

The Spirit Filled Life!

By My Spirit

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Tonight we are going to turn in our Bibles to Ephesians chapter five as we continue our series about the Holy Spirit. Last week we looked at the extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit and considered that great power, the power that has the potential to provide you with extraordinary things.

The extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit can provide you extraordinary strength. We saw this in the life of Samson, how he became unusually, unhumanly powerful.

He has the potential to provide you with extraordinary service, service that really matters, service that is unique, service that is elevated and really is fruitful. He has the potential to provide you with extraordinary courage in the midst of situations that are difficult and where you would normally feel apprehensive and fearful, especially in the area of witness which, again, his extraordinary power is provided for an extraordinary witness where you are able to go to some of the people that you would normally not go and share the Word of God with because you know it is not you that they have a problem with if they reject it. It is God and his Word.

But the extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit also has the potential to provide you with extraordinary faith and we all need that kind of faith. And that is why one of the fruits of the Spirit is faith. We need that growth in faith. And only through the Holy Spirit's power can it become extraordinary. This potential power is absolutely phenomenal. It is great.

Well, how can the Spirit's potential power become actual power in our lives as Christians? That is what I want us to focus on tonight, how that potential power through the Holy Spirit as God is omnipotent, how can that potential power become actual in our lives as a Christian?

How many of you have ever been to Niagara Falls either on the US side? You have all seen it. You have all felt it. You have all heard it. There is an enormous amount of power in the Niagara Falls. And there are other falls like that, but I focus on that particular area of the world because it is so unique and it is so well known because as we stand there, as we listen to it, the power there is absolutely incredible. There is so much potential power

as that water is just rushing in torrents down that cascade and crashing down to the river below.

Now that power has been destructive in times past. We know that people have tried to go over the falls in a barrel. Some have risked their lives and lost their lives. Some have risked their lives and lived to tell about it. It is very destructive. It has that kind of power. You even see the destructive power as it eats away and erodes the area that it is flowing over. And if you have seen satellite photos of maybe even 10 years or 15 or 20 years ago, you will see that there is some erosion taking place because of the destructive power of those falls.

But sometimes that power which is potentially great, it can also become constructive. People have been trying to harness the energy of the Niagara Falls for decades. And now they have placed generators along the river to capture that intense power. It is enough power now that they are able to generate from that river to run a medium sized city, even the city of Buffalo, New York where about 20 miles away they are sending some of that power.

These particular generators can get nearly five gigawatts of power. Now, to give you an idea of how much power that is, one kilowatt is enough to function a house for a day. Five gigawatts is enough for a medium city like Buffalo, New York for an entire day. And it does that day in and day out. That is an amazing amount of power.

And what they did in order to harness this power is upstream they dug these huge tunnels and they diverted some of the water that would be flowing down there and the water was diverted through these tunnels and the water was diverted through these tunnels. And at the ends of these tunnels there were these large turbines or these large generators. And as that water would flow past it, it would turn those turbines and generate electricity to the tune of five gigawatts per day. That is a lot of power.

But like these tunnels that divert the energy and the power of a Niagara River, a Christian must be filled like those tunnels with the Holy Spirit in order for us to be empowered by him. There is great potential in the power of the Holy Spirit, but how does it become actual in our lives. It is through the filling of the Holy Spirit and that is what we are going to be looking at tonight.

How can you be filled with the Holy Spirit? First, I believe, you need to see that you and I must believe in the Spirit filled life. This is not something that is designed for the super Christian. It is not designed for those that are super pious or those that are pastors or elders or deacons. We need to understand and really believe in our hearts that the Spirit filled life is available to every single believer. It is something that ought to be the norm in our life and in our Church. The Spirit filled life is absolutely real. It is as real as the Niagara River and its power.

Now the Niagara River was said to be first discovered in 1677 by a Belgian priest Louis Hennepin. But that Niagara Falls and Niagara River was real before he ever came to

discover it. It was known in those parts by the Indians who settled in that area. And they knew of it. They knew of its power. And so even thousands of years before Louis Hennepin ever showed up on the shores there to discover it, it was still real all along. And maybe we have struggled in our Christian life to really understand what the Spirit filled life is like or what it is, but that doesn't make it any less real. There is a reality of having the power of the Holy Spirit becoming actual in the life of a believer by being filled through him.

Just because we haven't seen or experienced the Spirit filled life in our own lives doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. It does. And tonight I want you to see from the Word of God that it is absolutely real. You need to believe in its reality because the Lord has described the Spirit filled life for you. He has described that the Christian life ought to be like this. And he comes in Ephesians chapter five—which is a passage that we are familiar with—and he focuses on what the Spirit filled life is like and he says in Ephesians 5:18, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”¹

The Lord uses the word “fill” in other places of Scripture to give us a picture of what it means here in this verse. What does it mean when the Lord commands us to be filled with the Spirit? What does it mean to be filled?

