

MARKS OF SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVERS

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18-21, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Introduction: Paul planted the church in Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18). He wrote this letter from prison (in Rome) to a church comprised of both Jew and Gentile Christians. This letter seems to have primarily been written to ex-pagan Christians, teaching them about their **position in Christ** [1-3] and **prescribing them how to live their Christian life** [4-6] in this fallen world.

In Ephesians 5, Paul gave a couple of negative and positive commands.

- ❖ **v.4**, Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place [NEGATIVE], but instead let there be thanksgiving [POSITIVE].
- ❖ **v.11**, Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness [NEGATIVE], but instead expose them [POSITIVE].
- ❖ **v. 15**, Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise [NEGATIVE] but as wise [POSITIVE]...
- ❖ **v.17**, Therefore do not be foolish [NEGATIVE], but understand what the will of the Lord is [POSITIVE].
- ❖ **v.18**, And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...

Negative command: And do not get drunk with wine (drinking wine to an excess), for that is debauchery (wild and undisciplined life)

- A drunken person is filled with wine.
- A drunken person is under the intoxication of wine (no control over himself).

- A drunken person will live a wild and undisciplined life. The effects are obvious.

Illustration: In my pre-conversion state, I remember once I got drunk with alcohol along with my friends. I fell on the road unconscious in BHEL. I don't remember how I got back home. After about 24 hours I woke up and came back to my senses.

Positive exhortation: “But be filled with the Spirit”

- A Spirit-filled believer is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- A Spirit-filled believer is under the control of the Holy Spirit (control over himself in contrast to a drunken person who loses control over himself).
- A Spirit-filled believer will live a wise and disciplined life. The effects are obvious.

Interesting observation [BEING FULL OF TRINITY] :

1. Church may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19)
2. Church is the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:23)
3. Church to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18)

I. SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVERS ARE FIRST INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

❖ Ephesians 1:13-14, “In him you also, when you **HEARD** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and **BELIEVED** in him, were **SEALED** with the promised Holy Spirit...”

- Baptism/indwelling of the Holy Spirit takes place when we believe in the Gospel of Christ.
 - The Holy Spirit **regenerates** us before conversion
 - The Holy Spirit **indwells** us after conversion
- Ephesians 1:13-14, “were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the **GUARANTEE** of our inheritance until we acquire

possession of it, , to the praise of his glory.” We are sealed with the Holy Spirit forever. [TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME DOESN'T APPLY TO NT BELIEVERS]

- **Who is a believer?** A believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
I Corinthians 6:19, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?”

❖ **To the same believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14), Paul writes in Ephesians 5:18, “Be filled with the Spirit...”**

Two experiences: Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Being filled with the Holy Spirit

Martyn Lloyd Jones: The first point that we have to get clear in our minds is that to be ‘filled with the Spirit’ is not the same as being ‘sealed’ with the Spirit, which I would regard as synonymous with being ‘baptized with the Spirit’.

Note: Acts 2 mentions that the disciples who were baptized with the Holy Spirit were filled with the Holy Spirit. But in Ephesians 5:18 being filled with the Holy Spirit is different from baptism of the Holy Spirit.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
One-time experience	Continuous state
Justification	Sanctification
Security	Maturity

Note: You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit without first being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit cannot indwell you without believing in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Have you believed in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus? Is the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?

2. SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVERS LIVE IN THE STATE OF COMPLETE CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Grammar of Ephesians 5:18, “Be filled with the Spirit...”: Present, Passive, Imperative

Present continuous tense: The whole statement is in the present tense (continuous action, habitual practice, as one's "lifestyle")

⇒ **John Stott:** We have been ‘sealed’ with the Spirit **once and for all**; we need to be filled with the Spirit and go on being filled **every day and every moment of the day**.

Passive voice (receiving the action): You cannot fill yourself with the Holy Spirit. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Let/allow the Holy Spirit fill you with Himself.

Imperative mood (making a command): It is a command to all Christians. It is not reserved for a few elite Christians.

⇒ To be a Christian is to live a Spirit-filled life. There is no option to live a non-Spirit-filled life.

⇒ **John Stott:** “The fullness of the Holy Spirit is emphatically not a privilege reserved for some, but a duty resting on all.”

