

Power in the Holy Spirit

8. BEING "FILLED" BY THE HOLY SPIRIT



Introduction

What does it mean, to be *filled by the Holy Spirit*? For some people, such a term only applies to saints long ago, like St. Peter, St. Ignatius or St. Jerome. However, the term is for everybody who is *Born Again*, not just famous people of years ago.

The Spirit of God is necessary for anybody who comes to Christ, however the continual filling of the Spirit is not a given. To live the Spirit filled life requires something on our part, it is not automatic.

Throughout the history of Christianity, we can see some remarkable stories of people who, by all accounts were ordinary. Take Peter for example, he was just a fisherman when Jesus found him. Later, he ran from a young girl who questioned his identity, however after being filled, by the Spirit, he led the church in Jerusalem. Facing the *chief priest* in boldness, he proclaimed Jesus. What changed Peter was the power of the Holy Spirit, which he received at Pentecost; he was *filled* with the Spirit when he met the priests.

The Holy Spirit is an integral part of any believer's life, without the Holy Spirit we could not know Jesus Christ. There is a clear difference in lives of many who accept Christ, some striving, some thriving and others static. Why do Christian lives differ so? What is the reason for such varied experiences? Jesus clearly explained such would be the case, in the *Parable of the Sower* (Matthew 13). In this parable, Jesus compares the soil the seeds are planted in, the better the soil, the greater the harvest. The soil is a metaphor for the person, who has received the seed (Gospel), a better soil produces a greater crop.

So how can we prepare our soil so we can yield a greater harvest? When we have yielded our "self" to God's Spirit, we can have an abundant harvest. This is the point of living a Spirit filled life.

What does it mean to be Spirit filled?

The filling of the Spirit differs in the *New Covenant* era, compared to the *Old Covenant*. The reason for this difference is one of relationship. Before the birth of the Messiah, humanity awaited His arrival; the prophets foretold His coming. The Messiah came to redeem lost humanity for our fallen state. Messiah would die for the sins of Adam and Eve's descendents; He would redeem us from our sins. Therefore, those who were before Messiah's death (Jesus Christ) did not have their sins paid for until after the cross.

Job looked forward to the coming of the Redeemer, who would one day resurrect him, allowing to see with his own eyes and not another's.

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;
26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
Job 19:25-27

In the period before Christ we see selective people filled by the Spirit, for specific purposes of ministry. The Holy Spirit was not permanent and could be removed, David pleaded for the Holy Spirit to not be removed (Psalm 51:11). The creation of the Tabernacle and clothing of priesthood was the result of the filling of the Spirit on select people to accomplish specific work for the Lord.

30 And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;
31 "and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, Exodus 35:30-31

Following Pentecost, the power and the filling of the Holy Spirit became available to all who accepted Christ, born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8). This is an amazing event, only experienced by the believer, so we should understand just what it means to be filled by the Spirit. Being filled by the Spirit is conditional, we can or cannot be filled. The filling of the Spirit, depends on our relationship with the Lord. This is not about salvation, which requires the Spirit of God to dwell in us, all believers must have this, but not everybody is filled by the Spirit.

The difference scripture makes between being "saved" and "being filled" is clear, it is about the degree of the relationship we have with the Lord. When someone comes to Christ they are saved (they have the Spirit), what do we choose to do with our salvation is another issue. If for example you received an inheritance, the property and money of an estate became yours. You could either squander the blessing or use it to accomplish more. In the same way, when we receive the Spirit, we receive an eternal inheritance from God, we have the choice, to allow God's Spirit to us or not use us.

When we yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, an amazing event happens; we become filled with the Spirit. Scripture commands us to seek the continual filling of the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.
Ephesians 5:18-21

When the Spirit of God is in control of our lives, there is both internal and external evidence of the Spirit filled life. Paul uses the illustration of wine to contrast someone filled by the Spirit. The power of wine is evident when we see somebody drunk, they are filled with "alcohol" to the point where it overflows. The results of alcohol are visible, so in the same way the Holy Spirit should be visible to the world, we should be "drunk" with the Spirit.