I think much like those tunnels that were used to harness that energy from the Niagara River, so we need to be filled in the same way. And the Scripture uses that word “filled” in a few other ways.

You don't need to turn to these passages, but in Mark 2:21 it describes how a patch is used to fill up a tear in a garment. I remember when I was a kid I would, you know, ruin my knees in my pants and some... from time to time, you know, the rest of the pants are fine. The jeans are fine and so my mom would so these patches on there. Why? In order to restore them to a condition that they once were. Of course they were ugly and as a kid you don't really care about that. But now that you get older we don't see a whole lot of people with patches on their knees because they really don't like to see it that way.

But the fact is, that patch filled up a tear. It filled up a hole. And this is what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It means to be restored by him, replacing what is old with something that is new. It is a flushing out of the old and coming in with the new. This is part of that filling. What are some of the old things, the old traits, the old thoughts, the old ideas, the old experiences that we have had before we knew Christ or even before we were truly filled with his Spirit. Out with the old and in comes the new as it flows and restores us to what God would have us to be. That is part of what this filling is.

But to be filled also by the Spirit means to be saturated by him, not just filling and flushing, but truly saturating and permeating your life.

In John chapter 12 verse three—we'll look at this a little bit later—but in that particular passage Mary came before the Lord Jesus and bowed before him and broke a bottle of

¹ Ephesians 5:18.

ointment and spilled it upon his feet and washed his feet with her hair. And in that passage it says that the fragrance of that perfume filled the house. It was so pungent and it was so strong that no place in the house was safe from that odor, from that fragrance and anywhere you went it would be so strong it permeated it. That is another idea, another picture that we can have in our mind of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is where the Holy Spirit permeates and saturates every aspect of our life.

On Tuesday I was going to spend some time with my grandfather-in-law at the hospital and I got a call just before I was about ready to leave to go to the hospital. My father-in-law called and said, "Steve, we ran out of gas. We are about a mile away from the hospital and we are right on state road nine and we are out of gas and we need help."

So I thought, ok, I have got a little bit of extra gas in my gas container that I had used for my lawnmower throughout the summer and it was probably maybe a gallon or two. I thought it would be enough for them to get to the hospital, get to a gas station, that's it.

So I stuck it in the trunk in our car and I drove to their place. I poured it in, drove back to the hospital and as I was going there I noticed a smell, a very distinctive smell, the smell of gasoline.

Why? Because it came from the container that was in the back of the trunk. It might have sloshed around but the fumes came and saturated and permeated the car to such an extent that yesterday when I got in the car I could still smell the odor from that gas. It filled the car. It filled the house.

And when we are filled with the Spirit we are saturated by him in any part and every part of our life.

Another picture that he uses in is in Matthew 13:48 where he is describing how these people were taking a net and fishing with this net and as they drew this net up it was filled with fish. It wasn't just one or two fish. It was filled to overflowing. And this is another picture of what it means to be filled with the Spirit. It means to be overflowed with him.

We looked at that this morning. What we want is the Lord. We desire for the Lord to fill us to overflowing and this is what that means to be filled. The Lord has described what it is and the Lord also desires to give the Spirit life to you, the Spirit filled life to you. Do you realize that? This is the desire of God when you were saved was to give you his Holy Spirit to indwell you for the purpose of empowering you through filling your life in this way, filling you by restoring you, flushing out what is old with that which is new, saturating you with his Spirit and bringing you to a point of overflowing with his power.

How do we know that the Lord's desire is for you and me and every single one in our church to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Because just before the Lord said in verse 18 of Ephesians five to be filled with the Spirit, look at verse 17.

He says, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”² And then he adds, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”³

We see that it is the will of the Lord that you and I be filled with the Spirit. This is his desire. This is his goal for us. It is his will that every Christian be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is his desire that you and I have this normal Christian experience every day of our life.

We also know that this is his will because in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 it says, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.”⁴

Now in other passages of Scripture it describes how we are sanctified. If God’s will is that we are sanctified, how do we become sanctified? In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2 it describes it as sanctification by the Spirit.

So here we understand that if God wants you to be sanctified, that is his will and he does through the Holy Spirit. He want you to be saturated in such a way whereas through his power you become more like Christ.

The Spirit filled life is not exclusive. We need to believe this. We need to realize this. It is available to you and to me if we are believers and have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. If we don’t have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, the Bible says that we are none of us.

So if we are his he is within us and that potential power is available and God desires us to be filled with it and empowered by him so that we can please and honor him. The Spirit filled life is not exclusive. It is available to each of us.

Not only that, it is not elusive either. Sometimes when we hear that phrase, “The Spirit filled life,” it feels like it is something that is out there, that if I reach for it maybe I will get a taste of it. Maybe I will understand a little bit more about it, but the fact is the Lord has displayed the Spirit filled life to you through his Word and it ought to be the norm of Christians everywhere.

