5 in the afternoon and you’re lying in bed at 11:30 going on midnight and you’re still upset about it and then remember Paul’s words, “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath,” and you think, “Uh oh, I’ve got to get this right,” so you wake up your wife, “Wake up! Wake up!” That is not what that means. It’s just a metaphor to say even if God is in your anger let it be short-lived. Let the duration of your anger be brief. Don’t let it simmer because the moment you let it simmer it’s going to take control and seize you, even if it’s justified and righteous.

It must be short-lived because we just can’t handle it. I’ve often thought about Jesus making a whip and driving out those moneychangers and throwing the temple tables over and I’ve thought, what a display of anger. Yet Jesus remained in complete control. I’ve come to the conclusion that I could never do that therefore I better not let my anger get me close to such a stage.

Righteous indignation is a very difficult thing for most of us. It’s best to give it to God quickly and immediately.

Thirdly, don’t give place to the devil. Sin crouches at the very threshold of Satan’s residence when you lose your temper, when you get angry, you are making an opening for the enemy in various facets of your life. You’re giving him right to set up domain.

You say, “I don’t know what the problem is. I blow up and then it’s done.” So does a shotgun! See what damage it does? Just because it’s short-fused and over in a moment doesn’t mean it’s okay. Look at the wake of destruction left behind. Most of us are not capable of knowing how to express rage or anger in a righteous way, so don’t do it. That’s my advice.

Not only were James and John angry, they wanted revenge. This is what anger that’s not dealt with does. We’ve all been angry, even God gets angry, so just being angry is not a sin. It’s what you do with that anger that determines whether it’s sin or not. Here with James and John their anger quickly turned to retaliation and wanting to respond with revenge.

*“And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’” (Luke 9:54)*

That was their response to being mistreated by the Samaritans. They mistook their anger as righteous. We know it is not righteous because Jesus’ rebukes them.

*“But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.’” (Luke 9:55)*

But James and John didn’t know it. They thought they were being very spiritual and compared their desire to toast the village to the mighty prophet Elijah, who called fire down twice. Anger is an emotion so deceptive that it will often convince you that you are justified in your display and expression of it. You can even go and find places in the Bible to warrant it, just like James and John. This is why anger is so dangerous and must be avoided by those who are walking in the Spirit.

Do you know the story about Elijah calling down fire from heaven? I think it’s appropriate that we recap it since it is mentioned in our text.

King Ahaziah, the son of the wicked King Ahab, suffered a terrible fall and sent couriers to the temple of an idol god who was supposed to be a deity of medicine to enquire if he would recover or not. Along the way the messengers were confronted by Elijah who sent the messengers back to the king with his prophecy that he would die as a result of his injuries from his fall. The messengers returned to the king, told him the news of the prophet, and then described the preacher to the king, not knowing who he was. When the king heard the description of the prophet, he knew it was Elijah. He then sent an army captain and 50 soldiers to capture Elijah and bring him to Samaria.

The Bible records the following events. Upon arriving at where Elijah was staying the captain said:

*“Man of God, the king has said, ‘Come down!’” So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.*

*Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And he answered and said to him: “Man of God, thus has the king said, ‘Come down quickly!’” So Elijah answered and said to them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.*

*Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: “Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight.”*

*And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king.*

James and John knew this story. Jesus had been mistreated and had not been given proper lodging and help. They had the Bible to justify their anger, but Jesus said, "No you don't." Friends, be careful, someone can sin against you and absolutely did not honor you but dishonored you. I understand you're feeling. That's why I asked those questions at the beginning of the message. I know we've all experienced this, not just once or twice but it happens regularly. Somebody treats us in a fashion we do not believe we deserve and we think ourselves justified in our retaliation. You will feel justified in feeling wronged and you will feel justified in your response. You think, *they are wrong and I am right*. That does not justify retaliation.

