

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

TEXT: EPH. 5:15-18

Introduction:

1. In Ephesians 5:18, the apostle Paul wrote, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”
2. In Acts 2:4, we read that on the day of Pentecost, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”
3. Unfortunately many Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Many are not even sure it means to be filled with the Spirit.
4. We often hear exciting stories about the great revivals of the past – the First Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening, etc.
5. However, we should remember that before these great revivals of the past, most of the churches were in a deplorable, backslidden condition.
6. Let me share a few quotations from some famous preachers of the past. Albert Barnes, the great commentator, said over 100 years ago, “Not one in ten of the membership of our churches (Presbyterian) are doing anything effective for the sanctification of believers, or the salvation of sinners.”
7. A. T. Pierson said, “God meant to impress men by the contrast of the unworldliness of his people; but, on the whole, the witness of a separate and sanctified life is gone, and the witness of the tongue of fire is gone with it. The worldliness of the church is a fact to which we can not with impunity shut our eyes.”
8. Dwight L. Moody said, “Nine-tenths, at least, of the church members never think of speaking for Christ. If they see a man, perhaps a near relative, just going right down to ruin, going rapidly, they never think of speaking to him about his sinful course, and of seeking to win him to Christ. Now certainly there must be something wrong. And yet, when you talk with them, you find they have faith, and you cannot say they are not children of God, but they have not the power; they have not the liberty; they have not the love that real disciples of Christ should have. A great many people are thinking that we need new measures, that we need new churches, that we need new organs, new choirs, and all these new things. That is not what the church of God needs today. It is the old power that the apostles had; that is what we want, and if we have that in our churches, there will be new life. Then we will have new ministers – the same old ministers renewed with power, filled with the Spirit.”
9. FB Meyer said, “How little power average Christians have. They wave the censer between the living and the dead, but the plague is not stayed. Like

Gehazi, they lay the staff on the face of the dead child, but life does not return. Like the disciples at the foot of the mount, they speak the healing words, but the devil-possessed are not relieved. They pray; but prayers are unanswered. The life-giving power must be in us, or we shall not see dead sinners come to life through our words.”

10. Consider our text (Ephesians 5:18). It is very remarkable that in both Acts 2:13 and Ephesians 5:18 the infilling of the Holy Spirit in its effect is compared to the effects of wine.
11. The Bible draws both a comparison and a contrast between drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit (cf. Acts 2:4, 13-18).
12. The comparison is in the matter of control. A drunken man is being controlled by the wine, and thinks differently, and acts differently and talks differently than he normally would when sober.
13. A Christian who is filled with the Spirit will also think differently, and act differently, and talk differently, because now he is being controlled by the Holy Spirit.
14. This has absolutely nothing to do with emotionalism. Nor am I referring to the foolish fakery prevalent today. The Bible says, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40).
15. Interestingly, alcoholic beverages are often called “spirits.” God says, “Do not be under the power and influence of spirits, but be under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.”
16. There are three points of comparison that we will concentrate on this morning: joy, speech, and power.

I. THE JOY OF THE LORD (ACTS 2:13-15; 13:52)

1. Wine produces a sense of exhilaration. A drunken man will sing as he stumbles along to his home, and when a man is really filled with the Holy Ghost he becomes a joyful, singing Christian. A Spirit filled church is always a singing church.
2. They say one of the notable things about the Welsh revival was the fervent singing. Men and women could be heard joyfully singing hymns as they walked through the streets before and after the preaching services, and even on their way back and forth to work.
3. In fact, every great revival has been accompanied by fervent singing. Luther’s revival spread through Germany by singing Luther’s hymns.
4. Most of the great hymns and Gospel songs in our hymnbooks were written during times of revival.
5. When we think of the great revivals of John Wesley, we think of his brother Charles Wesley, who published the words of over five thousand

- hymns, many of which we still sing today, such as, “And Can It Be That I Should Gain?” and “Christ the Lord is Risen Today,” “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” and “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.”
6. When we think about the great revivals of DL Moody, we remember his songleader Ira Sankey, who wrote the music to “Faith Is the Victory,” “Trusting Jesus,” “A Shelter in the Time of Storm,” and “The Ninety and Nine.”
 7. Galatians 5:22, 23 says, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.
 8. Acts 13:52 says, “And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.”

II. THE NEED TO TELL OTHERS

1. Secondly, a man who is filled with wine likes to talk; in fact you cannot keep him still. And a man who is filled with the Holy Spirit talks. He cannot keep silent; he must go and tell others what God has done for his soul.
2. David said, “The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue” (II Sam. 23:2).
3. Jeremiah said, “But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:9).
4. The apostle Paul said, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Cor. 9:16).
5. The key verse in the book of Acts is Acts 1:8.
 - The POWER is the Holy Spirit.
 - The PERSONNEL is the church.
 - The PROGRAM is worldwide evangelism, starting in Jerusalem.
6. The continuation of this promise of the Holy Spirit is seen all throughout the NT, and the Holy Spirit wants to work in each and every one of us (cf. Rom. 12:1, 2).
7. Dr. Walter Wilson was a great man of God with an unusual ministry. He was a doctor of medicine, and he wrote sixteen Christian books, many of which emphasized soulwinning and are still being published today.
8. He had a very fruitful radio ministry, and was the president of the Kansas City Bible College.
9. As a young man he designed and sold circus tents to Buffalo Bill and others.

