

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 9-14-14 PM NOTES
"WHAT MAKES THE CHRISTIAN LIFE POSSIBLE"
EPHESIANS 5:18
#20 in Series, "The Christian's Wealth, Walk, and Warfare"

I. The Contrast to Being Filled With the Holy Spirit (v. 18a)

Luke 15:13 (NKJV) "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living."

II. The Command to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit (v. 18b)

Luke 5:26a (NKJV) "And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear..."

Luke 6:11a (NKJV) "But they were filled with rage..."

2 Peter 1:21 (ESV) "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

"If we do not obey this command, we cannot obey any other—simply because we cannot do any of God's will apart from God's Spirit."
—John MacArthur

III. The Comparison to Being Filled With the Holy Spirit (v. 18a)

Galatians 5:16 (NKJV) "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Acts 4:31b (NKJV) "...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

IV. The Conditions for Being Filled With the Holy Spirit

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Psalms 42:2 (NKJV) "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"

A. Examination

1. Have You Grieved the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 4:30 (NKJV) “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

2. Have You Quenched the Holy Spirit?

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NKJV) “Do not quench the Spirit.”

B. Presentation

Romans 12:1 (NKJV) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*”

C. Supplication

Luke 11:13 (NKJV) “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!”

D. Appropriation

Galatians 5:16 (ESV) “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

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Some time ago, Adrian Rogers gave an illustration that perfectly described my Christian life before I learned and appropriated the truth that we are going to look at in this message. I want to share that illustration with you. Imagine a man who had lived as a subsistence farmer in an isolated place back in the woods. He had never owned or driven a car. One of his sons grew up and got a good job in the city and to show his love and appreciation for his father, he bought him a car and had the dealership to deliver it to his Father’s home. The Father was in the field and when he came home, there was this shiny new car in the yard. He looks at its paint job and the beautiful leather upholstery, but he doesn’t know that under the hood is an engine. The old farmer is so proud of this new car and calls his friends over to see it. The problem with this beautiful car is that he has to push it everywhere he goes. Sometimes when it is going

downhill, he can jump in and coast, but his excitement is dimmed by the realization that at the bottom of the hill, he is going to just have to push it up the next hill. While he is proud of his beautiful car and grateful for the sacrifice that enabled him to have it, sometimes ashamedly he almost wishes that he didn't have it. Rather than being a blessing to him, it was a burden. Rather than carrying him, he has to push it everywhere he goes. One day a friend came by who had lived in the city came by and said, "I want to show you something. This is called an ignition key. Put it right there and turn it." *Vroom, vroom!* The farmer cried out, "What is that?" The friend explained that it is an engine. He showed him how to move the gear shift to "D" and then press the gas pedal. The car surged forward with power. The farmer said, "This is wonderful; this is glorious! Why didn't someone tell me about this before?"

You may hear this story and say, "There's nobody that dumb". Maybe you're right, but one that is to be pitied even more than the farmer is the Christian who has never been told about the filling of the Holy Spirit. I was in that situation the first 18 years of my Christian life. I was genuinely saved and deeply grateful for my salvation and the fact that my sins were forgiven, but living the Christian life was something that I had to push in my own power. I was never told about the power of the Christian life that makes it gloriously possible – the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit. The fact is that apart from the enabling, the filling of the Holy Spirit, we are left to pushing the Christian life in our own power and that is an impossible task that always ends in failure and frustration. I remember the first time that I was taught about the Holy Spirit and I thought, "That's it! That is what I have been seeking and longing for and that is how the Christian life operates."

The Christian life requires supernatural power for it to operate as God intended. Let me illustrate. It is not natural to love your enemies and pray for those who spitefully use you. It is not natural to count it all joy when you encounter various trials. It is not possible in human strength for a person who is naturally quiet, reserved, and shy to share the Gospel as a way of life. It is not natural to give even when it seems you do not have enough for your own needs. It is not natural to have peace in the midst of life's storms. I could go on and on with examples, but to summarize it, the Christian life is a supernatural life that requires supernatural power. The Holy Spirit who indwells every believer gives that power to every Christian who allows Him to fill their life. The filling of the Holy Spirit is what makes the unexplainable Christian life possible! With that introduction, let's look at the filling of the Spirit which is what makes the Christian life possible.

