

THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

Part 4

Ephesians 4:30

Intro: I want to thank the Lord this morning that several of you have told me that you have found this present series on the Holy Spirit, a blessing, and for some questions have been clarified for you that you have had regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. But some of you still have questions, and I am equally thankful that you have come to me with your questions. And so I want to take some of my time, and yours, today to seek to clarify the truth about the Holy Spirit even more.

For all of my life I have heard that we cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit unless we speak in tongues. And so many people have spent their time seeking to speak in tongues. Usually what happens is that they work themselves upon into such a state that they have some kind of an emotional experience which makes them feel that they have been filled with the Spirit. Often they call it the baptism of the Spirit. But it is clear from the Scriptures that the filling of the Spirit, and the baptism of the Spirit, are two different truths. There were people in OT times who were filled with the Spirit, but you do not find a single person in the OT who was baptized by the Spirit. In the NT times, especially from Acts 2 on, you can't find a single Christian who has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Today every Christian has been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, which is the Church. But, as we learn from Ephesians 5:18 we are all commanded to "be filled with the Spirit." Along with the many other commandments of Scripture such a command would mean that every believer needs to be filled with the Spirit, but that not all are filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not descriptive of some ecstatic experience that we need to have, *but it is descriptive of the way we are to live.*

Now since in Ephesians 5:18 we have the only time in Scripture that we are specifically told to "be filled with the Spirit," we are dependent upon the context in Ephesians to help us to understand what the Apostle Paul meant, or possibly a cross reference that some other book of the Bible, and especially one of the other of Paul's epistles, to determine what he meant.

We have that cross reference in Colossians. As we all know, Paul followed basically the same plan in writing Colossians that he did in Ephesians.

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Those two epistles are very similar. When Paul approached the place in his Colossian epistle where he was ready to instruct wives, husbands, and so on, as he did in Ephesians, instead of saying “be filled with the Spirit,” he said in Colossians 3:16,

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.

This is the reason I have said that *to be filled with the Spirit of God is to be filled with the Word of God, or the Word of Christ. It points to our knowledge of the Bible.* We know that the Holy Spirit is the One Who led the Apostle Paul to write both Ephesians and Colossians, and so it is to be expected that the Holy Spirit would emphasize the absolute importance of the Word of God.

But now let me add another verse, from another of Paul’s epistles, where he seemed to be saying the same thing. I am referring to Galatians 5:16 where Paul said, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

As we seek to let the Word of Christ dwell richly in us, as we through our reading of the Bible, and now I am thinking especially of the NT, we find many things that God wants us to do. If we try to obey the Word in our own strength, we find that God asks us to do the impossible. Oh, we may have some success for a while, but we can’t consistently, day after day, do what God wants us to do, or, on the other hand, we can’t continuously refrain from doing what God says “no” to. This is where Paul’s command to “walk in the Spirit” sheds even more light on what it means to “be filled with the Spirit.”

To “walk in the Spirit” means *to walk in dependence upon the Spirit.* The Spirit of God has not just given us a lot of commands in Scripture, leaving us to find out how to obey them. But He commands us, and then He strengthens us by the Word so that by God’s grace and through the power of God’s Word, we can do what the Spirit of God tells us to do, and we can, by that same power, be kept, or keep ourselves, from doing what we are not supposed to do as the children of God. The Bible is not like any other book; it is a living Book, a powerful Book.

Among the Galatian churches some Judaizing teachers had come, who were teaching that the way to keep from sinning is to put yourself under the Law. The Law tells us what is evil in God’s sight, at least a part of it,

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but no one was ever able to overcome sin by obeying the Law. It wasn't given to the Jews for that purpose. The Law helps us to understand what sin is, but there is no enabling power in the Law. That is why Christ had to die – to deliver us not only from sin's penalty, but to deliver us from sin's power in our daily lives. So if we are to be filled with the Spirit, we are to fill our hearts and minds with the Word of God by reading, by meditating on it, by memorizing it, by obeying it.

This is why Paul wrote like he did to Timothy shortly before Paul died. Listen as I read to you from 2 Tim 3:10-17:

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life,
purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at
Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them
all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer
persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,
deceiving, and being deceived.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and
hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,
which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith
which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable
for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in
righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto
all good works.

There is nothing more important for any of us to do than to make sure that daily we are, not just reading, but feeding on the Word of God.

One time when Dr. Bruce Waltke was with us, I believe it was for one of our Family Camps. He was teaching part of the book of Proverbs, which was written by Solomon, king of Israel. When he began his reign, we are told in 1 Kings 3:5 that the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him, "Ask what I shall give thee." And here was Solomon's answer:

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy
people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able
to judge this thy so great a people? (1 Kings 3:9).

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That request was very pleasing to the Lord because he had not asked for a long life, or riches, or the lives of his enemies. And God gave Solomon great wisdom, and his wisdom is has been recorded for us in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. People came from all over the world to hear Solomon's wisdom.

But do you remember what he did in his old age? He married women from the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. And he built temples for their gods. We are told in 1 Kings 11:1 "that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father."

How could this happen? Dr. Waltke raised the question, "How could such a wise man die such a fool? And Dr. Waltke gave us the answer from Solomon's own writing. You will find it in Proverbs 19:20: This had been Solomon's advice to his son and to others: "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end." Dr. Waltke explained that Solomon had quit hearing the counsel of the Lord, and had quit receiving instruction. *We would say today that he had quit reading and meditating on the Word of God.* Women and his own lust had taken the place of the Word of God in his life.