You see, real people receive real power from the Holy Spirit by being filled with him.

Stephen, in Acts six and Acts seven was described as a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, the same word. He was full of the Holy Ghost. He was restored by the Holy Spirit. He was permeated and saturated by him to the point of overflowing. And you know the message that Stephen gave that really caused him to be the first Christian martyr where they killed him because of that. It as the overflowing compassion and power from the filling of the Holy Spirit. And he was a man just like us.

² Ephesians 5:17.

³ Ephesians 5:18.

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Barnabas was described in Acts 11 as being a good man and full. Again, that same word, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Barnabas was a man, again, that was restored by the Holy Spirit, saturated by him and was serving him and he was a man of consolation, a man of great love. He was displaying that because of the Holy Spirit's filling.

The disciples in Acts were also described as being filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

You see, the Spirit filled life is meant to be the normal life of a Christian. It is meant to be the norm for the Church and for you and for me no matter how young we are in our Christian faith or how old we are in our Christian faith. This is God's will and desire for us as a Church to be filled with his Spirit. It ought to be the rule and not the exception. And I am afraid that sometimes—we are going to see why here in a moment—but sometimes we feel like it is the exception rather than the rule and so we say, "Well, that is for extraordinary Christians. That is not for me. That is for the super pious Christian."

But the fact is, God has designed it for you and for me, all of us, to be filled with the Spirit. God's will is for you to be filled with him and in order to be empowered by the Spirit you must be filled with him.

So we need to believe in its reality. It is real just like the Niagara Falls was real just before the western world knew it existed. We know it exists. The Bible teaches that it exists. It is real and it is available. Do you believe it? Do you truly understand and realize that this is God's will for you if it is God's will? And we ought to pursue it with every fiber of our being. We ought to want to be a normal Christian. A normal Christian is a Spirit filled Christian. We must believe it.

But, secondly, you must receive the Spirit filled life as well. A few of the points on this outline I borrowed from another pastor and that is why his name is on there. I want to give credit where credit is due. But how can you know if you are Spirit filled?

Well, there is a difference between the kind of filling that is being talked about in Ephesians 5:18 and the kind that we looked at last week.

You remember Samson. His filling was for a sudden empowerment. The Holy Spirit would come upon him and he would become mighty in order to kill people. Now, I don't think God wants us to be filled in that way with that kind of power today. I do believe that he does come upon individuals in a sudden way to empower for a particular purpose and a particular season. And I have asked the Lord also even tonight and every time when I come before the pulpit to ask him to fill me in a unique way, in a sudden way, in a special way so that the Word of God will go with a free course and with all his power to influence our lives. I believe he does that even today.

But the kind of filling that it is talking about, that normal spiritual filling is for sustained empowerment. It is a sustained empowerment as we go through our life to serve him, to

glorify him, to witness for him. WE need to know when it comes tot his kind of Spirit filled life that we must receive that there is a counterfeit to the Spirit filled life. There is a counterfeit.

In the first part of verse 18 it says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.”⁵

Some of the teens heard a little bit about this Friday night. Drunkenness is the devil’s counterfeit to the Spirit filled life. That is what the Bible says. It is the counterfeit to the Spirit filled life.

That word drunk with wine or that word literally means to be soaked in it. You can be soaked in different things besides wine or booze or liquor. You can be soaked in yourself, in your own pride, in your life, in your own desires, in your own pride. You can be soaked in all these different things. But the truth is, is the devil wants you to think that when you are soaked in something other than God, that you can have a pretty good life.

Think about what happens when someone is drunk, though. When someone is drunk they are filled with the devil’s imitation. You have seen people that are drunk. They look like they are having a grand old time. This is before the hangover sets in and they start thinking, “What did I do that for,” the next morning.

But while they are drinking and while they are using that, it is a counterfeit of real joy. They might be as happy as can be on the outside, but true joy eludes them. They might feel like they are comforted especially when times are tough in life, people go to booze. People go to drink.

Why? Because it deaden the nerves. It makes them feel better. It feels like they then have some level of comfort, but that is simply a counterfeit to the real filling of the Spirit of God and the real comfort that he provides.

It is filled with the devil’s imitation of power. A drunk feels like he can do anything and that is why there is a lot of bar room brawls because they feel like they can take on the world. Why? Because it has affected and influenced every part of their life. It is a counterfeit. And instead of being filled with real joy, real comfort and real power, they are filled with the devil’s imitation.

But they are also filled with the devil’s influence.

This particular word “drunk” was often used in ancient times to describe a process where they would take animal skins and they would soak those animal skins and then they would stretch those over pieces of wood in order to shape it into a product that they desired. Often they would used leather to make shields. And they would take these animal skins and they would soak them in water and it would become pliable. It would become stretchy. And after they soaked it for a period of time in water or some other

⁵ Ephesians 5:18.

liquid they would then stretch it out over this frame of wood in order to make a very strong and powerful shield that it would be very difficult to penetrate.

