

Filled With The Spirit

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21

15 So be very careful how you live. Do not live like people who aren't wise. Live like people who are wise.

16 Make the most of every opportunity. The days are evil. 17 So don't be foolish. Instead, understand what the Lord wants.

18 Don't fill yourself up with wine. Getting drunk will lead to wild living. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

19 Speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. 20 Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Follow the lead of one another because of your respect for Christ.

Text: Ephesians 5:18

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit”

Introduction:

Have you ever wondered at the mediocrity of what passes for the normal Christian life?

If you have, you are not alone.

I've struggled with this question in my own life.

Why is it that so many Christians are not living the Fruitful Fruits of the Holy Spirit, in other words, lives that are marked by joy, peace, patience, power, goodness, and a rich and abiding love?

Why isn't the church seeing answers to their prayers?

Why aren't we seeing multitudes of people coming to know Jesus Christ as their Personal Savior?

I suppose that if all we had were the Scriptural accounts of how Christians lived then we would be able to dismiss our behavior now.

Let me try to explain that statement a little better. You see, it's my belief that we can live the way Jesus wants us to live, but in order to do that we must have judgment day honesty.

Every one of us here this morning needs to face where we are spiritually and decide if there is anywhere we are coming up short.

If there is anything that I would want in my own personal life and the church where I pastor, it would be to see a Great moving of God.

If you are a Bible reader and have read the accounts of many believers, we both know they had their own struggles in their walk with God.

On the other hand, there were some pretty spectacular things that happened when the Holy Spirit came and indwelled the 120 disciples in the Upper Room that is recorded in Acts 2.

We could simply say that this kind of living was only possible in that age.

But we cannot so easily dismiss it.

The uncomfortable truth is that we have people today who are experiencing a rich and deep life in Christ.

If you are a reader, which I know that many of you are, you will read about people and churches today being mightily used of God.

So we know from their testimonies and the miracles that are happening that living a deeper Spiritual life with Christ is possible.

No, this life is not something which was reserved for some so-called Apostolic period.

There are those who experience it today.

This is no new problem.

The history of the church is filled with examples of those who have addressed this very issue.

Still in our bookstores today are writings by people like Andrew Murray, William Law, R.A. Torrey, Watchman Nee, Oswald Chambers, Dwight L. Moody and many others like them from years ago addressing this issue.

I grew up with this kind of preaching that I'm going to preach to you today.

I remember sitting in Camp Meeting and listening to great evangelists such as John R. Church, Morton Dorsey, Donovan Humble, James Crabtree and Jason Feltner, all of these and many more that were contemporary my lifetime.

They saw in their day what we see in ours --- a few going on with God while the majority languish in mediocrity.

What do I mean by mediocrity?

A good definition of mediocre means to accept the ordinary or just average.

- It means coming to church not really expecting anything to happen.
- It means being content with the size of the church.
- It means not really expecting God to meet the financial needs of this church.
- It means just fulfilling our spiritual commitment for the week.
- It means to be saved and a believer, but not experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

In this sense that we are talking about when it comes to our spiritual lives, it would mean living with the Power and the Purity that is **experienced in being Filled with the Holy Spirit**.

Let me ask you a question then: Is this experience of a full and rich life in Christ reserved only for the few around the world?

- Is it reserved only for Pastor Agarrar in Brazil
- Is it reserved only for Rick Warren
- Is it reserved only for Evelyn Christenson

Is it not possible for every believer?
Is it not possible for every one of us here this morning?

Many have concluded that it is only for the few.

Now - This is an easy conclusion to draw, and it is very tempting to do so.

It's an easy out for those who don't have faith to believe

You see - if we draw this conclusion then we can excuse our lack of living the surrendered and full life that Christ promised to give to us.

And when we do this, we can sit comfortably and not really expect God to do anything for us.

But this conclusion has absolutely no basis in the Holy Scriptures.

This experience I am preaching about this morning is not exclusively just for some group of super-saints leaving the rest of us struggling in some mediocre experience with Christ.

The Christian life that is marked by the power of the Holy Spirit is for everyone.

The real truth of the matter may be that the modern evangelical church is lacking in power because of an under-emphasis on a personal, powerful, and dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Believers - friends, listen to me, The Church of the Nazarene was founded upon this experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

And the big lack in this denomination and others is due to spiritual lethargy. A mediocrity that has settled into our churches.

In his book: "Witnessing Without Fear", Bill Bright says, **"If you aren't excited about something, chances are you won't tell many people about it. And we find that in the lives of far too many Christians, the excitement of the Christian walk has been dulled by everyday distractions, materialistic pursuits and unconfessed sins. Like the believers in the church of Ephesus, these men and women have *"left their first love."***

Bill Bright tells this story:

A few years ago, following one of my lectures on the lordship of Jesus Christ, a bright young educator came to see me.

His credentials were superb: an earned doctorate, an already-successful career, and prospects for even further upward mobility.

But something was bothering him.

He said to me, “I became a Christian several years ago when I was a young boy. But through the years I gradually took back the control of my life.

