

17.06.07 Coromandel Baptist 10:00 a.m.

Filled with the Spirit

Bible Readings = Eph. 5:15-21 and Acts 2:13-18

Introduction:

- (1) Last time we were in Ephesians we were considering the difference between the deeds of darkness and those of the light.
- (2) We saw that as children of Light (i.e. sons of God, who is Light) we have left the deeds of darkness and been united to Christ. We now live in the Light, and therefore must lay aside the deeds of darkness. To walk in the Light is to walk in Love.
- (3) This week we continue with a related theme: being filled with the Spirit rather than seeking our fullness in modes and actions that belong to folly or foolishness.

The passage before us this week alerts us to the necessity to live in the Spirit's fullness, and tells us of the marks of that fullness among the Father's family.

1. Wisdom and Folly

(1) Last time we were considering the fact that there are two families in view: the family of the Father, the children of Light; and the family of the evil one, the children of darkness.

- We saw that we *were* darkness, *but now* are light, in the Lord. This means we are called to live in conformity to our true nature, as sons of the Light.

(2) In this section, the contrast continues: there are two ways of walking in this world: according to wisdom and according to folly (foolishness). The contrast is between the 'wise' and the 'unwise'.

- In particular, the foolish man does not recognise that the days are evil (Eph. 5:16 cf. Gal. 1:4) and he does not know what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17). The fool walks according to the desires of his own heart. 'Foolishness' in the Bible is a moral category: the fool is an idolater, who is opposed to God.
- As an indication of this foolishness, Paul speaks of drunkenness...about which we say more a little later.

(3) In the Old Testament we note that wisdom and the fear of the Lord go hand in hand (e.g. Ps. 111:10). Here the same thought applies (Eph. 5:15 cf. 5:21), but in particular there is a connection between the *Spirit* and wisdom in this passage.

- The way of the Spirit is the way of wisdom (Eph. 1:17 cf. Deut. 34:9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses; Is. 11:2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.; Acts 6:3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty, and 6:10 but they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking; 1 Cor. 2:13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual; etc.),

○ and the way of the Spirit is to hear and do the Word of the Lord.

(4) So God's children...his beloved family (from Eph. 5:2) have been formed by him to live in the fullness of his Spirit, and thus live in the light of his wisdom. This has to do

with submitting to the Father's will...in contrast to merely enacting our own. We sought our own will and by so doing 'professed to be wise', but we had in fact become 'fools'. Instead of finding enlightenment, we were darkened in our mind and understanding, with a dark heart at the very centre of our existence. We were children of night, instead of children of Light.

(4) God's purpose is to fill his people (Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:10, 13), and through them to display his wisdom to the principalities and powers, as in Eph. 3:10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

- Compare with Paul's thought in 1 Cor. 4:9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men
 - Little wonder that some time we feel ourselves in the midst of an arena when we are engaged in the spiritual battle that is our life in Christ!

2. Being Filled

(1) We have been created to be filled by God. It is not unnatural for a human being to be filled with his Spirit, but unnatural *not* to be filled! The fullness of the Spirit is the normative state of a believer!

- Can you imagine what it would be like if we did *not* have the Holy Spirit within us?

(2) In our rebellion against God we still must be filled...so we seek to fill ourselves with all that comes from the flesh, and all that hides in the darkness. Paul speaks of us being filled with unrighteousness (e.g. Rom. 1:29.. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness);

- All of our sin is, from one point of view, the desire for and attempt to find fullness outside of God. But we cannot be filled with anything outside of him, and be 'full'...only more and more empty.

(3) Here the matter of drunkenness is specifically mentioned, which ties in with many other references to drunkenness in the New Testament (e.g. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; 1 Thess. 5:7; 1 Pet. 4:3f.) all of which echo many other Old Testament passages such as Prov. 20:1; 23:20; 23:29-35; Is. 5:22; etc..

- Drunkenness and indeed any addiction, is an attempt to be filled while in rebellion against God.
- People drink in different ways and for different reasons.
 - The solitary, morose and socially withdrawn alcoholic often drinks to blot out memories of pain and to dull his sense of injustice. An angry spirit underlies the action and often accompanied by hidden violence.
 - Others drink for excitement...to suppress inhibitions so that in a drunken state they may be that which they are too timid to be in a sober state. The drink fortifies the weak will...and gives it strength to rebel more openly.
 - But others (and here we see a big problem in Australia) drink together...for company, for companionship, for fun...and ultimately as a parody of the fellowship of the people of God for which we are made. Drinking mates operate as a support network and peer community. But

ultimately this, as all drunkenness and other forms of addiction are entirely self centred in their actions and orientation.

(4) But the fullness that Paul is urging is not of this order: it transcends it like the light of the sun transcends the power of a light bulb. The parallel between being 'filled' with wine and being filled with the Spirit lies in the matter of influence. We even speak of being 'under the influence of alcohol'. This means that we are not in control of ourselves. To be filled with the Spirit is to recognise that we live under the leadership, guidance, influence and power of another. We are not our own masters.

- The initial filling of the day of Pentecost caused people to marvel...even suggesting that the believers were drunk at this early hour of the morning (Acts 2:13f.) The said that they were filled with new wine...and in a way they were!
- This is the promise that Jesus had made: he would pour out the Spirit of the Father on all flesh. Those who came to him would find that the Spirit would well up within them like a perpetual spring (John 4:13-14; 7:37ff.)
- On the day of Pentecost the ascended Lord poured out the Spirit from the Father (Acts 2:33), but then that was not the end. There were repeated fillings (e.g. Acts 4:8; Accts 4:31; 10:44ff.; 13:9; etc.), as the fullness was to be the normative state of the believers' life in God.

(5) Indeed, this is reflected in the grammar that Paul uses in this passage: the imperative 'be filled' (Eph. 5:18) is in the present tense...which indicates an ongoing action. "Be on being filled" (as compared to the aorist imperative in places such as John 2:7 "Fill the water pots with water"). On receiving the Spirit through faith at the time of conversion we are 'filled' with him. Here we are to go on in that fullness.

- From this imperative flow four dependent participles: speaking (5:19a); singing and making melody (5:19b); giving thanks (5:20) and being subject to one another (5:21). There is a close parallel in all this to Col. 3:16ff. These are the signs of the Spirit's fullness among his people.
- These are all other person related, and show that the Spirit's ministry is to bring us into relation to the Lord *together*. Compare with the action of the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41ff.; 4:31ff.; 13:1ff.; etc.)

(6) Note that the imperative is a passive: be filled.

- Could be translated by filled in spirit (i.e. in your own spirit), or be filled in the Spirit; or be filled with the Spirit...but whatever the translation it is a passive action.
 - Compare with Gal. 3:1ff. Hearing with faith.
- Luke 11:13; John 7:37ff. Do you want to be filled?? Laying aside own plans and all self related action...be filled!
 - Spring up O Well! (Numb. 21:16ff. cf. Is. 41:17-18)