

Ephesians 5:18–21

" The Command to Be Filled with the Spirit in Congregational Singing and Conversation"

2020.11.01 Evening Sermon ▫ **Pastor James Hakim**

Hopewell ARP ▫ **Culleoka, TN**

Every true Christian would immediately join in the command not to be drunk with wine. This is the “put off” portion of command. Drunkenness leads to dissipation, which is the exact opposite of self-control—a recklessness that falls easily into any and every sort of sin.

But the “putting on” is every bit as much as a command. Being filled with the Spirit is not a higher state to which some believers finally attain. Rather, it is a command that is set in parallel cooperation with “do not be drunk with wine.” Our Lord commands every single believer to be filled with the Spirit.

Now, let us not get the wrong idea. Being filled with the Spirit is not something that we can “accomplish.” This is a commandment, but it is a passive commandment. “Be filled.” In other words, we are commanded to something that only the Spirit Himself can do. We might paraphrase it, “let the Holy Spirit fill you.”

Thankfully, in the next three verses, there are several participial verbs by which the Spirit Himself tells us the means by which He fills us, before going on in the next twenty-one verses to describe what that Spirit-filled life will look like.

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (v19a). Earlier in the letter, the apostle said that the risen, victorious Lord gives gifts to equip every joint to supply something and every member to do its share. What is a great part of that share? Public worship. Singing in public worship. Singing various kinds of Scripture (each of these terms comes from superscripts of different types of Psalms in the Greek translation of the Old Testament that they were using in Ephesus). Since the Spirit Himself fills us through our speaking to one another in the singing in public worship, you are commanded to attend. You are commanded to sing. And the Spirit Himself honors His means by filling you through that singing—not necessarily by making you feel very spiritual, but rather by making His Word to dwell in you more richly (cf. Col 3:16).

“Singing and making melody in your heart” (v19b). Ordinarily, musical tunes energize the singing. We have all felt that. But that is not the accompaniment to the singing in Christian public worship. The accompaniment is the heart of the Christian, more specifically the grace of Christ in the heart (cf. Col 3:16). We understand this even better when we realize that it is Christ Himself Who sings through our brethren, and Who speaks through us to our brethren (cf. Heb 2:12). When this passage commands us to be filled with the Spirit, part of what it commands us to do is to realize that Jesus has not only given to us what to sing, but that He Himself is powerfully working to make those words of His to dwell richly in us while we sing. The command “Be filled with the Spirit” is a command to have a particular view of congregational singing.

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v20). The Spirit wars against the flesh, and as He wars against “fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, [...] filthiness, foolish talking, and coarse jesting” (v3–4a), with what does He displace these things that are put off? The Spirit displaces them with the putting on of “giving of thanks” (v4b). So, what is the Spirit’s own incubator for this thanksgiving that is to saturate out conversations with one another and to saturate our view of our lives under God? The Spirit incubates this thankfulness in the singing of the congregation, as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself

expresses His own perfect thankfulness and joy through our mouths and in our hearts (v20).

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God” (v21). Who leads worship at your church? In one sense, the correct answer to that question is “the risen, ascended Lord Jesus leads worship from the throne.” Hallelujah! In a subordinate sense, the answer to that question is “the shepherd-teachers whom that Jesus has given for leading and teaching His church” (cf. Eph 4:11). But, in a very real and true sense, under Christ and His governance through those elders, the entire congregation is called to lead within the context of the singing. This is one reason that some current trends in public worship music, in addition to profaning the worship of God by offering what is according to the design of men instead of the command of God... these trends harm the congregation’s discipleship by removing this dynamic of each of us leading all the others, and each of us being led by all the others, during congregational song.

And how dreadful for us to diverge from the Spirit’s directives for congregational song! Here, the Holy Spirit tells us that our submission to one another in this corporate singing is part of how He fills us—part of how we obey the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So, if we decide instead to sing (or have musical performance) that is according to what feels most spiritual to us, we tragically give up the actual filling of the almighty Holy Spirit for a powerless and worthless feeling of spirituality. In our singing, we can only “submit to one another in the fear of God” if it is that God’s word being sung in that God’s way.

What a marvelous thing is congregational song in public worship! In it, we obey that wonderful command, “Be filled with the Spirit”!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

Ephesians.

Chapter 5.

This afternoon is 18 through 21. So let us ask the Lord for his help. Our father in heaven you give us commands that only you ultimately can accomplish. We thank you that you have told us what the means are about by which are that you have ordained to accomplish them.

As we come to use as means. We recognize Lord that we can't make. Your word to dwell in us richly we can't make your spirit to fill us. We can't put grace in our own hearts. That is your grace. So come now by your spirit we ask. Be gracious to us.