10. Early in his ministry he did a lot of street preaching and soul winning but did not see as much fruit as he'd like. He prayed about it, and one night he and his father-in-law were at a meeting, and Dr. James Gray (President of the Moody Bible Institute, editor of the Scofield Bible) was preaching. He was expounding Romans 12:1.
11. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).
12. Dr. Gray said, "Have you noticed that this verse does not tell us to whom we should give our bodies? It is not the Lord Jesus who asks for it. He has His own body. It is not the Father who asks for it. He remains upon His throne. Another has come to earth without a body. God could have made a body for Him as He did for Jesus, but He did not do so. God gives you the privilege and the indescribable honor of presenting your bodies to the Holy Spirit, to be His dwelling place on earth. If you have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, then yours is a holy body, washed whiter than snow, and will be accepted by the Holy Spirit when you give it. Will you do so now?"
13. Dr. Wilson and his father-in-law said little to each other as they went home that night. But separately they each went into their rooms and asked the Holy Spirit to use them as never before. The power of God came upon them and they both became great soulwinners.
14. Let's be honest before God this morning: we are barely scratching the surface here in this Elmont area. The vast majority of people in this community are on their way to hell and we are doing very little about it.
15. May God help us to see things the way He sees them. And may God help us to be better soulwinners.

III. THE POWER OF GOD

1. Thirdly, a man who is filled with wine is conscious of a great increase of power. The man who is filled with the Holy Ghost is also conscious of a great increase of power, but his power is the power of God (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).
 - In Acts 4:8, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and he preached the Word of God with power.
 - In Acts 4:31, the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit "and they spake the word of God with boldness."
 - Acts 6:3 says deacons are to be "full of the Holy Ghost."

- Stephen was one of these deacons. Acts 6:5 says he was “a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” Stephen preached the Gospel fearlessly and was martyred. Acts 7:55 says, “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”
 - In Acts 9 we read that Paul was “filled with the Holy Ghost,” got baptized and started preaching (Acts 9:17-20).
 - In Acts 11, Barnabas was “full of the Holy Ghost” and ministered faithfully (Acts 11:24-26).
 - Paul was “filled with the Holy Ghost” and exercised spiritual discernment (Acts 13:6-12).
 - Acts 13:52 says, “And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.”
2. The filling of the Holy Spirit may come suddenly, or it may come gradually. The important thing is that it come.
 3. Ephesians 5:18 is a command.
 4. I am speaking specifically of the need for a Christian to be filled with the Spirit. The unsaved man needs to first be convicted and then regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
 5. But a man will not be filled with the Holy Spirit till he first recognizes his need to be filled. RA Torrey said, “No man ever got this blessing who thought he could get along without it.”
 6. In John 7:37, our Lord said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”
 7. DL Moody said, “You will get this blessing when you seek it above all else. For months I had been hungering and thirsting for power in service. I had come to that state I think I would have died of I had not got it. I remember I was walking the streets of New York. I had no more heart in the business I was about than if I had not belonged to this world at all. The blessing came upon me suddenly like a flash of lightning, right there on the street. The power of God seemed to come upon me so wonderfully that I had to ask God to stay his hand. I was filled with a sense of God’s goodness, and felt as though I could take the whole world to my heart.”
 8. C.I. Scofield preached D.L. Moody’s funeral. This is what he said, “The secrets of D.L. Moody’s power were: First, in a definite

experience of Christ's saving grace. He had passed out of death into life, and he knew it. Secondly, he believed in the divine authority of the Scriptures. The Bible was to him the voice of God, and he made it resound as such in the consciences of men. Thirdly, he was baptized (meaning "filled") with the Holy Spirit, and he knew it. It was to him as definite an experience as his conversion."

9. Whenever a sincere Christian, smitten with thirst, comes to Christ, and opens his heart to Christ, instantly Christ begins to fill him with the Holy Spirit.
10. FB Meyer said the Christian should be like a brimming lake, on the one hand always giving out to a dying world, but always kept full because he receives every moment from Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. We know we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and led by the Holy Spirit the same way we know we are saved – by faith.
2. Galatians 3:14 says, "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."
3. Hudson Taylor said, "Being filled (with the Holy Spirit) does not always lead to exalted feeling or uniform manifestation, but God always keeps His word. We have to look to His promises or rest in them, expecting their literal fulfillment. Some put asking in the place of accepting; some wish it were so, instead of believing that it is so."