But the fact is, this is exactly what the devil is doing when he dupes people into thinking that they have the Spirit filled life when in reality they are soaked with something else. If you are soaked and if people when they are soaked with drink, in liquor... and this is why we ought to abstain from liquor. This is why I do have a problem with a lot of Christian churches that say go ahead and drink a little bit.

Why? Because as the Proverbs say, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”⁶

I think abstinence is the way to go. I don't think it is a liberty that we ought to have or flaunt out there and say, “I am going to go home as a pastor and relax after a tough day at Church and drink a bear.” I am not going to be proud if I were to say that and I am not going to do that.

Why? Because drunkenness means that you are filled with the devil's influence. And even just a little bit of the devil's influence to me is wrong. He can stretch us to what he wants us to be. He can stretch us so that we have no power or influence before people.

And as we look in the Word of God he teaches clearly that drunkenness is wrong and that we need to abstain from appearance of evil. And if you remember, Timothy, when Paul said, “Take a little wine for your stomach's sake,” it indicates that Timothy was abstaining. He didn't want to contaminate himself. Paul had to convince him to take a little bit in order to make him feel better because of his sickness.

We need to make sure that we are not following after the counterfeits of the devil even as attractive or as innocent as they may seem it says in the Bible that, “[It] is a mocker... and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”⁷

Not only is drunkenness the devil's counterfeit, but also it causes people to be filled with the devil's iniquity. It says in Ephesians 5:18 that it is inside that drunken state, inside that wine is excess. This literally means to have a wild, wasteful and wicked living.

Think about the prodigal son in Luke 15. It uses this same word for excess in Luke 15:13 when it says that he “Wasted his substance with riotous living,”⁸ or excessive living with wild, wasteful and wicked living.

We need to be aware of this counterfeit, this counterfeit that tries to get us and allure us away from the real Spirit filled life where we get real joy, real peace, real comfort and real power.

⁶ Proverbs 20:1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Luke 15:3.

Don't be deceived by the devil's counterfeits. Don't be allured by what he might try to soak you in to then mold you after the character that he wants you to become. Not only must you know that there is a counterfeit, but also in verse 18 you need to know that there is a control to the Spirit filled life.

It says, "Be filled with the Spirit."⁹

This is a command that we must follow as Christians. Be filled. We need to have a choice to make. What are you going to let fill your life? What are you and I going to allow to fill up our lives? Are we going to let the devil and his influence fill us up? The devil wants to deceive us. He wants to sow doubts in our lives. He want to give us disputes so that there is discord within our church. He wants to distract us from everything else. But are we going to let the devil influence us and fill us up? Are you going to let the world and its influence fill your life? The world is so easy to be influenced by.

But think of some of the standards that the world has that has influenced our lives. Sometimes it does so through its music. How easy it is for us to be influenced by the world's style of music. How easy is it for us to be influenced by television shows and ratings, the ratings system.

I have said this before. Well, if it is rated PG-13 well, that means ok. It means it is ok.

Whose standard is that? Is it God's standard or is it the world's standard and why are we making it our standard?

Think about some of these things, the books that we read, the magazines that we get, the radio that we listen to. Are we going to let the world and its influence fill our life or we going to let even our flesh and its influence fill our life?

Sometimes we can let ourselves be ruled by—as it says in 1 John 2:16—"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life."¹⁰

Are we going to let ourselves be filled up with these influences? No. Rather, we need to be filled with the Spirit. This is a command to follow, but also this is a command or a condition, I'm sorry, to maintain.

This word is in a present tense which means it ought to be a continual condition of our lives. We ought to be constantly filled. That is why it is different than some of the Old Testament fillings. They were for sudden empowerment and God is saying be filled for a sustained empowerment while you live your life for me.

Just like the anointing of Christ in John 12:3. You turn there just a moment. Keep your finger in Ephesians four and turn back there.

⁹ Ephesians 5:18.

¹⁰ 1 John 2:16.

I already mentioned this earlier. When Mary took that ointment and anointed the Lord. But in John chapter 12:3 if you write in your Bibles, I want you to mark this because the same word “filled” is used here.

John 12:3. “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: [and note this] and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”¹¹

There was no parts that was unaffected. There was absolutely no part of that house that was unaffected by that ointment. That is why we must be filled with the Spirit. It is a condition that we must maintain, but it also is a comparison that we must understand.

Turning back to Ephesians chapter five verse 18 it has the counterfeit and the control combined.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”¹²

Why do those two come together in that verse? I think it teaches us that as the drunk is under the influence of liquor, you as a Christian ought to be constantly under the influence of the Spirit of God. That is what it means to be filled and that is why it is taking that illustration of a drunkard and say, “Don’t be a drunk, but be like the drunk where you are under the influence not of those things, but of God and his Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit influence every part of our life.