And make that word to dwell in us richly. For we ask it through Jesus amen.'s five verses 18 through 21, these are God's words and do not be drunk with wine. In which as dissipation. But be filled. With the spirit. Speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing in making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submitting to one another. In the fear. Of God. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent toward.

Because we are in America and 2020 we come upon the heels of about a hundred and eighty years of temperance movement in American Christianity. One of the results of the second horrible and sleeping under Charles Finney and the non-conversion of many who made quote unquote decisions was that they needed something to display their first unity that they could do in the flesh.

And so they came up with this idea of abstaining entirely from alcohol in order to combat drunkenness. Calling evil that which God in many places in his word called good. And yet it is an important command not to be drunk with wine. The days are evil. We are to be redeeming the time.

We are to be purchasing by awareness of ourselves in light of God's word and awareness of God's will from that word how he wants us to be acting in every moment and the one who is drunk is not aware of himself and cares very little for the will of God.

He just wastes destroys the time in foolishness. Dissipation debauchery doing that, which is worthless and worse than worthless. But the command not to be drunk with wine is the putting off part of the command in verse 18. We've seen this haven't we since the the last section there of chapter four that multiple places the apostle and said okay put this off from your old self your darkness self and put this on from your new self in Christ as a child of God and as light that belongs to and is joined United to Jesus Christ.

So as we seek to obey the command to put off drunkenness, what is it that we are to be putting on instead? Because that is the way to battle drunkenness. Not by calling evil what God calls good but by putting on in the the other part of the command being filled with the spirit.

Did you know that being filled with the spirit as a command? Every Christian in fact, every person is commanded to be filled with the spirit. You say all that's a commandment that only Christians can obey. Well, that means it's one of God's commandments because all of his commandments ultimately are only commandments that Christians can obey being filled with the spirit is not.

The emotional high or some ecstatic moment in which you lose control of yourself. That is actually closer to the dissipation of drunkenness. Being filled with the spirit is to be controlled by the word of God. In the service of God and we are commanded to be filled with the spirits on the one hand, it's a command.

Every Christian is to be filled with the spirit. If the duty. We know that as many Romans chapter 8 as our lead by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. This is not some some separate extra-level of the Christian life that you live to get to one day.

This is the Christian life. To be filled with this the Holy Spirit, you had chapter four we were told. Was given to us by whom we were sealed for the day of redemption. So it's a commandment but it's also something that you and I can't do. It's a passive commandment like repentee and be baptized.

Repent as active be baptized as passive. Commanding you to yield to something that someone else does to you. And be filled with the spirit is commanding you to yield to something that only God the third person of the Trinity God the Spirit can do. Now, thankfully He gives us several participles.

Those ING words present participles and the rest of this passage that are means by which the Spirit fills us. Speaking to one another verse 19. Singing and making melody in your heart the second half of verse 19. Giving thanks always first half of verse 20 or all over 20 and submitting to one another verse 21.

So these are means these are different parts different things aspects of one thing that the spirit especially uses to fill us. Speaking to one another verse 19 in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. One of the ways that the Holy Spirit has ordained to fill us as by our speaking to one another and this isn't that surprising because we know that God has given us his word so that we can be equipped so that we can each minister to one another isn't that what we learned in chapter four that every joint is to supply something and every member is to do it share and in order for every one of us who are joints in the body and every one of us who are parts of the body to supply what God wants us to supply in the life of a Congregation and the growth of all the other members.

We have been given the word of God the apostles prophets and evangelists by whom that word is proclaimed the shepherd teachers my whom that word is ministered and so the first part of being filled with the spirit it's a command to do something that only the Holy Spirit can do but it's a command that is fulfilled especially in public worship.

When we sing the word of God and this is the word of God all three in verse 19 speaking to other one another and psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and say, oh well Psalms are those things that the

church saying for the first 1500 years and then hymns are the things that the church saying for the next three or four hundred years and spiritual songs must be the ones from the last hundred or hundred and fifty years.

Which is exactly how the Ephesians would have received this from the apostle, isn't it? Of course not these are these are Greek words that were in their Greek Old Testament at the beginning of many of the Psalms some psalms would have more than one of these words some songs would have a couple of songs have all three of the words some of them don't have any at all but they were still to sing those the point is that God had given his people scripture and public worship to sing to one another.

Because the spirit uses his word and there is especially one moment in every week or one action in every week in which the entire congregation of God's people are addressing one another with his word. Now this does have something to say with what we do over lunch and what we do outside and always wanting to have something from his word to address one another but if we just go.

Then we will use by God in everyone else's in the congregation's life. To as he fills them with his spirit by the ministry of his work. So the apostle succeed you're all to be ministering the word to one another. Now get a man drunk. And he is going to talk about all sorts of things.

And sadly what comes out of him drunk is what was already in him when he was over.