I. The Contrast to Being Filled with the Holy Spirit (V18a)

Alcohol was as much of a problem in New Testament times as it is today. There seems to be a longing in the human heart to escape the pains and disappointments of life and to find happiness and the ability to live above the problems that we face. This longing opens the door for Satan's counterfeit for the Spirit filled life – being drunk with wine. Alcohol offers a temporary escape from the trials, pain, disappointments, and pressures of life. As with all the Devil's substitutes, the thing that we turn to is worse than the problem. Being filled with the Spirit is not a means of avoiding problems and heartaches and to find happiness. The filling of the Spirit enables us to use the trials to make us more like Christ and to show a pain filled world that we can have joy (not shallow happiness that depends on what happens) in the midst of the worst that the world, the flesh, and the Devil can throw at us. Also, in Ephesus there is another way alcohol (wine) was used. One of the prominent recipients of false worship and idolatry in Ephesus was the worship of the God of wine – Dionysius. As a part of that worship they would get drunk with wine and work themselves up into a state of alcohol induced ecstasy. Every one of the original readers of this letter would have picked up on this contrast Paul was giving. He is saying "Don't fall for the Devil's substitute for being filled with the Spirit. We worship the one true God and not Dionysius. We don't need an alcohol induced state of emotional ecstasy. We don't need to be drunk with wine to escape trials and hard times. We don't need to become drunk to cope. Through the Holy Spirit we face problems head on and don't hide from them or try to numb our mind to them. We allow God to conform us to the image of Christ through the trials. We have something better than temporal happiness; we have Spirit produced joy." As we examine this contrast, let's look at some word meanings. The word "drunk" was

translated in Wycliffe's English translation (over 200 years before the KJV) "filled". That is a legitimate translation. That makes the contrast even more evident. "Do not be filled with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit". What does the word "dissipation" mean? It is translated "debauchery" in the ESV and NIV; "reckless actions" in the HCSB, and "excess" in the KJV. The Greek word used here is the same one used to describe the prodigal son in **Luke 15:13 (NKJV)** "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living." That last phrase is translated "reckless living" in the ESV, "wild living" in the NIV, and "foolish living" in the HCSB. Ultimately the word speaks of wastefulness and destructiveness. Being drunk with wine (by implication, every alcoholic beverage) is wasting one's life away and destroying their life. Oh how true that is. I have seen marriages wasted, vocations wasted, health wasted, testimonies wasted, and so much potential wasted through alcohol.

II. The Command to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (V18b)

Allow me to share with you the grammar of verse 18b: **Ephesians 5:18b (NKJV)** "...but be filled with the Spirit".

* It is the imperative mood – That means that it is a command. God is not suggesting that if you want to maybe move your Christian life up to the next level you may want to consider being filled with the Spirit. This is a command for every true Christian. There are two kinds of Christians: Those filled with the Holy Spirit and those living in disobedience to God! This is just as much a command as "do not be drunk with wine". In fact, as bad as drunkenness is, more harm has come to the church by people who are not filled with the Spirit than by those who are drunk.

* It is present tense – that means that it is an ongoing action. It is not a one time occurrence. We can be filled today and not be filled tomorrow. It literally says, "be being filled".

* It is plural in number – A plural "you" is understood. In other words, this command is for every Christian, not just a select group of super saints.

* It is passive in voice – That means that the subject, "you", is being acted upon. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not something that we earn or achieve; it is something that we receive from God. Though it sounds cumbersome, the best translation would be "All of you keep on being kept filled with the Holy Spirit".

Let's examine that command to "...be filled with..." Every Christian is indwelt with, baptized by and sealed by the Holy Spirit. None of those are ever commanded. Our command is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In English, we think of the word "filled" in relation to a glass being filled with water or a tank being filled with gas. That really isn't the idea of this Greek word translated "filled". It doesn't mean that we get more and more of the Holy Spirit until we are filled with Him. The Holy Spirit is a person and every true Christian already has all of the Holy Spirit. He is not portioned out. The filling has to do with Him having all of us. To be filled primarily means to be under the total control of someone or something. Let me give you an example of where this same word is used elsewhere in the New Testament. **Luke 5:26a (NKJV)** "And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were **filled with fear...**" To be filled with fear means that we are controlled by fear. It controls the way we think, the way we talk, how we relate to others, and what we do throughout the day. **Luke 6:11a (NKJV)** "But they [the Scribes and Pharisees] were **filled with rage...**" When one is filled with rage, they are dominated and controlled by rage. That rage controls how they talk, how they walk, how they relate to others and circumstances in their life. In addition to being dominated and controlled by the Holy Spirit, being filled also carries the idea of being empowered by the Spirit. In secular writings the same word for "filled" in Ephesians 5:18 was used of the wind filling the sails of a ship to empower it to its destination. Here is the point: We do not have the ability to obey God unless we are dominated by, controlled by, and carried along by the Holy Spirit. John MacArthur said, "If we do not obey this command, we cannot obey any other – simply because we cannot do any of God's will apart from God's Spirit" [John MacArthur, "The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians", Page 248].

III. The Comparison to Being Filled with the Holy Spirit (V18a)

Being drunk with wine is not only a contrast to the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit; it is also a comparison. When a person becomes drunk, the alcohol takes control. It controls his walk (staggeres); it controls his talk (slurs speech); it controls his boldness; it controls how he drives; it controls his emotions. The alcohol controls his decision making and every part of his being. In comparison, when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit controls his walk. **Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)** “I say then: **Walk in the Spirit**, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” The Holy Spirit controls his talk. Verses 19 & 20 of the text tell us what is spoken when the Spirit fills us [we will examine this in the next message]. The Holy Spirit controls his boldness. **Acts 4:31b (NKJV)** “...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with **boldness.**” The Holy Spirit controls how we drive and how we express our emotions.

