

## Be Filled With the Spirit - 1

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AM Service

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Text: [Ephesians 5:17-21](#)

### Introduction

A Spirit-filled church, that's what I want, but more importantly that's what **God wants our church to be**. Since Grace & Truth, like every church, is made up of people, the only way that **we can be a Spirit-filled church is if we have Spirit-filled people**. But what exactly does that mean? How can we be filled with the Spirit? What happens when a church or an individual is Spirit-filled?

Now, sad to say **some Baptists have a tendency to avoid the subject** of the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is **due to the erroneous teachings and over-emphasis on the Holy Spirit** in some Christian circles. This tendency to avoid the Holy Spirit and His ministry is an **over-reaction to a real problem and excesses** in some Christian movements.

But the late Martyn Lloyd-Jones has warned us about this, *"In our fear of the excesses that some who claim this experience may be guilty of, we often become guilty of 'quenching the Spirit' and robbing ourselves of the richest blessings."*

One of my favorite authors, A. W. Tozer also gave warning about by this using a scarecrow illustration ...

*"This is a crude illustration, but let me tell you what we did after planting a field of corn when I was a young fellow in Pennsylvania. To save the field of corn from the crows, we would shoot an old crow and hang him by his heels in the middle of the field. This was supposed to scare off all of the crows for miles around. The crows would hold a conference and say, 'Look, there is a field of corn but don't go near it. I saw a dead crow over there'*

*That's exactly what Satan has done. He has taken some fanatical, weird, wild-eyed Christians who do things that they shouldn't, and he has stationed them in the middle of God's cornfield, and warns, 'Now, don't you go near that doctrine about the Holy Spirit because if you do, you will act just like these wild-eyed fanatics.'"*

Then Tozer prays ... *"Keep us, Lord, from shying away from such valuable truth and experience as the ministry of the Holy Spirit because of the excesses of a few fanatics. We lose too much, and we can't afford the loss. Amen."*

The **enemy loves to use** these things as **scarecrows to keep away God's children from genuine blessing**. Both Martin Lloyd Jones and A. W. Tozer advised that the answer to **abuse** is **not disuse**, but **proper use**. Let us not be scared off by the scarecrows, but welcome the doctrine of the Spirit and His ministry with **balance, discernment, and maturity**.

**The Holy Spirit is not a danger to be avoided**. He is the third person of the Trinity without whom we cannot live the Christian life. And **it grieves the Holy Spirit when we allow the danger of excess** to avoid or ignore Him and His important ministry.

Many Christians are confused about what the filling of the Holy Spirit is. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? How to be filled with the Spirit? What happens when a person is filled with the Spirit? These are the **big questions** we will try to answer in the coming weeks. This morning consider with me this great subject "Being Filled with the Spirit" – what is it?

I have four headings to guide us through this study, and they are the **Command**; the **Comparison**; the **Consequences**; (Result, Outcome), and the **Cumbrances** (Hindrances).

### **I - The Command**

[Ephesians 5:17](#) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18: **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**

This Spirit-filling is **not optional**. It is **not a suggestion**. It is a imperative command. This is **the only ministry of the Spirit which we are commanded to seek**. There is nothing in the Scripture where we are commanded to be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in the Scripture where we are commanded to be **indwelt** by the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in the Scripture where we are commanded to be **sealed** by the Holy Spirit. Baptism with the Holy Spirit; indwelling of the Holy Spirit and sealing by the Spirit, these **all take place at conversion**. We do not have part in these. God does these for us at conversion. But **where we get involved is in the filling of the Holy Spirit**. This is the only part we can participate in because it is commanded. The good news is **because it is a command, it is possible**.

### **So what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?**

It is a **conscious, constant and complete surrender** to God's will and **dependence** upon the Spirit's power to live the Christian life - for the purpose of producing the fruit of soul's ([Acts 1:8](#)), the fruits of empowered ministry ([Acts 4:31](#)), the fruit of victory over temptation ([Galatians 5:16](#)), and the fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

[Acts 1:8](#) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

[Acts 4:31](#) And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 25:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is not our having more of the Holy Spirit, but **the Holy Spirit having more of us!** It means the Holy Spirit has control over us, our **emotion**, our **thoughts**, our **tongue**, our **body**, our **behavior**, and our **actions**.

We will talk more about what it means to be filled with the Spirit in the coming weeks. But what I want to focus now is **the characteristics of this command**.

### 1. It is Principal Command

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

It is an extremely important command. You have probably heard it said, *“To live the Christian life is hard.”* To which I disagree. I say, *“To live the Christian life is not hard. To live the Christian life is impossible.”*

There is **only one person who could live the Christian life** and that’s **the Lord Jesus Christ!** You and I cannot live the Christian life; only Jesus Christ can, but **I have good news for you**. When our Lord went back to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to take His place and to come and to live in us as believers so that we could live the Christian life. So that we could take our **stand in an evil day**; so that we would be **courageous holy Christians**; so that we could **do the work God has called for us to do**. O how we need the Holy Spirit.

