

“Be Filled With the Spirit”  
Ephesians 5:18  
(Preached at Trinity, July 26, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. For two chapters Paul has been instructing his readers on demonstrating with their lives the reality of their Christian conversion. He is stressing the infinite difference between the believer and the unbeliever. It is the difference of night and day, of darkness and light.  
**Ephesians 5:8 NAU** - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"
2. The nature of the deeds of darkness is the idea that they are hidden. The light of the glorious Gospel of Christ has shined upon us with such brilliance that we are forever changed and this change is evident to all. Paul's charge to us is that our lives shine in such a way as to expose and rebuke the deeds of the darkness.
3. But while we have been transformed from darkness unto light we are always being drawn back to the darkness. This is why the Christian life must be one of great caution, of serious watchfulness.  
**Ephesians 5:15 NAU** - "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise"
4. Our salvation is a unilateral work of God. Theologically we call it a monergistic work. From start to finish it is God's work alone.  
But the Christian life is also one of striving and great human effort in the pursuit of holiness.  
Paul has been stressing this throughout this passage. Chapter 5 is full of imperatives. Lay aside the old self and put on the new self.  
**Ephesians 5:1 NAU** - "be imitators of God, as beloved children"  
**Ephesians 5:8 NAU** - "you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"  
**Ephesians 5:11 NAU** - "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;"  
**Ephesians 5:15 NAU** - "be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise"
5. But it is not *merely* a human work. The New Testament sets forth a careful balance of human effort empowered by the Holy Spirit. Paul states it best in Philippians 2  
**Philippians 2:12-13 NAU** - "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure."
6. Paul has maintained this balance throughout this discussion. He has been careful to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 3:14-16 NAU** - " For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man"

**Ephesians 4:30 NAU** - "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

7. Now he adds:

**Ephesians 5:18 NAU** - "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"

8. The Holy Spirit is one of the glorious blessings in the life of a Christian. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential in the life of the Christian. In fact, His presence testifies to that our conversion is genuine. He is the seal that marks our new life and declares it to be authentic. Paul says without the Holy Spirit our salvation is counterfeit.

**Romans 8:9 NAU** - "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

9. He testifies to us that we are indeed the children of God.

**Romans 8:16 NAU** - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God"

10. Paul has been describing the great contrast between believer and the unbeliever; between the old man and the new. It is the Holy Spirit that displays this contrast in the life of the believer.

This is Paul's point here in **Verse 16**. He contrasts drunkenness with the Spirit filled life.

11. Drunkenness is the epitome of life lived in the flesh. It was common in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

A. It describes the undisciplined life; a life given over to the excesses of the flesh.

B. Paul describes it as synonymous with the unconverted life.

The word translated "dissipation" in the NAU is ἀσωτία which places the alpha prefix before the Greek word meaning "to save." In other words it means "unsaved." It describes riotous or unruly living inconsistent with Christianity.

C. Paul's consistent teaching was drunkenness is inconsistent with Christian conversion.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NAU** - "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God."

**Galatians 5:19-21 NAU** - "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

12. There is another element to see here. Drunkenness has certain effects upon the mind affecting the ability to reason, the ability to comprehend; it affects sound judgment.

When intoxicated with drink one is said to be under the influence. An alcoholic is under the control of drink. It rules him.

