

THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

Part 2

Colossians 3:1-17

Intro: Last week I directed your attention in our study of the Holy Spirit, to what has to be one of the most important commands in the NT for those of us who know the Lord. That is the command for us to be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, the One we call *the Third Person of the Trinity*. You won't find this expression, the Third Person, in the Bible, but Bible teachers have used it to distinguish between God the Father and the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps this terminology has arisen because, while the Holy Spirit is mentioned a number of times in the OT, the main emphasis is upon the Spirit's ministry followed the ministry on our Lord Jesus Christ here on earth. When the Lord met with His disciples in the Upper Room just the night before His death on the Cross, He spoke very clearly to them about the Holy Spirit. Let me remind you again of what He said. You will find these words that I am reading to you in John 14:16-17. Perhaps by now you have heard these words so often that you could say them along with me as I read them. But they are very, very important. They have to do with the coming of the Holy Spirit after the Lord returned to heaven, not coming for the first time into the world, but coming to be with the people of God in an entirely new relationship. Here are the words:

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (John 14:16-17).

Notice that the Lord said, "I will pray the Father." And then He went on to indicate His assurance that the Father would hear and answer His prayer by sending "another Comforter." By "another Comforter" the Lord was indicating that He had been a Comforter to the disciples during His earthly ministry, and that the Holy Spirit, Whom the Lord called "the Spirit of truth," would come to take His place, only instead of just being "with" them, He, the Holy Spirit was coming to dwell in them "forever." The word Comforter basically means a Helper. It is the word Paraclete in the original Greek, literally One called to our side, or actually to our inside. He was not just going to be "with" the disciples, like the Lord was, but, as the Lord said, this other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would come to be "in you," as the Lord told His disciples. God answered our

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Lord's prayer on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. And, as we have learned in our study of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit not only indwells all of the people of God, but He seals us in Christ, and He baptizes us into the body of Christ, the Church. All of this accompanies our regeneration and is true for every believer.

So we don't pray for the Holy Spirit to come to dwell in us; the Lord Jesus did that. We believe it not because we have experienced these works of the Spirit, but because these are truth which we are taught in the Word of God. So we are all on the same ground when it comes to the regenerating power of the Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit, the sealing of the Spirit, and the baptism of the Spirit. I hope the Spirit of God has made this clear to all of us. Don't let anybody tell you that what you need to do is to pray for the Holy Spirit to come to you. Tell them that the Lord already prayed for that, and it is done for every child of God.

But where we are different concerns the filling of the Spirit. As one writer has said, the filling of the Spirit has to do with the quality of our lives as the people of God (Chafer, L. S., *He that is spiritual*, p. 39). The Holy Spirit has been given to us because the Christian life is a supernatural life. We can't live it in our own strength. We have all tried to, and failed! So when the Apostle Paul told the believers at Ephesus, "Be filled with the Spirit," what did He want them to do?

As I sought to explain to you last Sunday, when the Apostle Paul said, "Be filled with the Spirit," he was addressing a specific command to them which they were to obey, but he indicated that they were not bringing about the filling of the Spirit; *this is what the Spirit of God will do when we meet the conditions*. But what are the conditions? Well, we can get that answer in Ephesians, but the Holy Spirit has given us some added help in the book of Colossians. And that is why Colossians 3 has been our Scripture reading this morning.

Most of us know that Ephesians and Colossians are very similar to each other. They were written by the Apostle Paul at the same time. Ephesians is a little longer, but Paul basically followed the same plan in both epistles.

For example, both as you get into both epistles, Paul had some special words of instruction for wives and husbands, children and fathers, and servants and masters. In Colossians you find these instructions chapter 3,

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beginning with verse 18.

If you turn back to Ephesians, you will find these same instructions (or very similar instructions) in chapter 5, beginning with verse 22. Now in Ephesians what was it that led up to those instructions. Well, it is in verse 18 that we have those words, “but be filled with the Spirit.”

Now look at Colossians 3 to see what Paul was writing about when he gave those instructions about wives and husbands, and so on. Look at Colossians 3:16 and 17. What do they say? You follow as I reread what Steven Nagai read for us a few moments ago. This is what verses 16 and 17 tell us:

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:16-17).

Now let me ask you a question. Do you think that “be filled with the Spirit” could possibly mean the same thing as “let the word of Christ dwell in you with all wisdom”? Both of them are commands. Both of them are in the present tense which suggests that both of these acts need to be going on in our lives day after day after day after day, and so on!