Like the odor filling the house, the Spirit’s influence ought to fill every part of our life. Everything is affected when you are under the influence.

I mentioned this to the teens on Friday night, but not too long ago the Carmel High School principal was pulled over for drinking and driving. Did anybody see some of that in videos? They stuck them on You Tube. And so there are people all over the nation and world that have been looking at this video and literally laughing about this guy. But if you see that video you know what drunkenness affects. He was obviously drunk He was definitely under the influence of whatever it was he was drinking. It affected everything about him. It affected the way he thought. It affected the way he did things, his actions. You could tell as he was moving, he was staggering. It affected the way he walked. It affected how his arms were moving. It affected his reactions when they asked him to touch his nose and to do these different things and he didn’t react in the right way because he was under the influence. It affected his walk and his talk.

And he looked like he was having a great old time. He was laughing and he didn’t think it was any problem.

“Go ahead and just take me home and we will just call it a night.”

¹¹ John 12:3.

¹² Ephesians 5:18.

The fact is, he was under an influence that brought him to scorn. We need to be under the influence of someone and his power that will bring us more like Christ. Be under the influence of the Lord because there is a control that we must submit to. That is why we must be filled with the Spirit. It is the influence of him.

We ought not to be under the influences of our circumstances. Sometimes we make decisions based on circumstances instead of looking to the Lord and asking for his influence. Sometimes we are influenced by our own personalities.

Well, I have got a strong personality and that is why I did this thing. Or, I kind of have a weaker personality and that is why I didn't do this thing.

And sometimes we blame what we do, whether it is sin or not sin or whether it was right or wrong based on our personality. And yet the Bible says, "Let your whole personality completely be pervasively under the influence of the Holy Spirit."

Have you received the Spirit filled life? Are you living your entire life under his influence?

Much of what we are covering tonight was suggested in this morning's service. How can you be living the Spirit filled life. It is by committing your way unto him.

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."¹³

It is when you wake up that morning you commit that day unto him. And as you go through the day you commit your activities and your actions, your prayers, your praise, all those things to the Lord. And you are constantly in communication with him and you let the Spirit of God dwell in you richly. This is what it means to be under the influence of the Spirit because only when you are filled with the Holy Spirit can you be empowered by him.

I don't know about you, but we want to be empowered by him. We want to see and feel and experience that great power that will turn ordinary Christians into extraordinary Christians.

The fact is that extraordinary Christianity ought to be the norm and it is available to those who are filled by his indwelling Spirit.

The third aspect of this is that you and I must be changed by the Spirit filled life as well.

When the Niagara's waters are channeled into those generators something happens. Electricity is generated. Power is created, enough for an entire city. And that is what is going to happen when we become the tunnels through which the Holy Spirit's power is tunneled.

¹³ Psalm 37:5.

Something is going to happen. There is going to be a change taking place. When you are filled, he will change you with his power.

A couple of things that he is going to change. He is going to change your character. When you are filled by the Spirit your character will reflect his character. This is an evidence of being filled with the Spirit.

How do you know if you are filled by the Spirit? Are you become like the Spirit? Are you becoming like Jesus Christ? What is the Spirit called in places in the Bible?

There is a brief list. Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom when you are filled with the Spirit you will be wise like him. Because he is the Spirit of counsel, when you are filled with the Spirit you will be helpful and encouraging to others. You will be a help to them instead of a hindrance.

Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace, when you are filled by the Spirit you yourself will be gracious to others in what you say, in how you say things in just your overall life and demeanor to others.

Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of supplications, if you are filled by the Spirit you will be prayerful and you will commit your prayers to him. You will always be in communication with him seeking him and his filling.

Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, if you are filled by him you will be truthful. You will tell the truth. You will love the truth. You will seek after the truth.

Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness you will also desire to be holy.

The Bible says, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”¹⁴ If the Holy Spirit is filling you, you will become holy. You will be more holy today than you were last week if you live this week in the filling of the Spirit.

He is also the Spirit of judgment. If you are filled by this Spirit you will also have this Spirit of judgment. You will be discerning. You will be able to judge between right and wrong, between truth and error and you will be able by the Spirit’s power and influence and illumination to know those differences.

He is also the Spirit of faith. And if you are filled by the Spirit you will trust in the Lord. You will trust in his power. You will rest in him and rely upon him. He will change your character completely.

But he will also change your conduct.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:16.

Turn with me to Luke chapter one if you will. In Luke chapter one we meet up with a remarkable family. This is just an amazing passage because as I was looking through these verses we see, again, the Holy Spirit filling certain individuals, an entire family.

