

Be Filled With The Spirit

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“And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Ephesians 5 vv. 18-21.

Introduction

Be filled with the Spirit! This is a command to Spirit-filled believers. That may sound a little paradoxical but I hope all will become clear as we proceed with this study, which is the first of a series of studies on practical issues of the life of faith.

I think that this verse is at the heart of all such practical issues. Be filled with the Spirit! The way you should live, as far as the Lord is concerned and as the Scriptures show us we should live, is possible because you are Spirit-filled. If you are a Christian, you are born again of the Spirit of God and you may go on to know that glorious baptism in the Holy Spirit which the Lord has freely poured out. Because of that mighty gift, it is wonderfully possible for you to live the life that the Bible requires of you. So all the practical issues we shall be looking at are possible to the Spirit-filled believer, and to the one who goes on, day by day, being filled with the Spirit. The moment we stop receiving that filling which He provides, the moment we stop relying on that enabling of His precious Spirit in our lives, then we start getting into difficulties. But in Him, we are more than conquerors.

Please remember, as we think on these things, that the Spirit is the Holy Spirit. He is a Person, a Divine Person, God the Holy Spirit. We are not discussing some impersonal force but God. Now the Bible tells us that we are partakers of the Divine nature and this is because God dwells in us. What we have read above is a command - "Be filled with the Spirit!" That, in itself, is a practical issue. A command is to be obeyed. We must be responsive to that, in faith, in obedience and in allowing the Lord to fill us with Himself and with what He wants us to have. It is allowing the Lord to make us what He wants us to be.

God Working in Us

What we shall look at in this study is not only how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but how, being full of the Holy Spirit, you can allow Him to fill you. Now you may need to think about that idea. If we do allow the Holy Spirit to fill us continually, we shall live right. If we get this right, the other twenty or so practical issues will present no problem. You will fail in the Christian life if you say, "I'm not like that, like the Bible says; I'm going to try to be like that." It seems to me that many Christians take that attitude. They look at what the Bible says concerning the believer and say, "I'm not like that. I'm going to try to be like it." If that is how you approach the Christian life, you will fail. You will never do it, because you will be relying on human effort. The life of faith, however, is a life of believing the Word of God. In faith, the Spirit-filled believer looks at the Word of God and declares, "I am like that. Therefore I will act like it." The devil, or your own fleshly mind, or your family will say, "You're not like that." That is why faith is essential, for by faith we look at things which are not seen. Our evidence is faith itself. We believe what the Word says about us above any other voice. It tells us we are children of the Living God, partakers of the Divine nature, more than conquerors, victorious, free from the dominion of sin, holy. You must believe it. If you are born of the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit, then that is what you are like. All kinds of voices of doubt, without and within, may be saying "impossible", but faith - not trying - will bring you to victory. In some ways it is like learning to swim. You say, "I can't swim. It's impossible for a heavy body to do such a thing." But when you gain the confidence and move out in that confidence, then you wonder how you ever thought it was impossible. Similarly, when you become a Christian and you begin to move in the life of faith, you cannot imagine what was so difficult about it before. Before, it seemed so impossible.

How can anyone live apart from sin and the lusts of the flesh? How can I live with a thought life that is pure and so on? It looks so difficult until you begin to move in the power of what you are. Then you prove that the Lord is true, because you are then living according to what His word says and not according to what your mind tells you. Your mind will tell you all sorts of different things about yourself based on what you used to be like. However, the Bible says that you are a new creation. That is what you must move in.

Jesus said, in **John 15 v 5**, ***"Without Me, you can do nothing."*** Now when we say that we are going to try to be what we should be, then we are doing it without Him and consequently fall flat on our face. But when we open our heart and life to the Holy Spirit and move out in faith, then we are moving with Him and He with us. Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him and in Him we are more than conquerors. So in **Philippians 2 vv 12 and 13**, it says, ***"For it is God that works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure."*** This is the secret: it is not us but God who works in us. Being filled with the Spirit is opening ourselves up to let God work in us, to let the Lord Jesus Christ be revealed in us, being responsive to His leading and guiding.