13. Paul is saying instead of being ruled by alcohol, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Be under His influence. Be under His rule. Curtis Vaughan state it: “to be permeated by His presence and power, being brought under His gracious control.”
  14. Alcohol is actually the great counterfeit of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It promises happiness when it is actually a depressant – “happy hour?”  
Only life in the Spirit is truly joyous, exhilarating,
- I. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- A. This is different from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit sometimes referred to as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit
    1. The Baptism of the Spirit is the initial indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It takes place when we are engrafted into Christ.
    2. Every Christian has this indwelling by the Holy Spirit
    3. The Holy Spirit was the agent of our conversion. Regeneration came through the Holy Spirit. Faith and repentance came through the Holy Spirit. And our progress in holiness is through the Holy Spirit.
    4. Since every Christian has this indwelling we are not commanded to *be* indwelled.
  - B. But not every Christian is *filled* with the Holy Spirit to the same degree and so it is urged upon us. It is commanded of us.
    1. Paul is using a present plural passive imperative
      - It is present telling us that it is an ongoing work – be filled continually
      - It is plural telling us that this isn’t something exceptional for only a select few – Paul is writing to the church.
      - It is passive telling us that it is a work taking place outside ourselves—we are being filled.
      - But it is also an imperative making it a command – “be filled” Which means we have the responsibility of being filled.
    2. Some Christians have larger measures of this filling. They are given particular mention. They are distinguished from others
      - a. Jesus in His humanity was full of the Holy Spirit – equipped and led by the Spirit  
**Luke 4:1** – “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,”
      - b. We read of Barnabas  
**Acts 11:24 NAU** - "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord."
      - c. We read of the first deacons:  
**Acts 6:3 NAU** - "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."
  - C. Looking at the Paul’s contrast here, just as the drunkard is under the influence of alcohol the Christian must be under the influence of the Holy Spirit
    1. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a life under continual submission to His leadership; His dominion

2. The word for “filled” is from a word that means to bring something to its full completion. Here it is referring to the total influence of the Holy Spirit. It refers to submitting to Him above all else with nothing remaining undone.
  - a. Paul used the word in **Chapter 1** referring to the work of Christ. **Ephesians 1:22-23 NAU** - "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."
  - b. With the work of Christ there is nothing left undone. He has filled all in all.
  - c. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be under submission to Him with nothing held back, nothing undone.
3. The Holy Spirit is always at work within us.
  - a. He stirs our affections towards the things of God. This is what it means to be spiritually minded. But we can resist these stirrings. Our flesh finds no satisfaction with spiritual things  
**Romans 8:5 NAU** - "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."
  - b. When we are filled with the Spirit, when we are under His influence there is a higher class of objects that gain our attention and captivate our thoughts. There are a higher class of objects that satisfy us.
  - c. These things cannot be appreciated by the lost man. He has no interest in them. He is uninterested in the things of God. He is only interested in the things of the flesh.  
He is uninterested in worship, preaching, the Bible, prayer, service to Christ – He cares little about the well-being and prosperity of the church. If the church closed tomorrow it would affect him little.  
He is unconcerned about evangelism, missions.
  - d. It's like a gazing upon a beautiful piece of art. Although the uncultivated man can look upon it with his physical eye he has no perception of its aesthetic excellence. He will have no delight in it. The lost man may have an intellectual knowledge of the "things of God" but he will not delight in them. He will be bored with them.
3. The Holy Spirit is constantly informing our conscience. He is at work applying God's Word to our heart. In other words, the conscience is properly informed.
  - a. The one filled with the Holy Spirit is obedient to the conviction of his conscience. He submits to the Holy Spirit's proddings.
  - b. Our conscience under the Holy Spirit's influence becomes tender and easily offended. We love the things He loves and hate the things He hates.
  - c. But we can ignore the stirring of the Holy Spirit upon our conscience. We can stubbornly resist Him. As we resist Him He withdraws His influence. Our hearts become hard and unfeeling.