Luke one verse 15 referring to John the Baptist before he was born. The angel is telling Zacharias and Elisabeth, “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.”¹⁵

Jump down to verse 41 and we read about John the Baptist’s mother, Elisabeth.

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?¹⁶

So it affected when the Spirit filled Elisabeth, it affected what she said.

And then jumping down to verse 67 we see Zacharias who is John’s father. It says about him:

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.¹⁷

But they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and the thing is, is that it changed what they did. It changed who they were. It changed how they reacted and what they said. If you remember Zacharias at first didn’t believe and so he was dumb until John the Baptist was born. And then the Holy Spirit came upon him and he was able to speak. It changed their conduct and he will change our conduct as well.

But he will also change our course. If you turn over just a few pages to Luke chapter four Jesus Christ, it says, in verse one of chapter four, “being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”¹⁸

And then if you jump down to verse 14 this is after the temptation. “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Luke 1:15.

¹⁶ Luke 1:41-43.

¹⁷ Luke 1:67-68.

¹⁸ Luke 4:1.

¹⁹ Luke 4:14.

So we find here that even the Lord's course, his pathway was changed through the filling of the Holy Spirit. He directed him where he wanted to go and he will do the same with us. He will direct us in our paths.

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit and his power, there will be change. There is an evidence of this change because only when you are filled by the Holy Spirit will you be empowered by him to change in the way that he would want you to be.

The Lord wants you and the Lord wants me to live the Spirit filled life, but there are some qualifications in order to be a tunnel through which the Spirit will fill.

A few things that we need to note. You need to accept the Spirit's control. It is an acceptance of his control.

Just like the hydroelectric power plants there at the Niagara River, they only will run if the gates are open to that tunnel. If the gates are closed the water can't run, no power will be generated. We need to make sure that our gates are open to the Lord. We need to say, "Lord, I surrender to you my life and I want you to use me and work in me and through me and the gates are open."

It is a submissive attitude, a submissive acceptance by saying to the Lord, "I surrender completely to your will. I want your Spirit's filling."

And it is not just a part, but all. If you are not willing to let the Lord fill every part of your life, the gates aren't fully open and you will never experience this true Spirit filled life that all Christians were meant to have. You need to accept his control.

You also need to obey the Spirit's control. As that tunnel is opened and those Niagara Falls, the tunnel would need to let the water run its course. If there were obstacles in the way or if they tried to divert it, again, the power would be weak or non existent.

We need to obey the Spirit's control by being sensitive to him. When the Spirit is speaking to us through his Word we need to listen. If we don't listen what do we expect? Do we really expect that he is going to fill us with his power to enable us to be the kind of Christians that we ought to be? We need to be teachable. WE need to be open to what God has to teach us from his Word. We need also to be intensely obedient. When the Lord tells us to do something we are going to obey immediately and with fervency. We need to obey the Spirit's control.

And another qualification, we need to accept, we need to obey, but we also need to retain his control. There should be no obstacles in the way. If there are obstacles in the middle of these tunnels, the debris will quickly dam up that water and there won't be any electricity generated. It will prevent the water from going down. The same thing applies in our lives as believers.

We must realize that to retain the Spirit's control there must be no obstacles in the way for his work.

Some of the obstacles that we see are in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 which says, "Quench not the Spirit."²⁰

Do you realize that as the Spirit is trying to work in our lives we can quench him?

What does that mean? It means to suppress him or to snuff him out.

I know by experience in my life that there have been times that the Spirit has been speaking to my life and saying, "This is an area in your life that you need to surrender to God or this is an area where you are disobedient." And he is convicting you and I said in my heart, no.

And immediately that conviction went away for a while. But I didn't have any power. I didn't have any peace either. I didn't have any comfort. Why? Because I put up a road block and I squelched. I snuffed out, I suppressed the Spirit. And this is one of the obstacles.

"Do not quench the Spirit," he says.

When the Spirit is speaking, accept his control, obey his control and do not put up an obstacle against it, but also, Ephesians 4:30 says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."²¹ To grieve means to offend and we grieve God just the way we would others by sinning.

If you look at the context of Ephesians 4:30 it talks about some of these sins: corrupt communication, what you say, bitterness of your heart, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, malice. This is how we grieve the Holy Spirit. And he says, "Don't do that." Because if you do you are putting up obstacles and you are going to dam up that tunnel that cannot be filled until, again, you accept it, you obey it and then you maintain it.

"Be filled with the Holy Spirit," the Lord says.

My desire is that tonight we remove any of the rocks that are in the way from preventing the Holy Spirit filling us. What kind of rocks are in your life that is preventing the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life which is the norm of the Christian life. What rocks are there? How many are there? We can remove them all by submitting them to the Holy Spirit and say, "God, convict me and I will listen and I will obey. There is a root of bitterness in my life. I will confess it and get it right with people. If there are offenses there I will get that right. If there are other blatant sins that I know like drunkenness that it says here, if I have been drunk with wine I am going to, Lord, obey what you say and I

²⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:19.