We must understand that the Spirit-filling is **not optional** in the Christian life. **It is mandatory**. We need the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need to be filled with the Spirit. We need Him in every area of our lives. We need to be under control of the Spirit, because **if the Holy Spirit is not in control of our lives we will not be able to live the Christian life**. No Christian can fulfill God's will for his life apart from being filled with the Spirit.

Alan Cairns

*“If you and I are going to experience the fullness of the Christian life, then we must learn how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It isn’t enough just to be saved. That will get you to Heaven, but unless you are filled with the Spirit, you will have a rough road here below. Christianity is far more than a bunch of “don’ts”, there are a whole lot of “do’s” to keep you busy too. In fact, if you will spend your time doing the do’s, you won’t have time to do the don’ts.”*

### 2. It is Passive Command

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Not only is Spirit-filling a principal command, it is also a passive command. The word **“be filled”** is **in passive voice**. It means **the subject receives the action**. We as believers are being

acted upon. **God** is implied as **the source** of the filling. **We are the recipients of the action.** We as believers do not fill ourselves, **God does the filling** when we ask Him to fill us or control us.

The Puritan John Bunyan explained this "**passive**" aspect of the filling when he said that "*Seamen cannot create the wind, but they can hoist their sails to welcome it; neither can we create the breath of the Spirit, but are we to miss it when it comes through failure to keep our sails unfurled?*"

We cannot do the filling of the Spirit for ourselves. We don't make it happen ourselves. It is God that does the filling. How? We will answer this in the coming weeks.

### **3. It is Plural Command**

[Ephesians 5:18](#) **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**

Not only is Spirit-filling a principal command, a passive command, it is also a plural command. This command of being filled with the Spirit **applies to every believer in Christ.** It is not reserved for a few special super spiritual Christians. Every Christian without exception can be filled with the Spirit. This means, if you are a born again Christian this morning, regardless of how long you have been born again, **this is for you. Don't believe the lie of the enemy** that joy, peace, freedom, and victory is for another Christian and somehow not for you. This is very crucial because so much of your life hinges upon your right understanding of this. Because it is plural it is for every believer. That means **it is for you and for me.**

### **4. It is Perpetual Command**

[Ephesians 5:18](#) **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**

Not only is Spirit-filling a principal command, a passive command, a plural command, it is also a perpetual command. The words "**be filled**" here is in the present tense. It refers to continuous action. "Be filled" means "**be continually filled,**" "**keep on being filled,**" "**be filled again and again and again**". These words emphasize that the fullness of the Spirit is **not a one time event,** like baptism in the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in Scriptures do you see believers baptized in the Holy Spirit more than once. **One baptism, many fillings.**

The believers at Pentecost were filled once ...

[Acts 2:4](#) **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And those same believers were filled again ...

[Acts 4:31](#) **And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,** and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Paul was filled once in ..

[Acts 9:17](#) **And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.**

Paul was filled again in ...

Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) **filled with the Holy Ghost**, set his eyes on him,

We are baptize with the Holy Spirit once, but we filled with the Spirit repeatedly. **Spirit-filling is a repeated experience for believers.** This is the only ministry of the Spirit to the believer which is **repeatable**. This is the only ministry of the Spirit which **can be lost and should thus be repeatedly sought**.

D. L. Moody said, *“A great many think because they have been filled once, they are going to be filled all the time after. But O, my friends, we are leaky vessels, and have to be kept right under the fountain all the time in order to keep full.”*

### Closing Thoughts

Let me close with two passages found in the gospel according to Luke,

Luke 4:1 And **Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost** returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Here, Luke describes Jesus as full of the Holy Spirit, indicating **Jesus had surrendered to the Spirit's full control**. It is clear that Jesus was not only fully man but also fully God. Since He was God it was no problem for Him to live a holy life and to do His Father's will. And yet, **understand that our Lord did not rely on His Godhood to live and perform His ministry**. Jesus relied completely on the Holy Spirit. **Our Lord Jesus lived His life and performed His ministry on earth in the power of the Spirit.**

Then we read in ...

Luke 4:14 And **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit** into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Our Lord Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. **That same Source of power, the Holy Spirit is in us today**. He indwells every believer. Every believer has all of the Spirit that he or she will ever have. **The issue is not how much of the Spirit we have, but how much of "us" He has!** Does He have control over us, our **emotion**, our **thoughts**, our **will**, our **affections**, our **tongue**, our **body**, our **behavior**, and our **actions**?

O may we learn from our Lord and Master and to completely rely on and surrender to the Holy Spirit in our life and our ministry.

**AMEN!**