Born of the Spirit

Now let us look at the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us, as far as the world and the unsaved are concerned, that everyone is born dead in trespasses and sin, spiritually dead, cut off from God. And the Holy Spirit draws such men and women to God. As the word of God is preached the Holy Spirit is using that word to draw people to God. People can resist the Holy Spirit but that does not alter the fact that His work is to draw them to God. In **John chapter 16**, you will find that Jesus describes there this work of the Holy Spirit, awakening the minds and consciences of people to their own sin, to their need to be righteous and to the fact that there is a judgment to face. Look at vv 8-11, where Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit:

"When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see Me no more; of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged"

And so the Holy Spirit will reprove the world, the unsaved, of sin. The world, certainly in the West, does not really believe in sin. The vast majority of people believe themselves to be morally upright and decent. As far as most people are concerned, if you were born in England you are a Christian. One man is as good as another. But the Bible says that the Holy Spirit reproves the world of sin, awakening the conscience to the fact of sin, that we are separated from God and deserve nothing but judgment. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Now the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (**John 14 v 17**), because it is full of sin. The unsaved cannot receive the Holy Spirit because of sin, and so the Holy Spirit reproves them of sin. He speaks to their conscience to awaken them to the fact that there is a need there. He speaks about righteousness and the righteous standard of God; He speaks about the fact of judgment that people may turn to Christ to find forgiveness and cleansing in Him. Then, when people do turn to Christ, when there is repentance and the placing of faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation from sin, the Holy Spirit does a work in the heart and life of those people. That is the work of regeneration - being born again of the Spirit, new birth, new life from God.

You know that in **John chapter 3**, Jesus said to Nicodemus, ***"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*** You must be born again. There is no other way. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. So when you came to God through Jesus Christ, you received forgiveness from God, because your sins were dealt with in Jesus. You received cleansing from that sin through the blood of Jesus. But something else happened: a miracle took place in your life. You, who were once dead, spiritually speaking, were born again spiritually. There began that new life in you. You were born of the Spirit. You received life from above, Divine life. The Bible shows us that it is resurrection life, life that has defeated death. If you are a believer, you are rejoicing in forgiveness of sins, and experiencing that life from above. Although physically you are dying - as Paul said, ***"The outward man perishes day by day"*** - within you is that life that will never die.

The unsaved do not have that. The unsaved are without God in this world and without hope. They have nothing to look forward to, outside of Christ, but the second death. But the believer, because he is born again of the Spirit of God, has life which is eternal. Here is what Paul says about that life in the Spirit:

"But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." Romans 8 vv 9-13

This is resurrection life. It is the Spirit who gives life. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring people to this starting point of being born again.

Baptised and Filled with the Holy Spirit

As we look further we find that there is something in the Bible which is called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said, concerning Jesus, ***"He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*** Now the new birth is not the baptism with the Holy Spirit. When we are born again, we receive the Holy Spirit, as **Romans 8 v 9** makes clear, for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. But the baptism in the Holy Spirit is something further. When you are born again of the Spirit, the potential of that baptism is definitely within you, but you must come to a realisation of the fulness of it as you allow the Holy Spirit to fill you and flow through you. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a definite, saturating experience of being filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. It is being filled with God, for that is who the Holy Spirit is. It is a total yieldedness to Him. The word 'baptism' signifies an immersion in something. When the women dipped their clothes into purple dye, the Greek word that was used was 'baptise': they baptised the cloth. They submerged it completely into the dye. When we baptise someone in water, we immerse that person totally in the water. And when people are baptised in the Holy Spirit, it is as if they have been immersed completely in the Holy Spirit, and that every part of their being is filled with the Holy Spirit. He is in control. That is something we very much want to see for every believer. We often sing that chorus "I get so thrilled with Jesus, every moment of the day," but we will not see that thrill manifested in our worship services until every believer is baptised with the Holy Spirit and being filled continually with the Holy Spirit. It is rather sad sometimes to see Christians worshipping in such a half-hearted and glib way.