❖ **Do you know what is the opposite of not being filled with the Holy Spirit? Ephesians 4:30, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” IF WE DON'T LIVE A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE, WE LIVE A SPIRIT-GRIEVING LIFE!**

⇒ It is impossible to live Christian life without being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Note: Although the passive voice speaks about you cannot fill yourself with the Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit who fills you with Himself, **the command shows that you must actively seek (not stay passive) to be filled with the Holy Spirit.**

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Let us first look at what it is not.

- i. **Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not receiving Him progressively by degrees. The Holy Spirit is a person and not a thing/liquid.**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, “So many seem to talk about being filled with the Spirit as if the Holy Spirit were some kind of liquid. They talk about having an ‘empty vessel’, an empty jug, and having the Spirit poured in. That is entirely wrong because it forgets that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is not a substance, not a liquid, and not a power like electricity...We even tend to refer to the Holy Spirit as ‘it’, forgetting that the Holy Spirit is the third Person in the blessed Holy Trinity...But if that is so, why does the Bible use these terms ‘poured out’, ‘shed forth’ and so on? These are but figures [figurative language], of course...These are but terms and expressions used in order to put the truth to us in a vivid way, in order that we may realize the variations in the **strength of the personal influence and power.**”

- ii. **The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a mere dramatic, emotional experience.** That may happen at times but that’s not what it means. It is not also behaving out of control.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, “*Being filled with the Holy Spirit* is not some critical experience; and therefore it is not to be sought as ‘a blessing’. There are many people who go round from meeting to meeting seeking, hoping to get ‘the blessing’ of being ‘filled with the Spirit’. They are sometimes invited to come forward at the end of a meeting to ‘receive’ the fulness of the Spirit. But surely that is to do utter violence to the language used here and to the whole analogy of the teaching of the Scripture. **This is not a critical experience, this is a state or a condition in which we are to live always, permanently.** This is how you always ought to be, says the Apostle; and he commands us to be like this.”

- **Example:** You don’t see loving your wife this way because that’s a state or a condition in which we are to live always. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is similar.
- iii. **Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not about speaking in tongues.**
 - I remember reading a book in my early Christian life, explaining Ephesians 5:18 as speaking in tongues.

- **AG's official statement:** Is tongues the only evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit? The first physical sign of the infilling of the Spirit is speaking in tongues. This is the one physical sign that is consistent in its recurrence.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, In the first place, speaking in tongues is not the invariable accompaniment of the baptism of the Spirit. I put it like that because there is teaching which has been current for a number of years and still is today, which says that speaking in tongues is always the initial evidence of the baptism with the Spirit. It therefore goes on to say that unless you have spoken in tongues you have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Now that, I suggest, is entirely wrong.

- The apostles and other believers did speak in tongues when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. But in Ephesians 5:18, that's not what Paul intended when he said "Be filled with the Holy Spirit."

SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The filling of the Holy Spirit is mentioned essentially in two ways:

i. Unusual empowerment for a particular task.

- ❖ **Acts 4:8,** Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,** "Rulers of the people and elders..."
- ❖ **Acts 4:31,** "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**"
[Observe: Peter was among them]

ii. A normal continuous state or condition in which one lives.

- **Acts 6:3,** Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, **full of the Spirit** [normal state, condition, lifestyle] and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.
- **Acts 11:24,** "Barnabas was a good man, **full of the Holy Spirit** [normal state, condition, lifestyle] and of faith."

Martyn Lloyd Jones: We are not to expect always that the expression “filled with Holy Spirit” indicates special filling for a task. That comes, that goes. **But we are meant to be ‘filled with the Spirit’ always, which is constant condition...** It is vital that that should be established, otherwise there will be nothing but confusion. There is great confusion about all this, and people are waiting for an experience of being filled because they have a wrong conception of this particular teaching.

The second factor [a normal, continuous state/condition, lifestyle] is what Paul intended in Ephesians 5:18,

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to live fully under the control and dominion of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: “Each Christian has all the Spirit, but the command here is that the Spirit have all of him.”

The old (not revised) NLT paraphrase presents an accurate sense of the meaning of the original Greek: Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.

Other phrases for “Being filled with the Holy Spirit”:

- ❖ **Romans, 8:13-14,** For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **For all who are LED BY THE SPIRIT of God are sons of God.**
- ❖ **Galatians 5:16,** But I say, **WALK BY THE SPIRIT**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

TO BE CONTINUED....