

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 8-7-11 PM NOTES
"THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"
EPHESIANS 5:18
#4 in Series, "The Forgotten Member of the Trinity"

Acts 19:2b (NKJV) "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

"Satan has opposed the doctrine of the Spirit-filled life about as bitterly as any doctrine there is. He has confused it, opposed it, and surrounded it with false notions and fears. He has blocked every effort of the Church of Christ to receive from the Father her divine blood-bought patrimony [inheritance]. The church has tragically neglected this great liberating truth..."

—A. W. Tozer

I. The Meaning of Being Filled With the Holy Spirit

Acts 4:8a (NKJV) "Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them..."

Acts 4:31 (NKJV) "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit**, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

Acts 6:3 (NKJV) "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, **full of the Holy Spirit** and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

John 12:3 (NKJV) "Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was **filled** with the fragrance of the oil."

Luke 6:11 (NKJV) "But they were **filled** with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus."

"Thus, going on his way, his thoughts began to swell and rise higher and higher like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, 'till at last they became an overwhelming flood. Such was the intention of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys and such the full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world and all the concerns thereof. And for some hours he knew no more where he was than if he had been in a deep sleep upon his bed. Arriving in great exhaustion at a certain spring, he sat down and washed, earnestly desiring, if it was God's pleasure, that this might be his parting place from this world."

—The experience of Puritan John Flavel (1630-1691)

"As I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that was for me extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God as mediator between God and man and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. The grace that appeared so calm and sweet appeared also great above the heavens, the person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent and an excellency great enough to swallow up all thoughts and conceptions, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me a greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust and to be full of Christ alone, to love Him with a holy and pure love, to trust in Him, to live upon Him, to serve Him, and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity."

—Jonathan Edwards

II. The Necessity of Being Filled With the Holy Spirit

A. Because of the Immensity of the Requirements

B. Because of the Inadequacy of Our Flesh

John 15:5b (NKJV) "...without Me you can do nothing."

We **love** by the Spirit (Romans 15:30); we **pray** by the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26-27); we are **led** by the Spirit (Romans 8:14); we are **strengthened** by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16); we are **taught** by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13); we **bear fruit** only by the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

III. The Procedure for Being Filled With the Holy Spirit

John 7:37b-39a (NKJV) "³⁷If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. ³⁹But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive..."

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!"

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#4 in Series, "The Forgotten Member of the Trinity"

Let me share my personal testimony as it relates to this forgotten member of the Trinity. I repented of my sin and savingly believed on Jesus Christ as a child. I was transformed at the very core of my being (my nature). I truly was, in the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17, "a new creation". However, my flawed view of the Christian life was, "Try as hard as you can and then ask the Lord for a little help. If things aren't working well, rededicate your life, read the Bible more, pray more, and just try harder." I wasn't much better off than the disciples of John the Baptist that Paul met at Ephesus. He asked in Acts 19:2 if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They replied in **Acts 19:2b (NKJV)** "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." I knew there was a Holy Spirit, but I understood nothing of His ministry in me to enable me to live a life of obedience to the Lord who was precious to me. Consequently, my life was a cycle of failure, frustration, rededication, and then more failure. There was little joy in my life and yet I was truly a believer with a strong desire to please and obey the Lord. I had been a Christian for about 17 years before I heard about the filling of the Holy Spirit and His enabling work in the life of a believer. I have personally seen what A. W. Tozer says about the widespread ignorance of the Holy Spirit in the church, "Satan has opposed the doctrine of the Spirit filled life about as bitterly as any doctrine there is. He has confused it, opposed it, and surrounded it with false notions and fears. He has blocked every effort of the Church of Christ to receive from the Father her divine blood bought patrimony [inheritance]. The church has tragically neglected this great liberating truth..." [A. W. Tozer, "How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit" P 32].

I suspect that many of you have a story somewhat like mine. That is why I teach so often about the filling of the Holy Spirit. I don't want any believer to go through the years of joylessness and frustration that I went through. Let me review where we have been in this series. We began by looking at the Trinity. We saw that the Holy Spirit is a person, one of the three persons of the one Godhead. We then looked at the Holy Spirit's role in salvation. He convicts us, draws us and births us into God's forever family. Last week, we looked at the baptism by the Holy Spirit. We saw how the Holy Spirit is Christ's agent in baptizing every born again person at the moment of their salvation into the body of Christ. Since Pentecost those who savingly believe in Jesus Christ have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ's body, placed in union with Christ – identified with Him. Let's examine the filling of the Holy Spirit.