We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, filled to overflowing. It is like that widow in the Old Testament who had just a pot of oil. Elisha told her to pour out that oil and to keep on pouring. That little pot of oil was all that she had left in a time of severe famine, yet she obeyed and poured it out. One pan was filled up and the pot was still full of oil, and the next pan was filled and the next. In the end she had to borrow pots and pans from the neighbours to fill them up with oil and still the oil flowed until everything was filled. It was an overflowing vessel of oil that was miraculously filled. Now oil is a type of the Holy Spirit and we are like that little earthen vessel that contained it. The Bible says we are like earthen vessels and when we are filled with the Holy Spirit it is an ever-overflowing experience, not something that you can bottle up and keep inside. It is overflowing. Jesus said in **John chapter 7 vv 37-39**:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

Jesus was speaking prophetically of the time when the Holy Spirit would come and fill believers with that glorious baptism. It would be an overflowing experience for out of their innermost beings would come these mighty rivers of living water. In **Acts chapter 2**, when the disciples received the fulfilment of that promise, they knew quite definitely that the promise Jesus had made had been fulfilled. In **Acts ch. 1**, after Jesus had risen from the dead and before He ascended into heaven, He gave them the command,

"...wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, you have heard of Me. For John truly baptised with water; but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1 vv 4,5) and then in verse 8, ***"But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you."*** Then in **Acts 2 v 4**, they knew the fulfilment of that, when they were all together on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. That was a mighty, overflowing and quite definite experience. There they were, about a hundred and twenty of them, unsure of what to do, when suddenly there was this mighty experience. Immediately they were transformed. They became a praising people, the words of worship and praise and glory to God coming from deep within them as the Holy Spirit saturated their beings. The people heard them glorifying God and this not even in Hebrew or Aramaic but in other tongues. There was an overflowing. What a transformation took place when they were filled with the Spirit! And what was the manifestation of that overflowing? It was in words, in language, in praise, and all in other tongues. It was not just a big, beaming smile or a feeling of peace and joy. They had taken the stopper out of the vessel and the oil came out - praise and glory to God in abundance and Divine power.

This is what we find in the New Testament, that when people were baptised in the Holy Spirit there was an overflowing experience which was noticeable. Now I do not want to use terms such as 'the initial evidence', but I want to talk about the definite, overflowing experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. If you have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, you know that you have been baptised. It is not possible to say, "I think I received the baptism," or, "I must have received the baptism because every believer does." If you have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, it was a definite, tremendous experience which you will never forget. But if you cannot testify to such blessing, and you are a Christian, the potential is there; it is within you; you have received the Holy Spirit. He is just waiting for that obedience for you to come in faith, and to allow Him to take control. It is like taking the stopper out of the bottle and letting the contents flow out, but instead of being emptied, as fast as the vessel pours out, it is constantly filled from within.

Look at the experiences of the people in the book of Acts as they were baptised in the Holy Spirit! Look at the people of Samaria! They believed and were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus and yet they did not receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit straightaway. When the apostles came and laid hands on them, then they received and so remarkable was the outward demonstration of it that Simon, a magician, wanted to give money to the apostles to buy such power that he also might be able to give the Holy Spirit to people. Peter had to rebuke him for such corrupt thinking but something remarkable had happened. They were already believers, born again of the Spirit, baptised in water but they had not yet come into the fulness of the Spirit. However, when they did, what happened was observable: Simon saw the miracle. It was not just some private, inner blessing. Simon was practised in the black arts of magic and sorcery, but what he saw then amazed him. It was something that he could not account for. That is in **Acts chapter 8**. In **Acts chapter 10** we meet Cornelius, a Roman centurion, who feared God and was seeking God. God sent him Peter, who preached to Him Jesus, whereupon the man and those that were with him came to that precious knowledge of salvation; they were born again of the Spirit and baptised with the Holy Spirit immediately. How did Peter know that they had been baptised in the Holy Spirit? It tells us in the same passage. It says it was because they heard them speak with other tongues, just as the disciples had done at the beginning. There was an overflowing experience that all could see, just as there had been at Samaria.