I am still active in my church.

Yet, I am ashamed to say that I’ve been more interested in promoting my own business and social position than I have been in serving the Lord and getting to know Him better.

I have a compromised my business and professional standards, and have not always been honest and ethical in my dealings with others.

God has shown me that I have wasted many years living selfishly and for my own interests.

Now I want to help reach the world for Christ.”

Bill Bright said, “We prayed together, and rejoiced in his new commitment. Up that moment he had been living in spiritual lethargy: self-centered, carnal, and with little desire to reach out and share the love of Christ with others.

Upon his re-dedication, (and allowing Jesus to become Lord in his life), he became a confident, effective witness for Jesus.”

I. The Issue

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” (5:18)

The Apostle Paul addresses our need in the first part of this verse when he says do not get drunk with wine.

You might think how odd to begin here, but the Apostle Paul is beginning where we live.

He warns against the sin of drunkenness.

This was a sin very frequent among the heathens; and particularly whenever they would have a feast.

And when they would get drunk there would be the sins of lust.

And Paul was telling them that where drunkenness was there was all kinds of sensuality and vile sins.

In Psalm 66:18 it reads, “If I regard iniquity (sin) in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” KJV

Unconfessed sin short-circuits our fellowship with God and makes us like those Christians Paul describes in I Corinthians 3:1-3

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and

quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere human beings?

The carnal Christian described by the Apostle Paul does not feel the need to share Christ with others because their attention is upon themselves rather than on others.

This type of person has allowed the love of things, love of distractions, and Unconfessed sins to take their eyes off Jesus.

They have left their first love.

My friend, if this sounds any where like you, I want you to know that you can restore your first love – your intimacy and joy in making Jesus Lord of your life by taking two important steps:

1) Be sure there is no Unconfessed sin in your life.

Sometimes we just need to get alone with God. We need to ask Him to reveal to us through His Holy Spirit areas that might not be right.

- Could you have offended someone and not asked for forgiveness?
- Could you have violated a command of God's Word and not asked God for forgiveness?
- Have you been living live of criticism and being negative all the time?
- Have you been unloving to others and displayed a mean spirit?

- Have you been unloving to your spouse?
- Have you been dishonest with finances or work habits?
- Have you been dwelling on lustful thoughts and fantasizing about someone?
- Have you been involved in any pornography?

And if you and God agree on any of these issues then you need to agree with God in prayer that you have sinned, and you need to appropriate His forgiveness that is promised in I John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

And when you agree with God about this – you repent and ask Him through His Holy Spirit to turn your heart and mind away from these sins and move towards complete obedience to God.

2) Be sure you are controlled by God's Holy Spirit

II. The Answer

... but be filled with the Spirit. (5:18b)

What has been missing for so many believers in their spiritual lives is a dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit is the secret of living the Christian life.

It simply means allowing God, through His Holy Spirit, to empower and guide you moment by moment, day by day.

The same Holy Spirit who empowered the disciples at Pentecost to *“turn the world upside down”* is available to each one of us today.

We are commanded in Ephesians 5:18, *“Be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

The tragedy is that in many churches the work of the Holy Spirit is almost totally neglected in teaching and practice.

This should not be so.

The Bible emphasizes the power, person, and work of and the guiding ministry of the Holy Spirit throughout its pages.

But if you and I are going to live for Christ and be effective for Christ then we must be willing to surrender our lives totally to His control.

Keeping Christ on the Throne of Your Life.

Picture with me this morning a Large Throne.

This is the control center of your life – Your will.

God created you with a free will.

And God wants you to choose freely whether you will obey Him and live for Him.

The Apostle Paul struggled with this free will when he said in Romans 7:14-20

14-16 I can anticipate the response that is coming: "I know that all God's commands are spiritual, but I'm not. Isn't this also your experience?" Yes. I'm full of myself—after all, I've spent a long time in sin's prison. What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary.

17-20 But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

Paul identifies his problem. Can you?

Being Filled with the Holy Spirit is simply the act of surrendering your will and actions to God for Him to control the throne of your life.

Let me share with you another story:

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Jeff, for example, had been a Christian since childhood, but he had felt frustrated with his “roller coaster” commitment to Christ.

When he learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and keep God on the throne of his life through daily prayer, he consciously began to tell the Lord,

“I give you control of the throne of my life. Guide me, and give me wisdom and strength today to act, talk, and think the way You want me to.

Fill me with your Holy Spirit today>”

From that time on Jeff left a life of constant defeat and he began to live a life of spiritual victory and joy with Christ.

Let me ask you friend, are you tired of living a defeated spiritual life?

Are you weary of just the routine?

Are you interested in a dynamic spiritual life that will see things above mediocrity?

Let me take you back to Acts chapter 2 and verses 1 and 4

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”

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Acts 2 records an awesome historic event that changed the church forever – the coming of the Holy Spirit into the life of the church of the Day of Pentecost.

Illustration:

Whenever I first became a Christian, there were very few modern translations of the Scriptures.