The internal relationship

The filling of the Holy Spirit is an internal relationship, between the Holy Spirit and the person. From this internal relationship then flows external evidence. Is God's Spirit in control of our life? When we yield to the Spirit, then the results follow, because the Spirit of God is working through us as opposed to us doing his work. We became the vehicle God uses to accomplish His work. The external circumstances are only secondary, because the internal relationship is primary.

31 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 4:31

The disciples after they prayed, they received power to proclaim the word of God with boldness, first they yield through prayer, the filling of the Holy Spirit was the result, an internal event. Out of this internal control of the Holy Spirit, the disciples became a vehicle for the word of God to be proclaimed.

Through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we have a relationship with God. The status of a relationship depends on the communication between parties. A relationship can be encouraged or quenched. Such is the case with the Holy Spirit, scripture clearly teaches the Holy Spirit is the "third person" in the trinity who dwells in us allowing us to have fellowship with God.

This relationship can be quenched like any relationship. Paul warns us (I Thes. 5:19) not to quench our relationship with the Holy Spirit, because we harm our relationship with God. We quench our relationship with God, when we yield to our old nature.

22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,
 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
 25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.
 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
 27 nor give place to the devil.
 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.
 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.
 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.
 Ephesians 4:22-32

We have a choice, we can choose to yield or not yield control of our life to the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians chapter 4, we see very specific examples of choices, which indicate whether we have given control of our lives over to the Spirit. The conduct of the *old man* grieves the Holy Spirit. These specific actions will effect or relationship.

- deceitful lusts
- lying
- unforgiving anger
- stealing
- corrupt words
- bitterness
- wrath
- clamor (screaming)
- evil speaking
- malice (meanness)

These actions quench the Spirit of God; they grieve him because they feed our old nature, our old man. They prevent us from being filled, because God's Spirit is grieved within us because of our actions. Our lives are un-yielded to the Holy Spirit, if these terms describe us.

External fruit

When we have yielded to the Spirit, we produce fruit; the Holy Spirit harvests a crop from our soil. An evil spirit produces bad fruit; the Holy Spirit produces good fruit. What kind of fruit do we yield?

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.
 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.
 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Matthew 7:17-20

So if we are saved, and have God's Spirit dwelling us, are we producing "good fruit"? The fruit we produce is an indication of our relationship. Galatians lists these fruits and they are clear indication if we have yielded to the Holy Spirit.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.
 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 5:22-26

We should evaluate our lives, by taking an inventory of our fruit. Many employers do an annual review of their employees, by evaluating their work. They sit down and examine their work, the pluses and minus, if they lack, they tell them what they need to do. If they do many times they get a bonus or advance. In the same way, we can evaluate our own life, where do the *Fruits of the Spirit* stand in our life.

1. Do I **love** those around me, including my enemies?
2. Do I have inner **joy**, regardless of my circumstances?
3. Do I have inner **peace**?
4. Am I **patient** (longsuffering) in my circumstances?
5. Would those around think of me as **kind**?
6. Would **goodness** be a quality that describes me?
7. Do I live a **faith-filled** life?
8. How do I treat those around me, am I **gentle**, mean or indifferent?
9. Do I have **self-control** over my flesh, or does it control me?

If we see a definite lack of these fruits in our life, we need to evaluate why. Can we change the results? Can we establish a course of action, so the results demonstrate fruit of the Spirit? Remember we can take all this before the Lord and pray for these fruits, these fruits are God's will, so praying for them is in accordance to God's will.

Gifts of the Spirit

When we have the Spirit in our lives, we are being transformed into the image of Christ. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, to make us Christ-like. (2 Corinthians 3;18) When we examine the filling of the Spirit, in scripture, they occurred for ministering to others. As a member of the Church, we are part of the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit equips us to minister to the world we live, through gifts. When we become Spirit filled, the gifts of God's Spirit are used to produce fruit.

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

I Corinthians 12:4-11

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

I Corinthians 12:28-31

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

I Corinthians 14:1-4,12

8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:8

According to Corinthians why does the Spirit become manifest in our life? To bring glory to the individual, no but for the profit of all, who make up the church. The Holy Spirit has a gift for every believer, so the whole body of Christ can benefit. What is your gift? These are the gifts mentioned in I Cor. 12.

- Word of wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Faith
- Healings
- Miracles
- Prophecy
- discerning of spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

When we are filled by the Spirit, we allow God to use us to minister to those around us.