Next we come to Ephesus, in **Acts chapter 19**, where Paul finds some believers, not Christians, but God-fearers, people who had repented of their sin but had not gone on to know the salvation of God in Jesus Christ. Paul preached to them Jesus, and when they heard this they were baptised in the name of Jesus. Then, when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. They were baptised in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon them in a mighty deluge. Of course, the Bible speaks about the coming of the Holy Spirit in terms of rain - the former rain and the latter rain. Have you experienced this deluge, this baptism of the Holy Spirit? Do you know the fulness of the Holy Spirit within? Peter said, in **Acts 2**, that this was a fulfilment of a prophecy, given in the Old Testament by the prophet Joel. Peter goes through what Joel said - you can compare the two: **Joel 2 vv 28 & 29 with Acts 2**.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

Now Peter adds these words to the words of Joel: ***"And they shall prophesy."*** In other words, as the result of the coming of the Holy Spirit, there will be prophetic utterance. I think it can be maintained that it is the teaching of Scripture that, when a person is baptised in the Holy Spirit there will be this prophetic utterance as part of the overflowing experience. In the Old Testament it was so when the Spirit of God came upon people. When Saul was sent by Samuel and he mixed with certain prophets, the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied, so much so that people began to say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" When Moses and the seventy elders received the Spirit, they prophesied and somebody came running to Moses to report a couple of men prophesying in the camp, to which Moses replied that he wished all God's people were filled with the Spirit and were prophesying. This prophetic utterance is the result of the Spirit of God coming upon people.

Of course, we find in the New Testament its special fulfilment in the promise that Jesus gave at the end of Mark's gospel, where He said that these signs would follow those that believe, that they should speak with new tongues. This had not happened in the Old Testament. Thus we find in the book of Acts that they spoke with tongues and prophesied. There was a speaking forth in a new language and everyone that is baptised in the Holy Spirit has this overflowing experience and has this ability, given of God, to praise and magnify Him in tongues. There is the evidence. We do not have to call it 'the initial evidence of speaking in tongues' but we can confidently point to the Scriptural evidence given by Peter: ***"they shall prophesy"***. Prophetic utterance is a speaking forth, and that speaking forth, which is particular to the New Testament, is that of speaking in tongues - a definite experience.

Jesus said, ***"You shall receive power."*** When they received the Holy Spirit, in the Book of Acts, they found they had a holy boldness that they had never possessed before. In Ephesians it tells us that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. This is all part of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you do not know that baptism then you need to know it for it is not an option but is standard for the Christian life. If you do not know that you are full of the Holy Spirit then you have not really begun to serve Him and to live the life that God wants.

"In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."
Ephesians 1 v 13.

Notice the sequence here! What happened first? You heard the word of truth, after which you trusted. That is pretty straight forward: you cannot trust until you have first heard the good news. Then, after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. This is the progress in the Christian life. Now a seal is a mark of identification. A seal on a letter gave it the authority of the sender as he made on it an impress with his signet ring. We are sealed with the mark of the King of kings, sealed with the Holy Spirit. You are marked as being His if you are baptised with the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 4 v 30** warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit by Whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

However, this fulness of the Holy Spirit, this baptism in the Holy Spirit, is not known by every believer. It is what every believer may have but not all walk in what God has provided. Every Christian has the potential but for many the potential is not realised. There were more than five hundred brethren who witnessed the risen Lord. **1 Corinthians 15** makes that clear, but **Acts chapter 2** reveals that only about one hundred and twenty were present, on the Day of Pentecost, to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In **Acts chapter 7**, the command was, when there was trouble over the distribution to the widows, to seek out men, full of the Holy Spirit, which suggests that there were others who were not full of the Holy Spirit. And they chose Stephen and six others, men of faith and full of the Holy Spirit. When you are baptised with the Holy Spirit, you are full of the Holy Spirit. He does not come in parts or instalments but you are full of Him completely, to overflowing.

How can you be baptised in the Holy Spirit? By faith - that is the only way. Read **Galatians chapter 3 v 2: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"**

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter said, **"Repent and be baptised and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."** You do not have to earn or merit it: it is a gift, which is received by faith, according to **Acts 5**, by those who obey Him. That is not the obedience which merits but the obedience which, in humble submission, reaches out and receives.

"And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Luke 11 vv 9-13

It is a gift that God is only too willing for us to have, but the problem is at our end. When we yield all then there is that mighty, overflowing experience - born again of the Holy Spirit, baptised in the Holy Spirit, full of, and being filled by, the Holy Spirit.

