

The Spirit-filled Life – Part 2
Ephesians 5:18-21
Reading: John 14:16-17, 25-27

Bethany Baptist Church
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...pray...

We've been steadily working our way thru the NT letter of *Ephesians*.

But in the past few weeks we've *slowed way down* to spend more time examining a vital part of experiencing a *joyful & successful* walk of faith!

Kind of like *driving* through the mountains and *pulling over* to marvel at an *especially* glorious view! I mean, it's *all good*, but there are some scenes that are just *breath-taking*...

The **two** *truths* that have captured our hearts are these:

- The *Spirit of God* lives inside of every Christian, and will *never* leave (“*indwelt*”)!
- And, the *Spirit* not only *lives* in you, He wants to *fill* you! The Bible describes the **Spirit-filled life** as *being led by & walking in & abiding with & ... being controlled by*. The *Spirit-filled* life is the *Spirit-controlled* life.

But *how* do you **know** that you are *Spirit-filled*!?!

I just don't always *feel so spiritual*...

Let's return to Eph. 5:15-21 (continue our focus on vv.18f).

Do you want to **know** that the Holy Spirit is *leading your life - today*!?! 😊

You can know! Your Bible provides clear *evidences* of the *Spirit-filled life*.

Last Lord's Day we *identified 3 results/evidences* of being *controlled by the Spirit* and then unpacked the *first of the three*.

Today let's take a *quick review* & then *drill down* into the **rest of the list**:

You can know you are Spirit filled.

1. **Evidence # 1: melody** (v.19). → *Last Sunday*.
2. **Evidence # 2: thankfulness** (v.20).
3. **Evidence # 3: submission** (v.21).

Let's begin by taking another look at the *structure* of vv.18-21!

1. *First*, these three verses are really just **one** long sentence (18-21).
 - a. The *main idea* of the sentence is the *command* (18b): ***be filled with the Spirit.***
 - b. Then the sentence continues with series of **3 phrases** to develop that *command*, each *phrase* is framed-up on *participles* (→ form of a *verb*; “ing”).
 - c. And each *phrase* (**19&20&21**) defines an *evidence* of being *Spirit-filled*.

The *first evidence* that you are *Spirit filled* is that you *sing*!

2. **V.19** is packed w/*music vocabulary*; Paul writes about *making music* & *types of music*.
 - a. The *Spirit-filled* believer makes *music* by *speaking* & *singing* & *lit. psalming* (NASB - *making melody*)! **Two** ideas that *float up* from this list are that *music communicates* (message) & that our *songs* could be accompanied by *various instruments* (*psalming* ~ *pluck strings*).
 - b. When the *saints sing*, our set-list includes *psalms* & *hymns* & *spiritual song*. Some of our lyrics are *straight out of the Scriptures* & some are simply songs that express our *joy* & *praise*. And all of our Spirit-led *music* is ***spiritual*** – fueled by *sincerity* & *devotion* & *God's truth*!
3. Paul notes that when you are *Spirit filled*, your song goes in **two** directions: *horizontal* & *vertical*.
 - a. We sing to/with *one another*. Beloved, the *main choir* at **BBC** sings together from the *pews*!
 - b. Which brings us to the *second* direction: *vertical*. We sing *to the Lord*. He is our *audience*!

4. What is the best kind of music for the *Spirit-filled* Christian? Paul's set-list has a lot of *variety*: *psalms & hymns & spiritual songs*.
- a. But he qualifies it w/ this: *spiritual... spiritual songs*. We sing songs that *communicate* God's truths & are *led* by God's *Spirit*.
 - b. And we sing from a *heart* surrendered to the *Lord* (19b): *singing & making melody w/ your heart to the Lord*.
 - c. The **Holy Spirit** is our *worship leader* & **we** are the *choir* & the **Scriptures** inform our *lyrics* & **God** is our *audience*.

It all adds up to this: Spirit filled saint...sings!

And when you are *Spirit controlled* you are *thankful*! Read v.20.