## **B. The Basis of James and John's Anger.**

The basis of James and John's anger was not righteous indignation it was selfish-love. It was more selfish love even more than it was love for Jesus.

What is a selfish-love? It is a more than appropriate love for one's self. I know there are Bible teachers and preachers who have said you don't need to love yourself but that's not a command given in Scripture and I believe in preaching only what the Bible says and not what it doesn't say. So the Bible tells me that God gave every one of us the ability—and therefore, it's natural—to love your own self. You are to take care of yourself. Self-preservation comes from this type of self love. Why would Jesus ever address rewards and judgments if there was not something about us naturally that He could appeal to? It's the love of self. It's there. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about a love for self that is more important than love for God or others. It is a manifestation of pride that sees the faults of others and is blind to your own. It is the opinion that in some way you are superior to others or more worthy of esteem or value. In today's culture it is erroneously taught as self-esteem. There are many people out there writing books and teaching saying you ought to love yourself with a selfish kind of love and they call it self-esteem, thinking that will take the sin out of it. Whether you call it self-esteem or selfish love or whatever, it is not God's kind of love.

One of the evidences of this selfish kind of love, and there are many but I only have time to deal with one, is a sensitivity to what people say to you or how they treat you. Selfish love is always going to be sensitive to how people address you, their mannerisms around you, their demeanor and how the deal treat you. A person more consumed with loving self more than God and others will always be conscious of this at all times. I'm not just talking about lost people; in fact, I'm not even talking about lost people at this moment. I'm talking about Christians like James and John. They have an oversensitivity, if you please. I would like to suggest that any sensitivity to the way people deal with us is absolutely selfish love.

I will love you as long as you love the same thing I love—me and mine. That's what we're dealing with. This is the same spirit that James and John had. Beloved, I don't preach this message because of any one thing but I believe this is the word of the Lord for us this morning so please don't try to make personal application from any experience you have had with me or anyone else in this church. I say to you in the strictest honesty my heart can know: I preach this because the Lord laid this text upon my heart and it has grown over the days.

Way too many of us are like James and John, we're too sensitive to how people talk to us or deal with us. This is not righteous or holy. When you are concerned about how others deal with you and relate to you, then you are carnal and not spiritual. If you are exacting about how people relate to you, and disturbed if they treat you in a manner in which you believe you don't deserve, and the result is anger in your heart, my dear friend, I say to you with all compassion, you are on the path of an enemy not the path of the Savior. This is the leading of the enticer to sin not the Savior who is holy.

We ought to be a people who care very little about what others think about us, what others say about us, and how others treat us. This is the way Jesus was and is.

So many of us are over-preoccupied with how we are viewed, how we are related to, what people are thinking or saying about us. I should be much more concerned with what God is thinking about me and what the Triune God is saying amongst Themselves about me.

Let's look at how Jesus responded. Did Jesus call down fire from heaven? Did He rebuke the Samaritans? What was His retaliation? His retaliation was to move on to the next village and just leave it alone.

### **III. The Mercy of Jesus**

Our love must be measured against God's love. What I mean by that is that the way we love one another ought to be compared to the standard of how God loves us. Not in degree but in kind. None of us are going to love to the degree God loves us but we can love with the same kind of love. God is able to love you and I even when we are unlovable. He loves us with a merciful kind of love, a love that forbears, a love that—if you please—tolerates us. Do we love and delight in the wellbeing of others like God loves us?

To love somebody else, even when they have mistreated you, is not denying love for yourself or the delight in your own wellbeing. Actually, you can love that person and still love your wellbeing at the same time because they are the same love. Your love for the wellbeing of others, can love a person and their wellbeing even when they mistreat you because you love to love.

What I mean by this is this. Your sense of wellbeing comes from others' wellbeing and happiness. You love to make others happy, encouraged, strengthened, helped, and their delight and joy is

your delight and joy and the more they have delight and joy the more you are delighted and joyful. This is the way the love of God works.