²¹ Ephesians 4:30.

am no longer going be under the influence of that stuff. I am going to be under your influence, Lord.”

Because only when you are filled with the Holy Spirit can you ever be empowered by him. Let us be filled with the Spirit.

Shall we close in prayer?

“By My Spirit!”
The Spirit Filled Life!

Introduction:

1. Last Week, We Looked At The Extraordinary Power Of The Holy Spirit!
 - That Has The Potential To Provide You With:
 - Extraordinary Strength / Service / Courage / Witness / Faith!
 - This Potential Power Is Great!
 - But How Can The Spirit’s Potential Power Become Actual In Your Life As A Christian?
 - **IE:** There Is Tremendous Potential Power In Niagara Falls! Its Power Has Been Destructive – How Can It Become Constructive? Generators Have Been Placed Along The River To Capture That Power – Enough Power To Run A Medium - Sized City - Nearly 5 GigaWatts! The Water Fills Up & Flows Through Long Tunnels To Capture & Generate This Power For Use!
 2. Like These Tunnels:
 - ***A Christian Must Be Filled With The Holy Spirit, In Order To Be Empowered By Him!***
 - And You Can Be Filled With The Holy Spirit! How?
1. ***You Must Believe In The Spirit Filled Life!***
 - The Spirit Filled Life Is Real!
 - **IE:** As Real As The Niagara River & Its Power! Said To Be First Discovered In 1677 By Belgian Priest Louis Hennepin - But It Was Real Before He Ever Showed Up! Just Because We Haven’t Seen / Experienced The Spirit Filled Life Doesn’t Mean It Doesn’t Exist! It Does! You Must Believe It Does!
 - The Lord Has Described The Spirit Filled Life For You!
 - Key Verse: Ephesians 5:18 - “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit!”
 - The Lord Uses The Word “Fill” In Other Places To Give Us A Picture Of What He Means!
 - To Be Filled By The Spirit Means To Be:
 - Restored By Him! Mark 2:21 - Like A Patch! (Replaces What Is Old With Something New!)
 - Saturated By Him! John 12:3 - Like The Odor Of Perfume Filling A House!
 - Overflowed With Him! Matthew 13:48 - Like A Net Being Filled With Fish!
 - The Lord Desires To Give The Spirit Filled Life To You!
 - To Every Believer!
 - Just Before The Lord Says In Ephesians 5:18 - “Be Filled With The Spirit,” He Says In 5:17 - “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is!”
 - It Is The Lord’s Desire & Will That Every Christian Be Filled With The Holy Spirit!
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:3 - “This is the will of God, even your sanctification!”
 - How Are We Sanctified? Both 2 Thessalonians 2:13 & 1 Peter 1:2 Describe It As “Sanctification By The Spirit!”
 - The Spirit Filled Life:
 - Is Not Exclusive! It Is Available To You!
 - Nor Is Not Elusive!
 - The Lord Has Displayed The Spirit Filled Life To You!
 - Real People Received The Holy Spirit’s Power, By Being Filled With Him!
 - Stephen - “A Man Full Of Faith And Of The Holy Ghost!” (Acts 6:5) / “But He, Being Full Of The Holy Ghost!” (Acts 7:55)
 - Barnabas - “For He Was A Good Man, And Full Of The Holy Ghost And Of Faith!” (Acts 11:24)
 - Disciples - “And The Disciples Were Filled With Joy, And With The Holy Ghost!”
 - The Spirit Filled Life Is Meant To Be The Normal Life Of The Christian / Church!
 - The Rule & Not The Exception!
 - God’s Will & Desire Is For You To Be Filled With His Spirit!
 - ***In Order To Be Empowered By The Spirit, You Must Be Filled With Him!***

- Believe In Its Reality & Availability!

2. ***You Must Receive The Spirit Filled Life!*** (From Dr. Alan Cairns)