Did Paul in Colossians answer the question that arises in our minds when he said, “Be filled with the Spirit”? Is it by making sure that “the word of Christ is dwelling richly in us?” **I believe it does!**

Consider with me what it means to “let the word of Christ dwell in you in all wisdom.” And as I seek to explain it, I want all of us to be asking ourselves, Is this what I am doing? Am I making sure that the Word of Christ is dwelling in me *richly*?

Let’s begin by asking,

I. WHAT DID PAUL MEAN BY “THE WORD OF CHRIST”?

If I were to ask most of you, “What is “the word of Christ”?, you would respond by saying, “That is the Bible.” And that is right. It is also called “the word of God.” And since we are trying to find out what it means to

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be filled with the Spirit, isn't it to be expected that it would have to have something to do with this book which was authored in a very special way by the Holy Spirit. It wasn't but a Sunday or two ago that I reminded you that the Bible is the result of what its writers wrote as they were moved upon by the Spirit of God. That is in 2 Peter 1:21. And Paul said that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and that it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (mature, complete), thoroughly furnished (thoroughly equipped) unto all good works."

So it is called the word of Christ because it is a holy book, infallible, the word of truth, totally without errors.

But it is also called "the word of Christ" because it is all about Christ. This brings me again to a verse is used recently in this series where the Lord told a bunch of unsaved Pharisees, "Search (or ye search) the Scriptures; for in them ye think that ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me (John 5:39).

I love that story which Dr. Luke tells us in the last chapter of his Gospel about two disciples, not apostles, who were leaving Jerusalem on their way to a nearby town called Emmaus. They knew that the Lord had been crucified, but they were confused because the word was circulating that certain women had gone to our Lord's tomb and had found it empty. And the report was that the women had been told that the Lord was alive. Then Luke tells us this about what the Lord said to those two disciples. I will read it to you from Luke 24:25-32:

- 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:
- 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
- 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.
- 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.
- 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.
- 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.
- 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he

vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

The Scriptures, OT and NT, are “the word of Christ” because from Genesis to Revelation they tell us about Christ.

But let me add one more comment about “the word of Christ,” the Bible. If you read it, it will cause you to love Christ, to be devoted to Him, to be looking for Him every time you read it.

But now let’s look at the words:

II. “DWELL IN YOU.”

“Dwell” is in the present tense meaning dwell and dwell and dwell. Or to state it another way, the Word of Christ, this Word about Christ, is to become so much a part of us that it makes it home in us. Paul couldn’t write very much, or talk very much, but what he was writing or talking about his Savior. I read through the book of Colossians and found that Paul referred to the Lord by His name, or His titles, or by pronouns referring to Christ a little over 70 times in the four chapters.

Of the word of Christ has found a home in our hearts, it a book we want to be reading every day. Have you read it today? When was the last time you committed a verse, or verses, to memory? How often during the day do our thoughts return to the Word of Christ? Are you here today because you want to learn more about the Lord Jesus? Will you be disappointed if you don’t learn something of Him? Do you sing from the heart when we sing that hymn, “More about Jesus would I know”? To have the word of Christ dwelling in you means that the greatest blessing in your life is to be learning more and more about the Lord Jesus, as you walk each day in fellowship with Him through the Word.

What I have been trying to say is what Paul had in mind when he said the next words I want to call your attention to:

III. THE WORDS, “RICHLI IN ALL WISDOM.”

This means that the word of God, the word about Christ, is to be overflowing in our lives, and that is how we can be ministering to each

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other. Does it make any difference as to what we sing? The more the word of Christ is dwelling in us, and overflowing with the wisdom of God in our lives, the more we are going to want to sing Psalms, and hymns and songs which reflect the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I know why godly music is not popular at all in many churches. It is because they do not have the word of Christ dwelling in them. They would rather have fun than be learning about the Lord. Those of us who read the Word, and think and talk about the Word, who memorize the Word, and who go where we can hear the Word, know that there is no joy compared with the joy of having the Word of Christ in our hearts.

Concl: So where does all of this take us? How are we filled with the Spirit? We are filled with the Spirit when we are filled with the Word of Christ – not only reading, hearing, memorizing and meditating on the Word, **but obeying!** **This is where Colossians 3:17. If the word of Christ is dwelling in us, it is going to be seen in the lives we live. A Spirit-filled Christian is one who has learned to depend upon the Holy Spirit for the desire, the wisdom, the power, and joy of living to please God. I am sure that the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are delighted to hear us say that we love them. But the truth of such statements needs to be backed up by giving the Word of Christ a home in our hearts. And that is what shows that our faith is real.**