Filled by the Holy Spirit

At this point we arrive at **Ephesians 5 v 18**, which was our verse for this study. It says, **"Be filled with the Spirit,"** in the Authorised Version, but it carries with it the idea of **"Be filled by the Holy Spirit."** Now, of course, you are being filled with the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit wants to fill you with good things. You are born again of the Spirit, baptised in the Spirit, becoming full of the Holy Spirit, and then the next stage is to allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with all the heavenly treasures that are at His disposal. That is what this verse signifies. Be filled by the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit fill you. You are in the position to receive what the Holy Spirit wants to give you. In **Luke chapter 1 v 53**, Mary says: **"He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent empty away."**

God wants to fill you with good things. In **Matthew 7 v 11**, we find the parallel to the passage that we read just a minute or so ago, from **Luke 11**. Here it says, however, **"...how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"** In **Luke** the promise is that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; in **Matthew** it says He will give good things.

So, in our verse in **Ephesians 5**, the Holy Spirit is the agent rather than the substance; not what you are filled with, but the one Who does the filling. You can look at other Scriptures which refer to being filled with the Spirit, and in the Greek they are different in construction from the phrase here. It says that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit, but closer examination of the text shows that he was full of the Holy Spirit. And it says that Elisabeth was full of the Holy Spirit; and Zacharias was full of the Holy Spirit; Jesus, going into the wilderness was full of the Holy Spirit; Stephen was a man full of the Holy Spirit; and those seven chosen to serve, of whom Stephen was one, were men full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. Here, in **Ephesians 5**, the construction is different. It does not say, "Be full of the Holy Spirit"; it says, "Be filled by the Holy Spirit." This is something different from the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but is a consequence of it.

What Paul also sets before us is a contrast between the old life and the new life. Now we need to go back to the beginning of the verse, for there he says: **"Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."** Do not be soaked with wine, saturated with wine, wherein is excess. This word excess is made up of the Greek word for 'saved' with a prefix which has the effect of cancelling out the word. In other words, there is no salvation in being filled with wine. But be filled with the Spirit! Do not be filled with the wine of the old life. There is similarity here: when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, some said that they were filled with new wine. Peter pointed out that they were not drunk since it was only nine o'clock in the morning. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, some people, albeit mockingly, said they were drunk. Beware of judging only by outward appearance. A lot of people bring into meetings some of the wine of the old life,

to try to stimulate a bit of life, to 'pep' the services up a bit. That is not what we want. Do not be drunk with wine wherein is no salvation, but be filled by the Spirit.

People in the world think that wine is the secret to success in social gatherings. When the wine flows, the party swings. The problem is that alcohol is a depressant drug, and the next morning people soon find how greatly they have been deceived by it by the size of their hangover. But Paul says, **"Let the Holy Spirit fill you."** When He fills you, He does not switch you off, but He lifts you up. A people full of the Holy Spirit and being filled by the Spirit will be a lively, rejoicing people. Do not think that the good times that this world has to offer are going to satisfy. In the end they will leave you with a giant hangover; that aching void which only God can fill. Leave the old wine behind. It brings confusion and gets rid of control, but when you have the Holy Spirit filling you, then there is perfect order and perfect control. These practical issues, which we shall be studying, will present no problem; your life will be perfectly ordered as you let the Holy Spirit fill you with good things. Wine results in wastefulness and destruction; but with the Holy Spirit there is productivity. He is life-giving, bringing salvation. Wine exhausts you and wears you out. It takes away your energy; but the Holy Spirit energises and empowers. You cannot get exhausted in the work of the Holy Spirit because He energises. In fact, in **Ephesians 3 v 16**, it says: **"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."** There is strength and power for you. Wine impoverishes but the Holy Spirit enriches. The old life produces the works of the flesh; the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. Wine makes people sad - yes, merry for a while, but in excess it brings sadness - but the Holy Spirit brings blessedness. We read about the blessedness of the people who are God's people, filled with the Holy Spirit, right through the Scriptures. That well-known scripture in the Song of Solomon is so encouraging: **"we will be glad and rejoice in Thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine."** So the Spirit fills. Be filled by the Spirit! Let us stop looking to the world for things to fill our lives with, those bits of entertainment to fill up the gaps. Let us look to the Holy Spirit to fill our lives. Now the Holy Spirit wants to fill you with more of God's treasures. And the Bible shows us that His riches are inexhaustible. In other words, there is a never-ending supply to be poured into your life. The more He pours in, the more there is to be received. He wants to fill you with Life in every aspect of your life.