- How Can You Know If You Are Spirit Filled?
 - Different Than Samson & Others In The Old Testament!
 - That Filling Was For Sudden Empowerment!
 - This Filling Is For Sustained Empowerment!
- Know: There Is A Counterfeit To The Spirit Filled Life!
 - Ephesians 5:18 - "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess!"
 - Drunkenness Is The Devil's Counterfeit To The Spirit Filled Life!
 - Drunk With Wine Or Self / "Drunk" - "Soaked!"
 - When You Are Drunk, You Are:
 - Filled With The Devil's Imitation!
 - Counterfeit Of Joy / Comfort / Power!
 - Filled With The Devil's Influence!
 - **IE:** Would Often Soak Animal Skins To Stretch & Shape It However They Wanted! For The Devil's Purpose!
 - Proverbs 20:1 - "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise!"
 - Filled With The Devil's Iniquity!
 - "Excess" - Wild / Wasteful / Wicked Living!
 - Prodigal Son - "Wasted His Substance With **Riotous** Living!" (Luke 15:13)
 - You Must Beware Of This Counterfeit!
 - Don't Be Deceived By It / Allured By It!
 - Know: There Is A Control In The Spirit Filled Life!
 - Ephesians 5:18 - "But be filled with the Spirit!"
 - This Is A Command To Follow!
 - "Be Filled!" - A Choice Has To Be Made! What Are You Going To Let Fill Your Life?
 - The Devil & His Influence? (Deceit / Doubts / Disputes / Distractions)
 - The World & Its Influence? (By Letting Its Standards Fill Your Life, Through Music / Television / Radio / Books / Magazines / Etc!)
 - Your Flesh & Its Influence? (By Letting Yourself Be Ruled By "The Lust Of The Flesh, And The Lust Of The Eyes, And The Pride Of Life!" (1 John 2:16))
 - This Is A Condition To Maintain!
 - Present Tense - A Continual Condition!
 - Like The Anointing Of Christ In John 12:3 - "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: **and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment!**"
 - No Part Unaffected!
 - This Is A Comparison To Understand!
 - **As** The Drunk Is **Under The Influence** Of Liquor, You Are To Be **Under The Influence** Of The Spirit Of God!
 - Every Thing Is Affected, When You Are Under The Influence!
 - **IE:** Carmel High School Principal Video - Definitely Drunk - Everything Affected - His Thinking / His Actions / His Reactions / His Walk / His Talk - Everything!
 - There Is A Control To Submit To!
 - The Influence Of The Holy Spirit!
 - Not Circumstances / Not Personality!
 - Have You Received The Spirit Filled Life?
 - Are You Living Your Entire Life **Under The Influence** Of The Holy Spirit?
 - **Only When You Are Filled With The Holy Spirit, Can You Be Empowered By Him!**

3. ***You Must Be Changed By The Spirit Filled Life?***

- **IE:** When Niagara's Waters Are Channeled Into The Generators, Electrical Power Is Created - Enough

For An Entire City!

- When You Are Filled With The Spirit, His Power Will Change You!
- He Will Change Your Character!
 - When You Are Filled By Him, Your Character Will Reflect His Character!
 - Because He Is The / You Will Be:
 - Spirit Of Wisdom! Wise!
 - Spirit Of Counsel! Helpful / Encouraging!
 - Spirit Of Grace! Gracious!
 - Spirit Of Supplications! Prayerful!
 - Spirit Of Truth! Truthful!
 - Spirit Of Holiness! Holy!
 - Spirit Of Judgment! Discerning!
 - Spirit Of Faith! Trusting! The Lord!
- He Will Change Your Conduct!
 - In Luke 1, We Find A Remarkable Family!
 - Luke 1:15 - John The Baptist!
 - Luke 1:41 - John's Mother, Elizabeth!
 - Luke 1:67 - John's Father, Zacharias!
 - All "Filled With The Holy Ghost" & It Changed What They Did & What They Said!
- He Will Change Your Course!
 - Luke 4:1, 14 - "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness!" / "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about!"
 - Even Where You Go & What You Do!
- When You Are Filled With The Holy Spirit & His Power:
 - There Will Be Change!
 - ***Because, When You Are Filled With The Holy Spirit, You Will Be Empowered By Him To Change!***

Conclusion:

1. The Lord Wants You To Live The Spirit Filled Life!
 - But There Are Some Qualifications!
 - You Need To Accept The Spirit's Control!
 - **IE:** Like At HydroElectric Power Plant, The Gates Need To Be Open!
 - By Surrendering Yourself Completely To His Will!
 - "I Surrender All!"
 - Not Just A Part, But All!
 - You Need To Obey The Spirit's Control!
 - **IE:** The Tunnel Needs To Let The Water Run Its Course! / Like White-Water Rafting Down A Swift River!
 - By Being Sensitive / Teachable / Intensely Obedient!
 - You Need To Retain The Spirit's Control!
 - **IE:** There Must Not Be Any Obstacles In The Way - Like Rocks & Debris Quickly Damming Up & Preventing The Water From Going Through!
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:19 - "Quench Not The Spirit!"
 - Suppress / Stifle / Extinguish
 - Through Insensitivity & Pride!
 - Ephesians 4:30 - "Grieve Not The Holy Spirit Of God!"
 - Offend
 - Through Sin (Corrupt Communication / Bitterness / Wrath / Anger / Clamor / Evil Speaking / Malice)
2. "Be Filled With The Spirit!"
 - Remove Any Rocks That Are In The Way! How Many Are There?
 - Remove Them All!
 - ***Because, Only When You Are Filled With The Holy Spirit, Can You Be Empowered By Him!***

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