IV. The Conditions for Being Filled with the Spirit (V18b)

Before we talk about the specifics of being filled with the Spirit, let ask you a hard question. Do you really want to be filled with the Spirit? The Spirit fills those who are spiritually hungry, thirsty, and I would even say desperate for the Holy Spirit’s work in their lives. If you are satisfied with where you are, you will not meet the conditions for the filling of the Spirit. Are you desperate in your desire to be filled with the Spirit and to see Him control you and enable you to do all that God says to do and to go through all God allows you to go through? The majority of church members are content to sit through a service every once and a while, throw a few dollars in the offering plate, and live like the world. David Jeremiah summarized it well when he said, “...the general mentality in the evangelical world goes something like this: *We don’t want to be lost, but we don’t want to be so Spirit-filled that we can’t enjoy the mediocrity of a middle of the road position*” [David Jeremiah, “God in You” Page 80]. The Psalmist described this desire I’m talking about like this in **Psalms 42:2 (NKJV)** “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” Is there a desire in your heart for more, for all that God has for you? Is there that nagging unfulfilled longing, “There has got to be more and I want it”? If so, you are ready to embark on a tremendous adventure in the fullness of the Spirit.

A. Examination

The New Testament tells us two things we do to hinder the Holy Spirit from filling our lives.

1. Have You Grieved the Holy Spirit – **Ephesians 4:30 (NKJV)** “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” The thing that grieves the Holy Spirit is unconfessed, unrepented of sin in your life. The context of that verse is that it is at the conclusion of a listing of representative sins that grieve the Holy Spirit. It mentions lying, improper anger, giving in to Satan’s temptation and thus giving him a place in your life, stealing, corrupt talking, negative criticism, bitterness, and a failure to forgive those who have wronged you. Again, these are only representative of sins that grieve the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not fill a life that is grieving Him and has not repented.

2. Have You Quenched the Holy Spirit – **1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NKJV)** “Do not quench the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is often pictured as a fire that guides us and ignites us. To quench the Holy Spirit is to put out the fire. This refers to our refusal to obey the Holy Spirit’s guidance. It may be some Biblical command (like baptism or tithing or proclaiming the gospel) that He has illuminated for us and convicted us about and we refuse to obey. It may be that we sense His leading to speak to someone about Christ, to encourage someone, to give to a need, to lovingly confront someone and we refuse, we have quenched the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not fill the one who has quenched Him and refused to confess and repent. We grieve the Spirit when we do that which we should not do and we quench the Holy Spirit when we refuse to do what He has led us to do. There needs to be an all out examination of our lives for anything that has grieved or quenched the Holy Spirit. When He reveals anything we mourn that we have treated so horribly this One who has loved us so, agree with Him that it is sin (confession), and turn from it (repentance).

B. Presentation

If He is going to be in control, we have to present our total being to Him for Him to control. **Romans 12:1 (NKJV)** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.” God won’t fill what we haven’t given Him. A sacrifice has no rights and no vote. This presentation is total. “Here is my body and everything it contains (soul and spirit). It is presented to You to do with it whatever you please. Why do we shy away from a presentation like that? It is because we like to be in control and we really don’t trust that His ways are best. Examination, Presentation

C. Supplication

To be filled with the Spirit, you must ask the Lord to fill you. Remember that to fill is to control. It may be that you reach this point after great trial or failure and coming to the end of your rope. It may be that there is a great hunger in you and now is the time but you must ask Him to fill you. The passage I am about to give you is before the Spirit came at Pentecost and not in the church age. I realize that, but I think that it gives a principle that applies to any day. **Luke 11:13 (NKJV)** “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!**” have you ever asked the Holy Spirit to fill your being after examination and presentation? You can ask in faith because He tells us that it is His will. We ask believing that God will give us what He promised. Examination, Presentation, Supplication

D. Appropriation

To appropriate something is to reckon it as true and act like it’s true because God said that it’s true. If I have emptied out the garbage that was grieving and quenching Him and I have yielded control to Him and asked Him in faith to fill me with His Spirit, then all that is left is for me to simply reckon it done and begin to walk in total dependence on the Holy Spirit who fills my life. You see, you don’t always have an emotional experience when you are filled with the Spirit. Anyone that tells you that you have to speak in other tongues or have some other experience is twisting the Scriptures and not rightly interpreting them. I simply launch out in complete obedience to His guidance and trusting Him for power. That is what the phrase “walk in the Spirit” means. **Galatians 5:16 (ESV)** “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

CONCLUSION

Are you ready to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Most are not. They are content to live in disobedience and mediocrity rather than give up control and deal with their sin and present their body in total surrender. Those who refuse to be filled with the Spirit will miss seeing God do in and through them what only God can do. They will live their lives here under their own control experiencing the discipline of a Father who loves them, wasting day after day for eternity, and building their lives with wood, hay and straw for the judgment seat of Christ that will be burned up and leave them without reward. But there are others who say “Enough! I want all that God has and today, He takes control”.