He is called, in **John chapter 14**, the Spirit of Truth, but the world will not receive that truth. It is for you, Spirit-filled believer. The Holy Spirit wants to reveal truth to you. In **John 16** and from verse 13, Jesus revealed that the Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth. Are you concerned about truth? Let the Holy Spirit fill you. He will teach you the words of Jesus (**John 14 vv 25/26**). In fact, a passage in **Colossians 3 v 16** says, **"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."** **Ephesians** tells us to be filled by the Spirit; in **Colossians** we are instructed to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom. You will have noticed that the verse we have just read is, in other respects, parallel to that of **Ephesians 5**. When you are filled by the Holy Spirit, that is what happens. The word of Christ dwells in you richly in all wisdom. He teaches you the words of Jesus.

In **1 John chapter 2** we have that wonderful passage about that anointing we have received, which abides. **1 John 2 v 20: "But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things."** What me? Yes, you know all things. It is rather like my computer which knows all things that are on the network. The information is not in the computer, but on the network. It has access to all the information, not all at once but as and when needed. God knows all things and through the Holy Spirit we have access to His knowledge and can say that we know all things. Paul told the **Corinthians**, **"I have the mind of Christ."** Amazing truth. And so John continues:

"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him." (vv 26/27)

There is a teaching by the Holy Spirit as we let the Holy Spirit fill us. He fills us with truth; He fills us with Jesus' words. In **John 15 vv 26/27**, Jesus said, **"He will speak of Me."**

Then **Romans 5 v 5** says that the love God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us. The love of God - the Holy Spirit is filling us with all these things. We have read from **Ephesians 3** about being strengthened with might in the inner man. He fills with strength; He energises. **Romans 14 v 17** emphasises that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. He fills us with righteousness; He fills us with peace; He fills us with joy. It is all from the Holy Spirit. Look at **Romans 15 v 13**: ***"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."***

He gives us assurance. Did you know that? As you allow the Holy Spirit to fill your life, He will fill you with assurance. Doubts will evaporate:

"Hereby we know that He abides in us by the Spirit which He has given us." (1 John 3 v 24)

"Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."

(1 John 4 v 13)

"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8 v 16)

And the Holy Spirit is pouring all this in, all the time - truth, the words of Jesus, Jesus, the love of God, strength, righteousness, peace, joy, assurance.

Fruit of the Spirit

Then we find that it affects our lives. Here are the practical issues flowing out of it. As we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with these things, we discover there is harmony. You are encouraged to be filled by the Spirit, speaking to yourselves, that is speaking to one another, in the assembly, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. There is a harmony - singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord - in the assembly. There is a harmony in your own life and in your family life, because it goes on to speak about wives and husbands and parents and children; it extends to work-life, to masters and servants.

The world cannot attain to this or know this but we can, because it is the work of the Holy Spirit. If you go back from that verse, you will find Paul talking about all the things that we should be doing and all the things we should be abstaining from and ejecting from our lives. Our cry of despair may be that we cannot get all of these things out of our lives. It is impossible to the world but it is not impossible to us. Read from **Ephesians 4 v 17 to 5 v 13** and you will find all those things. The legalistic mind will say, "Well, I try to do this and I try not to do that," and will get bound up in knots but as you let the Holy Spirit fill you, you will find a glorious victory. You will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but you will go on in His glorious power. There will be a holiness of life. You see the natural man cannot receive the things of God; the natural man cannot walk in the things of God. They are foolishness to him. In **Ephesians 2 vv 2/3**, it says:

"In time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our way of life in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."

