

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:18 (Ephesians #38)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 5-22-22

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Come with me again to Ephesians Chapter 5. I didn't mean to lie to you last week; it wasn't a lie, it was just a little misspeak because I didn't remember what I was doing. But I said we were going to get past Chapter 5, Verse 18 today; well, we are going to walk right out to the *far edge* of Ephesians 5:18, and we'll sniff and take a peek over the edge.

This is our third and final message devoted to this watershed verse on the subject of how you relate to the Third Person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit. Each time I have come to this, I've read you the whole sentence, of which this is only the beginning: Ephesians 5:18-21. Look at it again, to remember how it all fits together: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted)

There is *so much* really *bad* teaching about what it means to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit—indeed, a lot of bad teaching about what it means to *have* the Holy Spirit, or *how* to have the Holy Spirit, or the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit, or the "sealing" of the Holy Spirit, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit—that I wanted to take plenty of time to work through this. And remember, I gave you an outline; two simple points: Unbiblical Statements and Biblical Statements about the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Here's a new outline for you, as we finish this up: Number 1—What Is Filling? (mostly review) Number 2—How Is Someone Filled? and Number 3—How Does It Feel To Be Filled?

First of all: What Is Filling? Well, I have told you and shown you in considerable detail that the biblical words for "fill" and "filling" and "full" mean "control." You can be controlled by something like "faith" (Acts 6:5), "comfort" (2 Cor. 7:4), "astonishment" (Lk. 5:26), "sorrow" (Jn. 16:6), "rage" (Lk. 6:11), "jealousy" (Acts 5:17), "joy" (Acts 13:52)—those things are what *drive* your behavior, your speech, your thinking, at any given time.

To be "filled with the Holy Spirit," then, is to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. That is a review; you can go back and see that in detail if you want to.

But I want you to look at a wonderful promise. It's over in James Chapter 4, Verse 5. It reads like this: "Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us'?" Now, I just called that a wonderful promise, but I need to explain: it is also a *very difficult* verse to translate into English.

When I was working through the Book of James, I wrestled *a long time* with this before I understood exactly what it means; and if we were to have the Harris Standard Bible, or the Legacy Harris Standard Bible—whatever it might be called, and by God's grace we don't have that—I would render it this way; I think the best translation of the meaning of this is: "The Spirit which He caused to dwell in us jealously desires us."

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---

God has given us His Spirit, right? Jesus promised He would ascend to the Father, He would send the Spirit (Jn. 16:7). He ascended (Acts 1:9), the Father sent the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), we have the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). And according to Exodus 34:14, our God "is a jealous God." "He jealously desires us." God has given us His Spirit because of His *powerful* desire, His *genuine* desire to manifest Himself by our changed lives (e.g., Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; Eph. 1:4; Phil. 2:15; cf. Jb. 1:8).

A lot of preaching and teaching about the Holy Spirit makes you feel like you need to jump through a bunch of spiritual hoops in order to convince the Holy Spirit to control your life. Not so! To be filled with the Holy Spirit is a matter of having your actions, your attitudes, your speech, under the control of the Holy Spirit.

And that brings us to the next logical question: How Is Someone Filled With The Spirit? Now, remember: This is in Ephesians Chapter 5; that's smack dab in the middle of the last half of this book—Chapters 4, 5, and 6. This whole section *presupposes* that you have read and understood everything in Chapter 1, 2, and 3, *and you believe it* (Eph. 4:1; cf. 2 Cor. 7:1). This is presupposing that you are—that theme phrase [of the Book of Ephesians]—"in Christ." So we are now talking about people who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When it comes to the issue of "How is someone filled with the Holy Spirit?" it would take you about two minutes on the Internet to search and find something really *bad*, really *misapplying* Scripture on this subject. There is a *whole bunch* of "holy hocus pocus" out there! There is a whole bunch of mystical pseudo-spiritual rhetoric about this. But I am going to show you what a *simple* concept it really is.

Now, I said "simple concept"; I *did not* say it's *effortless to do*. It *requires* effort to implement simple, profound truth. "Walking by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16) requires your commitment and "discipline" (1 Tim. 4:7)—and, frankly, there are no shortcuts. Just as fighting a war, *even if you win*—well, that's *serious business*; there are some scrapes along the way. So there *is* a part for you.