To the person in this room who is not yet truly a believer, God actually enjoys blessing you even though you are not yet His child. There is a love of God that recognizes you rebuff Him, you put up a no-vacancy sign over your heart and yet He still delights in your wellbeing because He is merciful. We are to love the same way regardless if our love is reciprocated or rejected.

What did Jesus do? He didn't rebuke the Samaritans, He rebuked James and John because today is the day of salvation. Elijah's day was a completely different work of God at that time. Jesus had come to bring salvation. Look at verse 56.

*"For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."*

"There it is, James and John. You're not of that kind of spirit; you're wanting to destroy them! No, My kind of spirit is one of mercy. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the acceptable time. I've come to keep men from judgment and the fire of God. I've come to spare people of the flames of hell, a flame that is never quenched."

Our God, through Jesus Christ, came to us in order to not deal with us according to our sins and iniquities and transgressions but to deal with us according to the lovingkindness of His own soul and heart. Jesus said His mission was to "seek and to save that which is lost." This is the hour of salvation, friend. Today the gates of heaven are wide open to you and there's nothing to bar your way from coming to God. There should be no fear that He will cast you aside because Jesus said, "All who come to Me, I will in no wise cast out." It's the day of salvation. It's a day of mercy.

When Jesus came to His hometown to begin His ministry in Luke 4, He opened up the Bible in Isaiah 61 and read the prophecy.

*"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." (Luke 4:18-19)*

Then He closed the book. He stopped reading the remainder of the prophecy because after that it talks about His judgment. He'll make the sun to turn dark, the moon to blood; He will pour out His wrath upon those who reject Him. He refused purposefully to read that part because that was not the mission of His first coming; it was the mission of the second. Do you know what He did? He expounded the text to the home crowd and the more He preached the angrier they became until they forcibly grabbed Him, manhandled Him and took Him out of the synagogue. They forced Him to the edge of Nazareth where there was a cliff and wanted to kill Him. His ministry wasn't even an hour old and they already wanted to kill Him and were in the act to do so.



What does Jesus do? Watch this. Marvel. Does He, like Elijah of old, call fire down and consume His hometown? No. Not at all. The Bible simply says,

*“Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.”*

He didn't exert any supernatural power. He didn't make them all blind. He simply passed through the crowd unharmed and untouched. Why? There's a sermon there. Here's the message—this is the day of salvation!

God has laid down His weapons of war against you, sir. He's saying, “I've come to show that God loves the world so much that He would give His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish.” Listen to God, even in the Old Testament, “I take no delight in the death of the wicked.” No delight in the death of the wicked yet He has to judge because of His love. He will one day judge you and me. We will one day stand before the throne of God and give an account because of divine love.

Right now Divine Love is to bring every sinner in who will be brought in. Will you? What spirit are you of? Do you have the spirit to welcome Christ and say, “Lord, have Your way?” Any other spirit will damn your soul. If your spirit regarding Jesus Christ is any other way, then you are headed for judgment.

Jesus bore the indignities, the curses, the ridicule, and mockery with forbearance and mercy. And that is what He does for you and me, even right now. The next time someone deals with you in an unfair way, at least unfair to you, you must remember how Jesus deals with you. Take His cue and example. “How do You deal with me, Lord, when I'm not so kind toward You, when I disregard Your Lordship, when I act in a way contrary to Your Spirit, how do You deal with me?”

What's the answer to the question? How does He deal with you? Does He want to curse you? Does He want to call down fire from heaven and singe you and all that you have? Not at all. What does God do? He loves you. There's not a child of God here who has ever sinned against the Lord that God stripped him of everything and cast him away. What does God continue to do? He keeps mercifully loving you and He demonstrates it in acts of kindness. This is the way we are to love others.