I. The Meaning of Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

The Spirit-filled life is not "Christianity X" (Christianity Extreme). It is not just for Pastor's and missionaries. It is God's plan and God's command for every Christian. Let's begin by looking at a few of the many places where the phrase "filled with the Spirit" is used. Peter is filled with the Spirit as he begins to preach in **Acts 4:8a (NKJV)** "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them..." After Peter and John are freed from custody by the Jewish leaders, they joined the infant church in a prayer meeting. Listen to what happened in **Acts 4:31 (NKJV)** "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." When the first Deacons were being called out we read of the qualifications in **Acts 6:3 (NKJV)** "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business". The Greek word translated "filled" in Ephesians 5:18 is "pleroo" (pronounced "plerahoh"). This word has several different shades of meaning and understanding these different shades of meaning helps us get a grip on what is meant by the filling of the Spirit.

The word translated "filled" was used in secular Greek to communicate empowering, enabling, or carrying something or someone along. As a child, most of us experienced throwing a floating toy of some kind or even a stick into the creek and then running downstream with it as the creek carried it along.

Another illustration would be how the wind would “fill” the sails of a ship to empower it to go across the sea. A Spirit-filled person is not empowered in his own strength; He is empowered, enabled, and carried along by the Holy Spirit. The second way that the word “filled” was used was in the sense of something permeating a container. An example would be **John 12:3 (NKJV)** “Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was **filled** with the fragrance of the oil.” In other words, the fragrance of the oil of spikenard filled every part of the house – every corner, under and around every piece of furniture, and in every shelf. For a believer to be filled with the Spirit means that the Holy Spirit permeates every area of that person’s life. He permeates their work life, family life, moral life, leisure life – every part of their life. If we think of our life as a house, the Holy Spirit is given the key to every room and the combination to the safe where the valuables are stored. He has free reign to change anything, put anything out, or bring anything in. The third way the word “filled” is used is to communicate control. This is the primary meaning of the word. Here are some examples. When Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, Luke tells us the response of the Scribes and the Pharisees in **Luke 6:11 (NKJV)** “But they were **filled** with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.” In other words, they were under the control of rage. Their rage affected the way they talked, the way they processed information, and the way that they viewed the Lord Jesus. In the same way, when the Holy Spirit fills our lives, He controls us. He controls the way we talk; He controls the way we view the world and our circumstances. To be filled with the Spirit is to be under the Spirit’s control.

Allow me to get a little technical now with the grammar. First, the phrase “be filled” is in the imperative mood. That means that it isn’t a suggestion; it is a command. Don’t ever view the filling of the Spirit as optional. It is a command from God to all of His children. Do you catch the gravity of this? God has told every one of His children, “I am commanding you to be filled with the Spirit”. To disobey a command from God is a sin. Second, the phrase “be filled” is plural. It is “all of you be filled”. As I stated earlier, this command isn’t Christianity X; it is just normal Christianity. Third, the phrase “be filled” is the passive voice. That means that the subject is being acted on. The filling comes from an outside source. It implies, “allow the Holy Spirit to fill you”. Fourth, it is in the present tense. The present tense means that it is ongoing, continuing action. Ephesians 5:18 literally says, “All of you be being empowered, permeated by, and controlled by the Holy Spirit.”

The filling of the Spirit is not something static. It is not like a glass being filled up with the Holy Spirit. It is more like a balloon being filled with air. Even at the size of a baseball the balloon is full but not stretched. It can be stretched with greater and capacity for more air. Spiritual maturity is the stretching of our balloon. As we mature, we have a greater capacity to be filled and used by the Holy Spirit.

In our previous message in this series on the baptism by the Holy Spirit we said that the baptism by the Holy Spirit is non-experiential. That is, it is something that God does that we are not aware of in our emotions. Yet, there are hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of people who give testimony of an experience when they surrendered themselves completely, having confessed all sin. After this experience, their love for Christ is greater, there is an increased fruitfulness in service, there is a holier life, and a joy they never before experienced. Often they call this experience “the baptism of the Holy Spirit”. I do not doubt that most of these people are telling the truth. I simply believe that instead of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it was a special filling of the Holy Spirit. I don’t think that this experience is promised. I do not believe that it is something that every person filled with the Spirit experiences, but I believe that many (in God’s sovereign choice of who He graces with a great experience) experience a special filling accompanied by great emotion. I have two books that give testimonies of these experiences. The subjects of these books read like a “who’s who” of Christianity. Dwight L. Moody speaks of walking down the street in New York City one afternoon and becoming so aware of the glory of God in an overwhelming way that he raised his hands and asked God to stop because he felt he was being crushed to death by the awareness of His glory. George Whitefield and David Brainerd are two others who had an experience that they never forgot. The Puritan John Flavel (1630-1691) was a Presbyterian Pastor. Listen to this description of what he experienced. “Thus, going on his way, his thoughts began to swell and rise higher