But I want you to pay attention to something; and if you have the notes that were handed out with your bulletins—or, if you are watching online, if you look on HBC-Boise.org under "Sermons," under today's date, under "Downloads," you can download this and look at it yourself. I want you to see something.

Paul, when he was in his first imprisonment in Rome, wrote four of the New Testament epistles. You know what they are: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Same guy, same jail cell, people in the same region—these were all in a circle of churches that had apparently been planted during the three years that Paul lived and preached in Ephesus—and there are some very strong parallels, *especially* between Ephesians and Colossians.

And if you were to go look at those passages, you would find that Ephesians 5:19-21 says the same thing as Colossians 3:16-17, and it is addressed to the whole church.

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:18 (Ephesians #38)

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---

Verse 22 of Ephesians 5 matches with Colossians 3:18—it is addressed to wives.

Ephesians 5:25 equals Colossians 3:19—that is addressed to husbands.

Ephesians Chapter 6, Verse 1 matches Colossians Chapter 3, Verse 20—addressed to children.

Ephesians Chapter 6, Verse 4 matches Colossians Chapter 3, Verse 21—addressed to parents.

Ephesians Chapter 6, Verse 5 matches Colossians Chapter 3, Verse 22—addressed to slaves.

Ephesians Chapter 6, Verse 9 matches Colossians Chapter 4, Verse 1—addressed to masters.

Now, all of those things are things that you should *do*; they are very practical human relationship instructions and guidance from God, in all of those different human interactions. At the top of both of those passages is a command. So, obviously, in those parallel passages, simple observation would tell you that: if to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" leads to all of these things, and *something else* leads to all of these things, to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" has to be parallel to whatever that other command is, which is: "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you" (Col. 3:16). So, we can say this: Ephesians 5:18—"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"—equals, at least in effect, Colossians Chapter 3, Verse 16—"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you."

What is translated "dwell" in there means "to take up residence, to make one's home in that place"—so, it's telling you to let the Word of God, if you will, fill your heart, live there. The word "richly" means "extravagantly," or, the opposite of "sparingly" (2 Cor. 9:6).

So this means: being *controlled* by the Word of God. It means: walking in *obedience* to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. The "holy men" who wrote the Bible were "borne along" by "the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21, AMPC; cf. 2 Sam. 23:2; Mk. 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:25). There is a Divine Author; there is always a human author.

The Holy Spirit is the author of every single portion of the Word of God. So, the Holy Spirit *never* acts contrary to Scripture (cf. Num. 23:19; Deut. 18:22). So, the more you saturate your decisions with the Word of God, the more you will come under the control of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 2:13b). And then you can look at those parallel passages; you can see them, if you will, in two columns—*exactly* the same results follow "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you" and follow "Be filled with the Spirit." What the church does, what wives do in relation to husbands, what husbands do in relationship to wives, how children respond to parents, how parents respond and lead children, how slaves respond to their masters, and how masters should treat their slaves—and to make that analogous to our culture: how employees should relate to employers and how employers should relate to employees. It is *very obvious*, the equality between those things.

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
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---

So, you become "filled with the Holy Spirit" *by* cooperating with Him in "daily" choices to conform your life to God's Word (Lk. 9:23). One of my favorite authors—he was kind of a Biblical Counselor before Biblical Counseling was cool—William Backus, in one of his books, calls this "finding the freedom of self-control." That's a great turn of a phrase! "Freedom" of "control"—I am *set free* when I learn how to control myself, under the control of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ps. 119:45; Rom. 6:18; 8:2). But, for that "fruit of the Holy Spirit" which is "self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23) to blossom and ripen in our lives, we have to make a choice to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16)—to "be filled with the Spirit."

Let me illustrate that a little bit for you. Suppose you are angry because someone, or some circumstance, suddenly kindles angry emotions within you. I had a phone call a while back from someone, explaining to me why my claim was being denied; and I was given a *completely* irrational reason why it was being declined. Now, I understand: an insurance adjuster is not hired in order to give away money; they are hired to *save* the company money—that's their job. Okay, I get that. But I responded to the irrational reason with a rational counter-offer, which was rejected. And, do you know what? My flesh knew *exactly* how to respond to that; I practiced for a long time: [ferocious growling]. I *didn't*. I said, "Well, that doesn't make sense." I actually submitted something; I'm waiting to have another opportunity to test whether I am "filled with the Spirit" or with the flesh.