1. That's the *second phrase* and the *second evidence* of being *controlled by the Holy Spirit*: “*giving thanks.*”
 - a. I've noticed in the past **20** years how often people wish you a “*blessed day.*” Or speak of “*being blessed*” – that's the language of *thankfulness*! I've often wondered if all those “*blessed blessers*” understand that all those *blessings* have to come from someone – and *who* that Someone must be!
 - b. *Thankfulness* has a couple of features:
 - i. *First, thankfulness* understands that good things ultimately come from *God* (...*giving thanks...to God*). The NT letter from James reads: *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,*
 - ii. *Thankfulness* also understands that even when things *don't appear good*, God is still in control. In fact, Paul has *famously* written in **Rm 8:28** – *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*
 1. *Paul & Silas prayed & sang* at midnight in the *Philippian jail*.
 2. Their *understanding of God* strengthened them *worship* in hard times.
 3. Similarly, *Daniel* continued to *pray & give thanks to God*, even under King Darius' *vain “worship me” decree.*
2. *Good times...hard times...* Paul says here that the *Spirit-controlled* believer “*gives thanks always for all things.*” Beloved, think of this: *anyone* can be thankful when the *blessings* are pouring in, but when times are *tough*, being *grateful* is a sure sign that the *Spirit* is giving you *grace*!

3. Then the apostle goes on to point out that your *gratitude* to God is rooted in your *relationship* to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. The “*Lord Jesus Christ*” is our Savior’s *full, formal theological name*. It speaks of His *divine rule*, His *incarnation* & His *Messianic mission*.
 - b. Now it’s true that even the *lost* (w/o Christ) experience God’s blessing. Jesus said that God “*causes His sun to rise on the evil & the good, and sends rain on the righteous & the unrighteous.*”
 - c. But beloved, the *big ticket blessings* can only come through *faith in Jesus: forgiveness of all your sins because He paid their penalty on the cross, the assurance of new life because He rose the grave, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the certainty of a heavenly home* – all of these (& *more!*) are through *repentance & faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.
 - d. Or to put it more *generally* but just as *powerfully* – we read in **Rom 8**: *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him (Jesus) freely give us all things?*
4. Well back to my question about all those *blessed blessers* – do they think about where all those *blessing come from*? Christians *know* where their *blessings* come from; from *God, who is even our Father!*
 - a. Ephesians is big on the idea of *blessings*, & big on the idea that *God* is not just our *Creator & Judge*, thru Jesus He is now our *Father*.
 - b. In fact, let’s just turn back a few pages & **read** Paul’s opening *worship song* in **1:3-14**. So just for *example*...
 - c. **V.3** – We *bless* God because He has *blessed* us & our *best blessings* are in the *Lord Jesus Christ*.
 - d. **V.4&5** – The Father’s *blessings* include *being chosen & being adopted as His children*. We can be *grateful* because the God of the Bible, the Creator of all things, the King of Universe, has *determined* that you are His *child* & He is your *loving Heavenly Father*.
 - e. **V.11** – Thus, as His children we receive an *inheritance!*

Beloved, do you have an *attitude of gratitude* or do you *whine & complain*? **When you are Spirit controlled, you are thankful!**

When you are *Spirit filled* you *submit* to one another. Read v.21

1. That's the *third phrase* and the *third evidence* of being *controlled by the Holy Spirit: mutual submission*.
 - a. A *Spirit-filled* man or woman is *submissive* in the *circumstances & relationships* God has for them.
2. Paul's Greek *participle* is from 'υποτασσω, a *military* term which lit. means "to arrange under," like *troops* under a *commander*. *Submission* requires *surrendering* some aspect of your rights to someone else.
 - a. In a *culture* that prizes *individualism* **that** doesn't *play too well*.
 - b. But Paul's grammar suggests when we are *spiritual* we willingly *submit ourselves* to what God *commands & brings to pass*.
3. The *scope* of *biblical submission* (v.21) is set by the familiar **NT** expression "one another." There are about **50** *one another* texts in the **NT**, focusing on relationships between Christians. We submit to *one another*.
4. There is a common sense, *key ingredient*, for *successful submission*.... *submission* requires *humility*.
 - a. In **1 Pt 5** you read: *clothe yourselves w/ humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble*.
 - b. The *picture* behind Peter's *instruction* is of *servant* who is *clothed in a conspicuous servant's garment (apron)*, ready to meet his *master's* needs.
 - i. Jesus *modeled* humble submission when He *washed* the feet of His disciples in the Upper Room.
 - c. *Humility* is *essential*, but certainly there must be additional *ingredients* that *flavor* the recipe of *submission* (slow, develop): *unselfishness, self-control, love, faith*. ... Beloved, it's **no** *coincidence* that these *ingredients* are closely aligned w/ the *fruit the Spirit!*