and higher like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, 'till at last they became an overwhelming flood. Such was the intention of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys and such the full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world and all the concerns thereof. And for some hours he knew no more where he was than if he had been in a deep sleep upon his bed. Arriving in great exhaustion at a certain spring, he sat down and washed, earnestly desiring, if it was God's pleasure, that this might be his parting place from this world" [Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "God the Holy Spirit", Page 248-249]. Jonathan Edwards is widely acclaimed to be the greatest mind ever produced in America and one of the greatest in the world. He was not one to be carried away by emotionalism, and yet he was given a great emotional experience. Listen to his account. "As I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that was for me extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God as mediator between God and man and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. The grace that appeared so calm and sweet appeared also great above the heavens, the person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent and an excellency great enough to swallow up all thoughts and conceptions, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me a greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust and to be full of Christ alone, to love Him with a holy and pure love, to trust in Him, to live upon Him, to serve Him, and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity" [Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "God the Holy Spirit", Page 249-250].

The people I have mentioned are giants of the faith and I would not doubt for a moment that these experiences happened to them. Here is what I want to emphasize: These experiences were gifts of God's sovereign grace to be enjoyed, but they are not promises to every person filled with the Spirit. The tragedy is when people begin to seek an experience instead of the Spirit's fullness. It is also tragic when someone has a great experience with the filling of the Holy Spirit and then starts telling everyone else they must experience what he experienced or they are not filled with the Spirit. That is incorrect. We don't have to wait until we have some great experience before we can be filled with the Spirit.

We have seen the meaning of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

II. The Necessity of Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

Certainly it is necessary to be filled with the Spirit because it is commanded, but why is it commanded?

A. Because of the Immensity of the Requirements

When you really understand the commands of Scripture and refuse to water them down, you realize how impossible they are to obey in our own strength. The Christian life is a supernatural life! We cannot obey God except we do it in the power He gives us. To try to obey in our own strength is a formula for frustration. Here are some examples:

- It is not natural to love your enemies and pray for those who spitefully use you.
- It is not natural to forgive those who have wronged you – especially to the extent that Christ has forgiven us.
- It is not natural to count it all joy when you encounter various trials.
- It is not natural for husbands to love their wives like Christ loved the church and it is not natural for a wife to submit to her husband.
- It is not natural for a person to deny self and take up their cross daily.

I think you get the point.

B. Because of the Inadequacy of Our Flesh

By flesh, I am speaking here of operating out of our own resources. The flesh can do nothing to please God. It doesn't matter how sincere you are. A lack of sincerity is not the problem; a lack of power is our problem. Jesus said in **John 15:5b (NKJV)** "...for without Me you can do nothing." When you examine Scripture, you see that everything we do, we do by the Spirit. We love by the Spirit (Romans 15:30); we

pray by the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26-27); we are led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14); we are strengthened by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16); we are taught by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13); we bear fruit only by the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). There are so many more things that we are specifically told that they must be done through or by the Holy Spirit.

III. The Procedure for Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

Before we deal with how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, I need to ask you some tough questions. Are you sure that you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you satisfied with your life like it is? Most professing Christians arrange their life so that they don't really feel like they need the filling of the Holy Spirit. We put parameters around our life and say, "I'll only do what I'm comfortable with and what I can handle with my own strength." We live self-centered lives that have nothing supernatural about them. We attend church, pay our debts, give a little to missions, and help someone in need every now and then and just live good decent comfortable challenge free lives. When you hear what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, I wonder if you will just say, "No thanks". I remind you however that the filling of the Holy Spirit is a command! I know that I am talking to some people here who are not satisfied. You long for an unexplained life. You are willing to leave your boring comfort zone in order to see what God will do. You're disgusted with a predictable life without the power of God and you're ready to launch out into waters over your head. Those of you who are or have been involved in athletics have likely heard a coach in his motivational speech before a big game say, "You gotta want it!" That is also true of the Spirit filled life. Jesus said in **John 7:37b-39a (NKJV)** "³⁷ If anyone **thirsts**, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive..." Before anyone comes to Him to drink, they have got to thirst. I am praying that God will place a craving in you that will make it impossible for you to go on without His supernatural touch on your life.

As we deal with how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, I don't want to give you a little formula. I want to give you some principles to apply as you come to God in faith to be filled.

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, tolerated 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 to get involved in a ministry) that He has 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. That is quenching 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. **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.”

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. Next week we will see that we must by faith begin to walk in total dependence on the Spirit to empower us to do what God in His word has commanded us to do.

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. I long for something better for you.

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