But when you come to that point, something makes you *angry*. It could be just a personal offense, it could be something unjust, it could just be that you are in a terrible mood—something makes you angry. At *that point*, God is calling you! You have a choice in that moment—and that is the *only* time you have that choice—and you must choose *in that moment*: "Am I going to follow the flesh, or am I going to 'walk by the Spirit'?"

So, the first thing you need to do is consult the Word of God. So, right after you *growl* at the other person, you say, "Excuse me," and you run and get your Bible and you get out the concordance and you start looking for verses about anger—or, far better: you have *memorized* them (cf. Ps. 119:11); you *know* what the Bible says.

And so, for example, you would know something like—oh, I don't know...something we studied less than a chapter ago, in Ephesians Chapter 4, Verses 26 and 27—"Be angry, and yet do not sin." The *command* is "Be angry"; I mean, you *should* be angered at the things that anger God (e.g., Ps. 97:10), but *never ever* be angry in a sinful kind of a way. "Do not let the sun go down on your anger"—don't just go away and bury it for a while and let it work up more and more and more steam until you finally blow off at somebody—"and do not give the devil an opportunity." If you let anger control you, you are giving the Devil the opportunity to *use you* for his glory—and his glory *always* does damage (cf. Matt. 16:22-23).

There is *no question* about which direction the Spirit leads you when you are angry. God's instruction is to resolve your anger and deal with it. Speak "truth in love" (Eph. 4:15)—to Christians *and* to non-Christians. There is absolutely no question whatsoever about the leading of the Holy Spirit. The only question is: Will you follow it or not?

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
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---

And by the way: It has nothing to do with whether you *feel* like resolving it or not. You might *not* feel like making peace in that moment. Our flesh screams, "I have to *win* this argument with this *stupid person*, or this *stupid thing* that this person has said!" No, God doesn't want you to bury it, He doesn't want you to deny it, He doesn't want you to explode; He wants you to *deal* with it in a way that honors Him.

Consider another situation: Maybe something doesn't necessarily make you *angry*, but it really *frustrates* you. What do you do? Well, first, consult the Word of God—a passage that I hope you at least know the gist of, if you don't have it memorized word-perfect: Galatians Chapter 5, Verses 22 through 24—"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

Why is that last part there? Because this is the passage that talks about how "the flesh" *wars* "against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (vs. 17)—*you* are the one in the middle of this war, and the choice you have to make is to *turn away* from the fleshly response (Matt. 16:24; cf. Ps. 18:23; Prov. 29:11), ask God for wisdom (Matt. 26:41)—and "patience" and "kindness" and "goodness" and "gentleness" and "self-control"—and thereby avoid flying off the handle. Simple concept, right? "Let the Word of Christ" settle down, be at home, and rule your heart! Simple concept...I didn't say it was always easy! I didn't say it doesn't require effort on our part.

Consider the issue of being tempted. Find something tempting—whatever it might be; there are a *gazillion* things that you can find tempting. Well, you need to let God's Word settle down and be at home in your heart. For example: James Chapter 1, Verse 14—"Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

Now, if you are a fisherman, two words from the realm of fishing here: "carried away" and "enticed"; they describe how a fish responds to your bait, to your lure. The word translated "lust"—it doesn't have to be sexual at all; it means "strong desire." Fishing works because fish have a dangerous habit: they eat, *even* when there are fishermen around. "Carried away" and "enticed" together—"enticed" is like "being drawn out from your hiding place." *Plunk*—something lands in the water. "Ooh, that looks yummy! I think I'll go look at that!" And he swims by and he looks around, and not only is he "enticed," he gets "carried away"—and he *chomps* on it, and you caught him! That's how you fall into temptation.

So, to avoid temptation, it is wise to avoid—*learn* to avoid, *practice* avoiding—those situations and those people that you know tend to kindle unhealthy desires in you (cf. Job 31:1, 9; Prov. 4:14-15; 7:8-9; 14:16; 22:5).

And so, another consideration of being "filled with the Spirit" would be First Corinthians 15:33—"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.' " It makes a *great big difference* who you spend time with (Prov. 13:20; 22:24-25). And it is very important that we spend time with one another, as often and in as many ways as we can (Prov. 27:17). You can't be with your whole church family 24/7, but understand that.