I tell you, my friend, some people act out in retaliation and revenge not with outbursts of anger but simply ignorance, keeping people at a distance. But on the inside there is a disturbance that leads to further disturbances and problems. That's a different spirit than the spirit of Christ. If you're to walk with Jesus you have to have the same spirit. How can two walk together unless they be agreed?

Does the Spirit of Christ motivate you when you are dealt with in an unfair way, when you are rightly justified in your anger? How do you respond? How can you walk with Jesus unless you be agreed? The only appropriate response is to return good for evil.

It's at this point you can sit there and say, "Ah, that's not for me. God can only do that. I can't do that." Are you filled with the Spirit of Jesus? Are you really His? What spirit are you of? If you have the Spirit of Christ in you then you are more than capable of doing it because with God you can do all things. Why? Because He strengthens you, even to love your enemies.

Look at Colossians 3.

*"Therefore, as the elect of God,"*

Who are "the elect of God?" Christians. Every saved person.

*holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*

What does longsuffering mean? To suffer long.

*bearing with one another,*

To tolerate, to bear with them. I know some people are like trying to bear with a prickly pear or porcupine, I mean, every place you touch them they're going to hurt you. But the command is to bear with them. Some of us can't bear with one another because we're like a fevered child on his sick bed, every place you touch him, he lets out a groan because it hurts. We walk with this anger in us, we walk with this attitude that we're worthy of a certain esteem and respect and you'd better give it to me. But everyone else is like that too. We're hurting one another, pricking one another, harming one another. So God says, "In the church this is going to happen so I command you to bear with one another." And not just that.

*and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." (Colossians 3:12-13)*

You've must forgive. You must forgive but you can choose to not do so. Often we choose not to because we cannot see our own selfish-love, but once you do and you understand how poor and needy you are, well then, you can respond with the mercy of Christ. When you truly know that you're no better than the person who has wounded you, when you see we're all flawed, frail, and feeble, then forgiveness can pour out of your heart towards the erring.

Even in your wounds you can recognize God's love. He let that person hurt you. Do you hear me? I don't care if you don't agree with me. You can take it up with God. Be careful, I'm being very sincere here, this is God's commandment and you must forgive.

God allowed that person to hurt you because it exposed your heart of selfish love. That's how much He loves you. Your whole spiritual downward spiral is not a result of their actions but because of a selfish heart that was already there that their actions exposed. I know it's hard to explain that even in God's own church, His own family, that He would allow His children to hurt

each other. But people can do only what God permits, and whatever God permits them to do against us must be seen as God's activity. It is not His will they they sin against us, I didn't mean it that way, but it is His will to use their sin against us to a greater good just as He used the sins committed against His own Son for a greater good. Thus, we must accept God's will. We must learn to do what Jesus did and show mercy to those who sin against us.

I conclude and say to all of my friends here who may be in a state of what we heard earlier today, "I thought I was a Christian for all of these years but God showed me otherwise..." Has He demonstrated to your understanding what spirit you are of? Has He showed you that there is no spirit of the Living God in you? Do you see that they spirit in you is just the spirit of religion that's masking your selfish love? A religious spirit will strengthen selfish love, for it makes the heart crave for people to see how good you are so they will praise you. Oh my friend, what spirit are you of? That's not the spirit of Jesus. I exhort you, come to Christ—He is merciful!

I know every argument you could present me. I know because I often argued them before the Lord myself. I know you don't feel right or just that you can come to this holy God. I know you don't feel worthy to be presented to Him and become one of His children. I know the arguments. I know you feel this way, but I have one argument against you—Jesus crucified and risen from the dead! Can your argument mount to that height? Is it as persuasive as the blood of Jesus Christ shed for sinners? I don't think so. There is nothing that stands between you and God at this moment other than your own selfish pride. I'm asking you in the name of Christ, pleading in His stead, be reconciled to Him this morning! Come! Lay aside the pride and accept the mercy of God. Know love unbounded, eternal, and free. Come. In Jesus' name. Amen.