Like many of you, I grew up with the King James Version.

There it talked about the Holy Ghost.

Ghosts are spooky, ethereal, nebulous apparitions.

Perhaps some people believe the Holy Ghost is like that.

He is not! Of course, a more appropriate translation is Spirit, not Ghost.

Even so, we must remember that the Holy Spirit is a person.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.

Father, Son, and Spirit are the triune God.

So what we are talking about is God the Holy Spirit.

We are not simply talking about some strange apparition.

We are talking about a manifestation of the living God.

And the Holy Spirit is not only a person, but He has a very real work to do in our lives.

Just as the Holy Spirit was actively working in creation, so He is working in our lives as well.

He convicts us of sin,

- reveals Christ to us,
- draws us to the Savior,
- regenerates us, and
- indwells us.
- He seals us,
- anoints us,
- fills us, and
- intercedes for us.
- He leads and
- guides us.

In light of all this, we should get to know Him better.

What we are called to do is **to be filled with the Spirit**.

The command in our English language seems very simple and straight forward.

However, **the verb, which is translated be filled** is much more rich in the original Greek language.

The verb, *plerousthe*, is a second person, plural, present, imperative, passive verb.

This is one lesson in Greek grammar that's worth understanding.

- The verb's mood is imperative.
- That means that it is a command.

Be filled with the Spirit is not simply a suggestion.

Not if you feel like it.

A true Christian must be filled with the Spirit.

This is not some kind of optional spiritual delicacy to be tasted at our convenience.

This is God's command to us.

The verb's tense is present.

In our English language we speak of things in three tenses:

past,
present, and
future.

The Greek verbal system is much more complex.

The present tense used here refers to a continuous action.

We could translate this to read **“be being filled continuously.”**

It is an action which has a beginning and is carried on.

We're not called to simply be filled once and that's it.
Although this is a Crisis experience.

But we are called to maintain the state of being filled continuously with the Spirit of God.

The **verb's voice is passive.**

That means that the subject is acted upon by another.

Being filled with the Spirit is something that the Holy Spirit does to us.

He comes upon us.

Our role is one of surrender.

We simply give up and let the Lord take control of every part of our life.

The verb is in the second person.

It is addressed to you.

The verb's number is plural.

It is not simply addressed to you, but to all of you.

It includes everyone.

Whatever your situation in life,
whatever your education,
whatever your occupation, it doesn't matter.

It says, ***You are to be filled with Spirit.***

What we are talking about is a dynamic relationship of being encountered and filled by the Spirit of the living God.

This is what Jesus was referring to in John 14:17 as He spoke of ***“the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.”***

The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus to us.

He is also called the ***promise of the Father.***

In Luke 24:49 we read, ***“and behold, I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”***

In Acts 1:8 the promise continues: ***“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”***

When the Holy Spirit comes upon us – the immediate result is to be witnesses for Jesus.

Of course, in Acts 2 we see the fulfillment of that promise as the Holy Spirit came upon the people and they were baptized in His power.

Concluding his sermon at Pentecost, we read in Acts 2:38-39: *“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.”*

It should be obvious to us when we read the Word that God wants every believer to live in the power of and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

This promise is for every believer the Lord calls to Himself.

My friend, it is for you.

Being filled by the Spirit will produce a life in us.

Jesus spoke of this life in John 7:37-39: *“Now in the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture says, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke of the (Holy) Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.’”*

These rivers of living water in the Christian life speaks of the life in the Holy Spirit.

When you come to Jesus, you're invited to drink from the living waters of the life of the Spirit.

Then this living water becomes rivers of living water, not only flowing into you, but also flowing out from you.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 it says, *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”*

The invitation is clear.

We are to drink deeply of the Spirit of God.

So how do we obey the command?

There is only one route.

It is the way of surrender.

It all begins there.

We must be willing to surrender ourselves completely to the Lord.

Why is that difficult? Because Paul said in Romans 7 that self gets in the way.

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Our problem is we don't want to give up our throne.

We are not so sure that we want to give the throne of our life to Christ.

But it's at the place of absolute surrender that we receive the power of God's Holy Spirit.

If we hold back ourselves in any way, then we grieve the Spirit.

In short, we must give ourselves totally to the Spirit just as a drunkard gives himself to the influence of the drink. Just as the drink controls the one intoxicated, **so we must be controlled by the Spirit.**

And that means we must let Him take control.

We do that by surrender.

I want to challenge you to hear the command of God to be filled with the Spirit.

I want to challenge you to obey that command.

Is there something you have been holding back?

Is there some area of your life you have yet to surrender?

Are you willing to allow the Spirit of God to take control of you and every part of your life?

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Are you willing to let Him set the conditions?

If you are willing to surrender your life completely to the Lord in a practical way, He can fill you and keep you full.

Do it without delay!

Invitation:

The invitation is this: This message is for the believers, but the sinner can come and be saved this morning.

If you will look at your life and see your need, and come to God for His Promise of the Holy Spirit, He will meet you and give you this Gift of His Spirit.

Would you come?