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
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---

Before we leave the subject of being Spirit-filled in the face of temptation, you better understand that *God understands* your situation, that it isn't always possible to completely avoid tempting things, or people that lead you in the wrong way; but again, the Scripture is so practical, it addresses the issue about how the Holy Spirit will lead you. Look at Second Timothy Chapter 2, Verse 22. Suppose you *can't* avoid it; it has come upon you—you weren't seeking it, you weren't lusting after it, it came upon you. Here is what to do: "Now *flee* from youthful lusts"—same thing: "lust" doesn't have to be sexual—"and *pursue* righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

How does the Holy Spirit lead you in a situation like that? *Become a fugitive*. The Greek word translated "flee" is *pheugō*; we get "fugitive" from it. The "fugitive" is the one who is running away from whatever is chasing. *Run away* from those things that yank you in the wrong direction, "and *pursue* righteousness, faith, love, and peace"—and notice: "with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." *Run to your Christian friends! Run to your Christian spouse. Run to your Christian family. Run to your church!* Run away. The Holy Spirit *will* lead you, He *will* enable you to run as far and as fast as necessary. Think *Joseph*, when Potiphar's wife decided to seduce him: he ran away (Gen. 39:12).

Again, we see the same principle: To be filled with the Holy Spirit requires *you* to exercise *your will* to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in obeying His Word—the Word of God (cf. Ps. 119:173). I think you get the point.

Your potential for a *consistent* walk with the Spirit, your potential for being "filled with the Holy Spirit," is *directly proportional* to your *knowledge* of God's Word—the more you have it settled in your mind, or, as David calls it in Psalm 119: the more you have it "hidden in" your "heart" (vs. 11, NKJV), the more readily you can respond to it (cf. Prov. 22:18). You have to have the knowledge of God's Word *and* the willingness to apply it (Ps. 119:106).

The idea is very clear in the way that Paul prayed for fellow believers in Ephesians Chapter 3. He was almost done with those great first three chapters, and look how he prays: Remember this, from Ephesians Chapter 3, starting at Verse 14—"For this reason"—what reason? Well, because you are "in Christ"—"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory"—remember that? You have been "blessed" with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3)—"according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man." So, put His Word in "the inner man": your heart, your soul, your mind, your conscience, your will, *saturated* in the Word of God (Ps. 119:95b).

And by the way: Right after Ephesians 3:16—that we just read—the *next* verse, which happens to be 3:17, is the one that talks about *Christ* settling down and being comfortable in your life (cf. Jn. 14:21)...which is *just like* Colossians 3:16—"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you."

Christ is the living "Word" (Jn. 1:14); Scripture is the written Word (2 Tim. 3:15). Having the Spirit strengthen you with His power is the result of Him being in control (cf. 119:38).

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:18 (Ephesians #38)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 5-22-22

---

Now, *living* this Spirit-filled life—oh, it's the way to go!—but understand: It's kind of like exercising a muscle. You decide to get stronger, you decide to get fit; or you have been injured or you've had a surgery or you've had an illness, and now you need to get strong again; well, you go, and that first time, you're working out a little bit and, "Ah, this feels pretty good; I'm glad I can do this"—and then the next day, you wonder if you'll ever walk again! You aren't as *good* when you start out, you aren't as *strong* when you start out, you aren't as *coordinated* when you start out.

But, making and breaking *habits* in the spiritual realm requires discipline and repetition, *just like* building up that muscle. It even requires being willing to endure some *pain* at first! The Lord promises that He will "chasten" everyone whom He "loves" (Rev. 3:19, NKJV)—you may get some chastening in the process here. But, as you are overcoming old habits and working underdeveloped muscles, it's like getting rid of old habits in your spiritual life, and developing *new* decision-making skills.

Now, go back to Ephesians Chapter 5, and I want to point out a couple more facts about this verse before we move on. Ephesians 5:18—"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation..." He uses that as the contrast. Being under the influence of alcohol—or any other foreign, external substance—is "dissipation"; it is *totally* wasted; there is *nothing* salvific about it; there is nothing good for you about it; it is *always* a bad thing to do! You don't need to pray about that! God took care of that for you; He told you: "Don't do that!"