5. Paul writes that there is a *vertical* component of *submitting to one another*: a holy *fear of Christ*.
- a. To *refuse* to submit in a *relationship* that God has placed you in is **defy** the authority of the Head of Church, who is Christ (therefore we are motivated by “**fear**”—Christ is your *Lord*&you aren’t to *defy* Him).
 - b. Is it *okay* to *fear Christ*...to *fear God*? “*I thought I was supposed to love Jesus!*” The answer is ... *yes*. You *love & fear* Him.
 - c. **C.S. Lewis’** children’s novel *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe*, is an allegory of the Gospel.
 - i. Four *children* (Peter & Susan & Edmund & Lucy) arrive magically in the land of *Narnia*...
 - ii. ... a kingdom gripped in perpetual *winter* (“*always winter but never Christmas*”), populated by *amazing creatures*, ruled by an *evil queen*, & waiting the *return of its king*.
 - iii. The *king* finally arrives, & the children’s are *awe-struck* that he is a **lion** – **Aslan!** The children are *intrigued & afraid*...
 - iv. And so **Susie** asks: “*Is he - quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion*” ... “**Safe!?!**” said Mr. Beaver ... “*Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe! But he's good! He's the King, I tell you!*”
 - d. Consider *Christ’s commands* carefully, my friend – including His sometimes *inconvenient & humbling* call to *submission*.
 - i. There is nothing **tame** about Jesus...but the *Lion of Judah*, and His *commands*, are always **good**.

6. *Submission* is a *challenging but essential* element of successful relationships in the *home, the church, & society*.
- a. So Paul immediately backs-up his brief *submission statement* (21) with **3** extended examples of *submitting to one another* in **vv.22 – 6:9**, touching on relationships in *marriage, parenting & the workplace*.
 - We'll *examine* those together in the weeks to come...
 - b. In the meantime, Bible-teacher **Harold Hoehner** makes a powerful observation about the importance of *submission* as the **3rd** *evidence* of the *Spirit-filled life*. ... Your *flesh* doesn't like *humility* & it doesn't want to *submit*. Which means you **have** to be *Spirit filled* to *walk* like this! ☺

We dove into this morning's text by first asking the question: *how do I know I'm Spirit-filled?* You can know!

Paul just gave us a *clear answer*: **3 evidences (results)** in your life when the *Holy Spirit* is in control: *spiritual singing, an attitude of gratitude & humble submission*. **No one can consistently live like this unless the Spirit is in control!**

But I think there's *another* question we still have to ask: *how do I become filled with the Spirit?* I want the Spirit to lead me & God commands it.

First, remember, "be filled"(18) is a *passive imperative* – you are to *seek & allow* the Spirit's control.

So w/your heart set upon that:

Confess known sin & make restitution. Sin & unbelief grief & quench God's Spirit.

Pray. If God wants you to *do* something, He'll *help* you do it. *Tell* God you want to be *Spirit-filled*...

The Apostle John wrote: *This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*

And lastly, in order to be *Spirit-filled* you have to *Scripture-filled*. Let me explain:

At the same time Paul wrote *Ephesians* he also wrote *Colossians*. So there are several *similarities* in the **2** letters. In **Col 3:16f** there is a *command* which is followed by **3 results**: *singing, giving thanks & submitting* (marriage, family, workplace). Sound *familiar...!?! It should!*

Yet the *leading command* is **not** a command to *filled w/Holy Spirit*, **but** rather a command to be *filled... w/ Word of Christ – Scripture*. (*Let the Word of Christ...*)

The *point?* In order to be *filled w/ the Spirit*, you have to *fill yourself w/ God's Word*. ...*pause*...

So...*confess* your sins, *ask* to Spirit-filled, *fill* yourself w/ your Bible. And God's Spirit **will** lead you, as you *sing, give thanks, humbly submit to one another* – every day! ...*pray*... Thank you for the Holy Spirit – *indwelling, filling, empowering*