But he is not going to be explaining and and praising God and telling you about what the Lord has been showing him from the word his favorite scriptures of that week of that recent time has God wants us to do. It bears saying that one of the things that is being commanded here is to attend public worship.

And to participate in the singing in public worship. That we would all sing in the hearing of one another in public portion. Now we live in a generation in which more and more they've pumped it in through the speakers or put the special ones up front that do the real thingy.

And we actually have just come through a year. In which there are places in which it's been controversial to have any singing at all. But God commands you to be filled with Hisperity. And then here is not forsaking the assembly of yourselves together as is the habit of sun.

And in here is all of you singing even if you can't carry a tune in a bucket. And those of you who can singing loud enough to help your brother or sister with that. Joyful noise. Speaking to one another singing and making melody in your heart. Now not everyone is a musician.

But every Christian has the instrument upon which this melody is played because if you look at the parallel in Colossians 3:16, it says with grace and the heart. Grace is that which energizes drive supports reinforces the singing of God's Word to one another in congregation. Christian congregational song. You can make the circumstance argument for using instruments to enable better singing.

You better not make a priestly instrument argument because there is one great high priest in glory and hebrews 2:12 sings a tells us that it is he who is singing his father's praise and the congregation. He by his grace in each heart addressing the entire congregation through each one.

Singing. With grace making melody in your heart you agreeing with the Word of God that you have been given to sing you agreeing by God's grace with the Word of God that your brothers and sisters are singing to you that Christ Himself is singing through you to them and through them to you.

This is a means by which he fills us. With His Spirit and the third place giving thanks always. Sorry. I lose track. Now speaking singing giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This isn't surprising at all because hopefully we can remember all the way back to verses three and four.

But fornication and all uncle on cleanness a covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints to not name those things neither filthiness nor foolish talking nor of course jesting which are not fitting so those are all the put off that is are really you have a drunk conversation with somebody.

You hear a lot of those things that you are not to speak about and ways of not speaking that are not fitting to Saints but what at the end of verse 4, what is fitting but rather giving of the thanks? And so the Lord has filled his word with Thanksgiving unto God so that you and I might have our hearts filled with Thanksgiving to God so that you and I are might have our mouths filled with Thanksgiving to God, and as we speak to one another in ways that express gratitude to God for who he is and what he has done that he would use us in.

Would use us in his filling and not one another with his spirit. The spirit as it were incubates thankfulness. As we sing his word so that we will be thanksgiving speakers in the way that was commanded and in verse three and four. And finally the end of verse in verse 21 a verse that people like to rip out of this sentence to try to make it the condition that forms the next the next section because they have such a difficult time with the God God's design for marriage and for the husband.

And for the wife which Lord willing God helping us we get to you next week. But the final part is submitting to one another in the fear of God. Who is the worship leader? In Christian worship. Absolutely. There is then the truest and most important since the Lord Jesus who is the worship leader in Christian worship.

The reason another sense. In which those shepherd teachers whom he has given to minister his word that they are the worship leaders say lead us in prayer and the reading and preaching of his word. Does it surprise you to find out that this morning and the public worship service there were multiple times at which I was required to submit to ruthlessly rental.

And to Lydia Bonomo. And Decaly Rowden. And to Jersey Kate.

You see God wants us to submit to one another as we say. Because we're singing his word. And that's what the Spirit does in the hearts of those whom he feels he makes us submissive to the Word of God and as we submit to his word the spirit fills us.

This is one reason why his tragic that we have so called worship leaders. On the one hand, they're not the elders of the church. The other hand it takes away from that wonderful truth that when we're singing we are all to submit to one another so not only. Do we profane the worship of God by introducing the idea of musical performance?

But we also miss out on that wonderful fellowship that we are to have. Speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in our hearts giving thanks always for all things to God the Father. Submitting to one another not to a few people on a stage up front.

But every one of us submitting to every other one of us. Because we're all singing and we're all being sung too and it is a. Often unimpressive. Glorious means by which God the Holy Spirit fills us and we're commanded to do it that way. And when we don't maybe out of ignorance.

But when we don't do it that way we are saying rather not be filled with the spirit but or not have the word of Christ dwell in me richly. No Christian would ever say that consciously. So let us follow God's design for the singing in public worship. And let us remember that that is the template for how he wants our conversations to go.

As we speak to one another those edifying things from his word and he fills us with his spirit by the means of this work. A man, let's pray. Our Father in heaven we thank you for this wonderful command that we would be filled with your spirit. We asked that you would help us to attend well upon the means that our delineated that our identified by these participles in this passage and then we throw ourselves upon your mercy we put our hope in your faithfulness your love your power to use those means that you have identified and to actually feel each of us your children.

With your spirit the spirit of your son that we might call you Alba Father. And that we might walk in your world as your children even children of light, which we ask through Jesus Christ in whom is the light and who is the light? Amen.