So, "Do not get drunk with wine"—this is teaching by contrast—"but be filled with the Spirit." Now, I want you to look at that command part: "be filled"—that's the command, and here's a chance for you Greek students to have some spiritual goosebumps: The grammatical form of "be filled" is "present passive imperative." Oh, I get so blessed when I read something like that, I can hardly contain myself!

What it means is: "Present" implies something that is repeated or continuous—always the way. "Passive" means you don't do it to yourself; it comes from another source—in this case, "the Spirit." The Spirit fills you, you don't go get another shovelful of the Spirit and fill yourself. So, "present"—ongoing. "Passive"—the Spirit does it. "Imperative" means this is a command. You could translate this: "Always *be* being controlled by the Holy Spirit." He is the power source. You cooperate with what He does in you, for you, through you—and you get the blessings, and He gets the glory through what is done in your life (Jn. 15:8).

Now, it sounds paradoxical, I understand; but it isn't. He provides supernatural enabling, *but* your decision is required in order to *have* His enabling. At the same time, it is both a matter of God's *grace*, and it's totally a matter of your *choice*. It isn't that you knuckle down and do all that you can, and then God takes over when you stagger to your knees, and He drags you to the finish line. No, the job can *only* be done by God—from start to finish. But He requires of you the choice to let Him do it His way—from start to finish. Spirit-filling, like salvation, is not a 50-50 proposition. It requires *total effort* on your part (Mk. 12:30), but it is *total provision* on His part (Ezek. 36:27; cf. Jn. 15:5; Heb. 13:21). That is to "be filled with the Spirit."

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:18 (Ephesians #38)

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Date: 5-22-22

---

Look at another passage that I have alluded to; it says the same concept in a different way: Galatians Chapter 5, Verse 16. Right before that part about "the fruit of the Spirit" (vs. 22), he says: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." "Be filled with the Spirit," "Walk by the Spirit"—what's the difference? There really isn't any, in practice. The imperative in that verse is "walk." *You* have to exercise your will and expend the energy to walk, but you "*walk by the Spirit*"—the Spirit enables you; the Spirit will control you (Ph. 2:12-13; cf. Ps. 119:32, 35-36).

And then, and *only* then, do you have the divine enabling to overcome the flesh; because the flesh battles against the Spirit, the Spirit battles against the flesh (Gal. 5:17)—guess who gets to decide the direction? *You* "walk by" His "Spirit" is the same as saying: *You* "be filled with" His "Spirit."

So, What Is Filling? It is control. God desires it. He desires *you*; He desires to have this *close* relationship with you (Prov. 3:32b; 15:8; Is. 30:18; Jn. 14:23).

How Is Someone Filled? By choosing to obey what God says, what the Spirit wrote for you (Ps. 119:30).

Third question: How Does It Feel To Be Filled?

Now, first, I want to underscore that the reality of having a relationship with God—God the Father, Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14)—is *not* a matter of *feelings*. The tragedy in defining *any* part of this relationship by feelings is that you will draw conclusions about reality based upon how you *feel*, when in fact, reality is determined by what is *true*—what God says is true (Jn. 17:17b); and if you wind up deciding what you believe is true based upon your *feelings*, you have the world upside down (Prov. 28:26). You need to take your feelings and adjust your feelings in light of the truth!

Now, your feelings—well, they are *real*. How you feel—well, *that's how you feel*. Right now, you might be feeling tired, you might be feeling exhilarated, you might be feeling bored; you might think, "Oh, gee, am I getting sick?" You can *feel* a lot of different ways; but if you are talking about your relationship with God, it all depends upon what is *true* and what you are *trusting* (cf. Hab. 3:16-18).

Your feelings are real—but they are *liars* (Jer. 17:9). You *never can tell* when they are telling you the truth! Sometimes you can feel good when you ought to be scared—you're just too dumb to realize how much trouble you really *are* in! You can feel anxious when, in reality, you have a God who has you safe in His hands. You have to adjust those feelings in light of the Scripture! Act on what is *true*, not what you feel (e.g., Ps. 23:4).

Okay, I think you have heard all that before. Having said that, there *are* several things that I think *can* be said about the life of a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit. These are practical things, important things. And I promise you: These things will *affect* your feelings in some practical and beneficial ways. And the more often that your feelings go in the wrong direction, the more often you need to bring your feelings under the authority of the Scriptures, and eventually change the direction (e.g., Jn. 14:1, 27; cf. Ps. 27:1-3).