This leads me to ask the question, "Can a Spirit-filled Christian lose that blessed, joyful, peaceful, and fruitful relationship with the Spirit of God? And the answer is, Yes! Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia in his day and said this:

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7).

And later on in that same epistle Paul asked those believers who were very dear to him,

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? (Gal. 4:15-16)

A Spirit-filled Christian is a Word-filled Christian. The Word tells us how to please the Lord, but in addition the Spirit of God empowers us

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through the Word so that we can obey Him. Whatever you do, never neglect the Bible, not even for a day. Read it for yourself. Fathers, read it to your family. Whenever we get together as Christians, reading the Word and prayer should always be a part of our fellowship. We need to talk about the Lord more than we do. We need to talk about what we are learning from the Lord. “Be filled with the Spirit” speaks of a daily relationship with God through His Word. Being filled with the Spirit is what spiritual growth is. It is what we call sanctification, or salvation in the present tense. If you haven’t read the Word today before you came to church, get your Bible out and read it just as soon as you can this afternoon. The more we expose ourselves to the Word of God, the more we will understand it, and the more we understand it, the more we will love it, and the more we love it, the more likely we are to be telling others about it.

Yesterday I read through Ephesians again looking especially for the times the Apostle Paul mentioned the Holy Spirit in it. There are thirteen specific times the Holy Spirit is mentioned:

- 1) In Eph. 1:13 we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.
- 2) In Eph. 1:17 Paul prayed that the Spirit (it should be capitalized) would give them “wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.
- 3) In Eph. 2:18 it is by Christ both Jews and Gentiles have access by the one Holy Spirit unto the Father.
- 4) In Eph. 2:22 all of us as believers are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.
- 5) In Eph. 3:5 we read how the mystery of Christ was revealed unto God’s holy apostle and prophets by the Spirit.
- 6) In Eph. 3:16 Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be strengthened with might by God’s Spirit in the inner man.
- 7) In Eph. 4:3 we are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- 8) In Eph. 4:4 we are told that there is just one Spirit.
- 9) In Eph. 4:30 we are told not to grieve the Spirit.
- 10) In Eph. 5:9 we are told about the fruit of the Spirit.
- 11) In Eph. 5:18 we have our exhortation to be filled with the Spirit.
- 12) In Eph. 6:17 we are told that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit.
- 13) In Eph. 6:18 we are told to pray in the Spirit.

Notice too that Eph. 2:2 we are told about another kind of a spirit, “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience who is the Devil, a

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very real and powerful, but unseen, enemy. In Eph. 5:6 Paul mentioned the children of disobedience again. The people of the world have no interest, and in most cases, no knowledge that their lives are characterized by disobedience. Consequently they are also “children of wrath” according to Eph. 2:3.

But I want to call special attention to Ephesians 4:30. (Read.) We don't usually think of the Members of the Godhead in connection with grief, do we? But you probably remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is described in Isaiah 53:3 as “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Here Paul said that it is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit. Reading this verse, if we are thinking at all, we should ask, What grieves the Holy Spirit? The best way that I know how to answer that question is to look at what Paul was writing about when he wrote verse 30.

If you begin by reading from verse 25, and read on to the end of chapter 4, you will see that there is one answer to the question, What grieves the Holy Spirit? The answer is “sin.” There is no reason to ask what sins, or what kinds of sin. The answer is simply, S-I-N! We have a tendency to classify sins. There is no question but that some sins are worse than others, but sin is sin however you look at it.

What is sin? Sin is anything that is displeasing to God. There are sins of omission, and there are sins of commission. Sins of omission are things that we do not do which we should be doing. Sins of commission are things that we do that we ought not do.

But who is most likely to grieve over us when things are not right in our lives. It has to be those who love us the most. When Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, even the reprobate Jewish leaders were inclined to say, “Behold, how He loved him” (John 11:36). Who grieved the most when the prodigal son took his inheritance and left home? It wasn't his brother. It was his father. When someone we love turns away from the Lord, or has never come to the Lord, we grieve. It makes us sorrowful.

But the Holy Spirit is grieved when a child of God continues in sin because he knows that that child of God is not happy, is not going to find happiness in what he is doing, and especially because fellowship with that child of God has been broken. This ought to tell us that when we engage in any of the sins which are mentioned in this passage, or any other sins, it causes grief to our heavenly Father. It causes grief to our Savior. It

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causes grief to the Holy Spirit. But here Paul was talking about a true Christian who isn't acting like a Christian, and yet he has been "sealed unto the day of redemption."

Nobody is ever happier because they sin. One step in sin can so easily lead to another, and then to another, and so on. But one other aspect to the Spirit's grief is that sin often calls for judgment. And the Apostle John tells us in 1 John 5 that there is such a thing as sin unto death. And notice, if you will, that most of the sins that Paul mentioned here are sins that we commit with our mouths. But what comes out of our mouths is what is in our hearts. Sin never improves any situation. Sin never makes any person better. Our sin makes it impossible for us to truly say that we love the Lord. To be filled with the Spirit, and filled with the Word, is the greatest safeguard we have because both speak of a strong relationship with God the Holy Spirit. As Paul told the Galatians, "Walk in the Spirit," walk in obedience to Him, walk with your faith in Him, not in yourself, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.. Oh, how we need to pray that the Spirit of God will enable us to reach the portals of heaven without grieving Him more than we already have. Let God speak to your heart through His Word. Make sure of your fellowship with Him.