- II. As we submit to the authority and rule of the Holy Spirit His influence in our lives is more and more apparent.
- A. Paul speaks of outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit's working
1. Paul is saying here that there is a great difference between the life lived in the flesh and the life filled with the Spirit. Drunkenness is the synonymous with life in the flesh.
  2. Paul also gives the contrast in Galatians 5  
**Galatians 5:19-23 NAU** - " Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."
- B. We'll see it working out in our daily lives.
1. Your children have tried and tested your patience to the max and you have every right to be angry, yet you respond with patience.
    - a. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in you producing the fruit of righteousness. The fruit of the Spirit is patience and self-control
    - b. You deny your desire to respond in anger and instead rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in you. You deny yourself and follow Christ.
  2. You've just received a phone call from a friend who begins to share some information about a mutual acquaintance. The information is interesting, but you know in your heart that it is gossip. You tell your friend it would be best not to talk about it. This is following the Spirit's leading.
  3. You come home tired from work and you want to just sit down and have some quiet time in front of the TV. Yet you rise up to invest yourself with your children and spend time with your wife. You deny yourself and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in sacrificial service.  
**Ephesians 5:21** - "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."
  4. A friend has offended you and is asking for forgiveness. But you're hurt. The offense is painful. Yet you forgive him. This is following the Holy Spirit.
  5. The flesh cares mainly for self. The Spirit filled life looks beyond self and looks to the needs of others.
- III. The person filled with the Spirit will be dominated by a love for Christ – He will glory in the person of Christ
- A. The Holy Spirit always points us to Christ.
1. Love is a fruit of the Spirit that finds its greatest manifestation in our love for Christ

2. The lost man despises Christ – His person, His rule, His kingdom, His people. He may pretend to be merely indifferent towards God, but his indifference is actually great wickedness and rebellion. God will not have a person to be indifferent towards Him.  
**Deuteronomy 6:5 NAU** - "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."
  3. The lost man may become religious. He may join a church. He may advance in leadership at the church. But he will not love Christ and he will not submit to the demands of Christ.  
**John 14:15** - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
  4. The Christian sees Jesus as most excellent, the greatest of treasures. This is the stirring of the Holy Spirit
    - a. The Holy Spirit always points us to Christ – We find His teachings excellent, we find His person excellent.
    - b. Jesus Christ has a spiritual beauty that can only be beheld by those who have been transformed. Only the redeemed truly know of His excellence.
  5. He is altogether lovely. We adore Him. We savor every aspect of His perfect divine person  
The man who filled with the Spirit has an appetite for Christ.  
Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:8 NAU** - "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ"
  6. Salvation is not chiefly about forgiveness or being delivered from the penalty of sin. Salvation is chiefly about being brought to fellowship with Christ  
Calvin – "The whole purpose of the Gospel is that Christ be made ours, and that we be engrafted into His body.
- B. But if you live in opposition to the Holy Spirit these influences will be hindered. If you are stubborn and resist the leading of the Holy Spirit you will suffer greatly the loss of His influence.
1. The Christian life is a great struggle. I have often said that the Christian life is a conflict of desires
  2. Before we are saved we have one desire – to satisfy our flesh. Sin brings the flesh pleasure and so it is the greatest desire.
  3. The Christian still battles against the flesh but by grace we have a new desire. Christ has become our greatest desire. He has become most precious in our sight. He has captivated our heart.
  4. The Holy Spirit enflames these feelings. We must follow His leadership and as we do He leads us nearer to Christ.

### Conclusion:

1. So here's the big question. How are we filled with the Holy Spirit?  
Simply by seeking to be under His dominion.  
By looking to the things of the Spirit – His Word, prayer, worship.  
By fleeing from those things He hates.  
  - 1 Corinthians 6:18 NAU** - "Flee immorality."
  - 1 Corinthians 10:14 NAU** - "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."
 Not only flee from sin but pursue righteousness.  
  - 2 Timothy 2:22 NAU** - "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."
  - 1 Timothy 6:11 NAU** - "flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness."
 By being careful of the things we fill our minds with  
  - Philippians 4:8 NAU** - "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."
2. And don't forget that God works through the particular means of grace He has given to His people.
  - God fills us with His Spirit through His Word. We aren't talking about some second blessing.  
**Colossians 3:16 NAU** - " Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."  
 Do you see the similarity of these passages?
    - a. Old rule in mathematics – "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other."
    - b. As the Word of God dwells richly in us so does the Holy Spirit. Does the Word of God dominate your life, influence your life, control your life?
  - Through prayer. By asking –  
**Luke 11:13 NAU** - "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"