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
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---

I came up with a list of five things from the Scriptures that can and should affect how you *feel* in your Christian life, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit. I'll bet you could add to my five pretty easily. Feel free.

Number 1—God provides us with peace that cannot be understood by anyone other than the one who experiences it.

Famous verse: Philippians Chapter 4, Verse 7—"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Isn't that a *great* way to say it? It "surpasses all comprehension"—what does *that* mean? That's hyperbole. It is *beyond* anything that, humanly, you can say. As a matter of fact, it's *supernatural* (cf. Is. 26:3).

As a matter of fact, Jesus mentioned it before He went to the Cross. Remember: "Peace I leave with you; *My* peace I give to you; not as the world gives" (Matt. 14:27). "In the world *you have* tribulation, but...I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). "*My* peace I give to you."

Now, if you look at Philippians 4:7 and you *want* that peace which "guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus," understand: The verses before that gives prerequisites for it: Rejoicing in the Lord, being forbearing to all men, refusing to be anxious, and praying with thankfulness.

And those are *just like* the things that we said that come with the filling of the Spirit—or, the things that are *your choice* to do in order to walk with the Spirit. What can those *possibly* add up to, other than *choosing* to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by obeying God's written Word that He has given to you?

Number 2—A second thing that we can say; and this is just a repeat of what we have said several times already, but I want to point out, it *does* affect your feelings: The *filling* of the Holy Spirit is *inseparable* from the *fruit* of the Spirit.

*Every* believer *can* and *should* manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit; that should be your pattern of life, that should be your desire. When you feel that angry sensation boiling up, remember: that's God's instant of calling you—He is calling you to *choose* to exercise "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." If that is the fruit that the Holy Spirit bears, and you are going to be under the control of the Holy Spirit, that's going to be the fruit that is going to show in your life; that's just almost a tautology.

Number 3—The filling of the Holy Spirit produces awareness of your relationship with God.

As you *choose* to do the things that make you under the control of the Holy Spirit, your *sense* of a relationship with God is going to grow. Romans 8:16-17—"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" (NASB-1977).

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Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 5-22-22

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What does it mean that the Spirit "bears witness with our spirit" that we belong to God? I've shared it with many of you; I've shared it from the pulpit several times: The morning after I gave my life to Christ—coming from a background of *zero* Gospel exposure, I heard the Gospel; He called me; I believed; I declared that Jesus is my Lord, and I said, "Come into my life and make me into the person that You intend me to be"; I went to sleep that night; I woke up in the morning, put my feet on the floor; I sat on the edge of my bed, and I said out loud, spontaneously, with *no* forethought whatsoever: "Good morning, Lord!" I kind of looked around. Is somebody else talking? No, *I said that!* Is that some kind of *super* revelation? No! But then I eventually found Romans Chapter 8, and I thought, Wow! That's an evidence of His Spirit in my life—that I actually had a sense of reaching out and calling Him "Lord"!

Your instinct to call upon God as your *Father*, your awareness that suffering in this life is *worth it*—that is all evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in your life. People without the Holy Spirit are *not* prompted to call out, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6)—"Oh, God!" They may cry out in desperation; but if you are His child, if you are "in Christ," you turn to Him in trust, in dependence—empty, uplifted hands: "God, I *need* You! I am Yours!" (cf. Ps. 119:94) Where does that instinct come from? The Holy Spirit at work in your life. Just like a child instinctively runs to Mom and Dad for safety and comfort and guidance (e.g., Ps. 18:6; 28:7; 30:2, 10; 40:13; 142:1; etc.).

Number 4—Another dramatic evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit is that He is an enabler. Like we read in Ephesians Chapter 3, He gives you the everyday enabling to do whatever it is He calls you to do (e.g., Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:21). Remember, He said in Chapter 2: "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (vss. 8-10).

So, *how* are we *able* to do those "good works"? He is the enabler. Ephesians Chapter 3, Verse 20—"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, *according to the power that works within us*"—that's the Holy Spirit!

One more: Number 5. I told you we would run up to the edge of Ephesians 5:18, and we would look over it to what is coming, and we would go [inhaling deeply], "Ooh, I get a whiff of that!" Here it is: This passage itself mentions several other phenomena which are results of the filling of the Holy Spirit—or, evidences of the filling of the Holy Spirit—in believers. Verses 19 through 21 mention "speaking," "singing," "making melody," "giving thanks," and "being subject to one another"; and that is going to set the tone for those next paragraphs in Ephesians, which are going to come alive to you as never before.

But now, observe one obvious truth: The *absence* of those things would be evidence of the *absence* of the filling of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ezek. 36:27). Somebody who *doesn't want* to talk with other believers? Somebody who *doesn't want* to sing God's praises? Somebody who *doesn't want* to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" (Ps. 98:4, KJV)? Somebody who *doesn't want* to give thanks to God every day? Somebody who *doesn't want* to figure out how to serve other people? *That's a person who is not a Christian!*

Sermon Title: Be Filled With The Spirit, Part 3  
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:18 (Ephesians #38)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 5-22-22

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Or, the *very best possible* other interpretation: That's a Christian in *open rebellion* to his or her Father!

This is a wonderful thing, what God has done for us. Understand, my friends: As we have said so many times, the most important question about you and the Holy Spirit is whether you have a relationship with Him in the first place (2 Cor. 13:5; cf. Matt. 7:23; Titus 1:16; Heb. 3:14; 1 Jn. 2:3-5, 19; Rev. 17:14).

The Bible speaks of only two kinds of people: There are those who are spiritually alive—they *all* possess the Holy Spirit. There are those who are spiritually dead—and they *do not* have the Holy Spirit. Romans Chapter 8 speaks openly about the two kinds of people: those who are "in the flesh," those who are "in the Spirit"—one lives in a state of death (Eph. 2:1); one lives in a state of life and peace (Is. 48:22; Matt. 13:38; Jn. 3:6; Rom. 2:9-10; 5:1; Gal. 4:29; 1 Jn. 3:10).

Now, no good thing you could ever accomplish in your own strength could *earn* you that kind of relationship with God (Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:10-12). You must come to Him by "faith," not by "works" (Gal. 2:16). You must accept that He has provided a way, through Christ, for your sins to be forgiven (Acts 10:36, 43; 26:18). You have to accept the "free gift" of "eternal life" that is "in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:23)—and when you come to Him like that, on His terms, you receive "the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:32) and "eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

And if you have never done that, I can tell you: Right now, today, where you sit—this is the *perfect time* for you to acknowledge your sin before God (Prov. 28:13), and to thank Him for sending Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for your sins (Is. 53:5) so that you won't "die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24). It's a "free gift"—but you have to *accept* the gift! It is all given by His grace, but you have to believe. And recognizing now that most of us have taken that step, if you haven't—like I said, this is the time to do it (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 4:7).

I suggest: this is here in God's Word for us to remember to examine our attitude toward our relationship with God, and to be sure that it is what it should be (2 Cor. 13:5). The Holy Spirit is not a genie who pops out of His bottle to grant wishes when you have run out of other options. He is the every day, every moment enabler—present in your life to make it possible for you to please God for His glory.

You can either be filled with the Holy Spirit, or you can squelch His control over your life (1 Thess. 5:19). Make the right choices. It's an every day kind of thing (Lk. 9:23; cf. Prov. 23:17b). And the *more* you do it, the more it becomes the right habit.

And God will see you through those times when you "encounter," as James says, "various trials" (Jas. 1:2), and they come upon you—they *fall* upon you, or you *fall* into them. Yeah, sometimes, *you can't see that pothole*, and you hit it; sometimes you step in it. You don't see the thing coming your way.

But you can "be filled with the Spirit," and you can see His grace carry you through every one of those things (Ps. 34:19)—so that then, when you have opportunity to serve, you can do it for His glory.

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And let's pray:

*Our Father, again, thank You for the Holy Spirit. Thank You for the God-breathed written Word that we have. Please, Lord, increase our desire for Your Word. Increase our joy in taking it in, comprehending it. Give us courage to obey—especially when our flesh screams out against Your Spirit. In those moments of decision, in those moments of reaction, teach us to make our habitual answer: "Yes, Lord. I belong to You. Send me! Give me words to speak that will honor You, when we interact with other people." And Father, indeed, send us when we see other needs, when we see needs of others around us. Have Your way with us for Your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.*