Now God has dealt with all that and there is a glorious victory and a holiness of life. We do not take these things from the Scriptures and start telling all and sundry that they must live by these rules. You cannot start preaching these things to the world, for you will not change the world like that. I am not too happy about this idea of signing petitions and sending them to the government. You cannot change the world like that. We are called in this world not to start telling the world or the government to clean up their act, and to clean up the cinemas and television and so on. That is not our primary role. If we want to see people's lives changed, they are to be saved. That is the answer we have got. Jesus said that if you clean up a man's life and cast out the demon from his life, the demon will go out through all the dry places of the earth, eventually coming back to that man's life bringing with him seven other demons that are far worse. If you get someone to clean up their act and their life and to start living more morally, without the power of God, they will end up far worse. Jesus said it. What we have is a gospel which has been committed to us. We are ambassadors saying to a dying world, "Be reconciled to God! Be saved!" The message that we have is one of salvation. When people are saved then the Lord will deal with their lives

and He will get things sorted out that are not right. That is what we are looking at here: be filled with the Spirit!

Walk in the Spirit

The Bible warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit. If He is leading you in a particular way, respond to that leading. In **Galatians** it tells us that we live in the Spirit and it tells us to walk in the Spirit. Now we live in the Spirit because we are born of the Spirit and are baptised in the Holy Spirit. But if we are going to be filled by the Holy Spirit, we have got to walk in the Spirit, following Him, being led by Him. That's what **Galatians 4** teaches. If you live in the Spirit, you have also got to walk in the Spirit. You may have thought about that verse, "What's the difference?" Well, if you have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, you live in the Spirit because you are full of the Holy Spirit. However, you can still ignore the leading of the Holy Spirit, and grieve the Holy Spirit. Walk in the Spirit; follow His leading; be filled by the Spirit and you will find your life blossoming in all these wonderful practical areas. Read **Romans chapter 8 vv 1-14**: it is all about the Spirit-led life. The carnal mind is at enmity with God, but the Spirit-filled life is victorious. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. In **Thessalonians** it speaks about being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This is all the work of the Holy Spirit. Be filled by the Holy Spirit. You realise, because it has been stressed in this fellowship before, that that command, in Greek, means **"Go on being filled with the Holy Spirit."** It is a continuous present tense. You were baptised with the Holy Spirit and you received that glorious fullness of the Holy Spirit. Now, go on, day by day, moment by moment, letting the Holy Spirit fill you with all the fullness of God. That is the limit, and it is no limit, is it?

"And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3 v 19.

That last phrase signifies "unto all the fullness of God." Marvellous! Boundless! Worship in the Spirit! Pray in the Spirit! Read the Scriptures; read them attentively; listen. You know, I have found a number of things in the Bible about the Holy Spirit speaking. The Holy Spirit speaks: **Acts 2 v 4; 8 v 29; 10 v 19; 16 v 7** - scripture after scripture where the Holy Spirit spoke to the disciples. The Holy Spirit speaks today, but you must listen. If you read the Word of God, read it attentively, listening. Let the Lord speak to you through the Word. These are practical issues. In your private prayer life, listen to the voice of the Lord. As you receive ministry in the church, listen to what the Lord says. The Lord will prompt you by His Holy Spirit. He will be filling you with good things. When you are confronted by situations, listen. You will hear the Lord speaking to you. We were at the market one Saturday and I saw an acquaintance sitting on the bench opposite. I gave him a wave, not really wanting to go over to him. I did not want to get involved in conversation. He waved back and immediately I felt the Lord urging, "Speak to him." I did not want to, but because you come to know the voice of the Lord, you know you must do what He says. Jesus said that His sheep would know His voice. So I went over and sat down next to him and began to talk to him. Now I do not know what the outcome of that situation will be, but the word has again been sown. Some time ago, the Lord spoke to us here, in this church, in an open meeting, that we would be ministering to gypsies before there were any in the area. Eventually a large group arrived and when we got the witness that these were the ones, we went and sang and spoke to them. And what did we discover? They had already been discussing, the previous night, where the Bible came from and how it was written. Again the seed was sown. The Lord speaks; we must listen.

Rejoice together in the fellowship the Lord has brought you into. Sometimes, maybe, we allow ourselves to be drunk with the wine of this world, with activities and so on, and then we do not get filled. The Holy Spirit cannot then move and operate in our lives. The Lord says to us, ***"Be still: be still and know that I am God."*** We can spend so much time complaining to the Lord that He does not seem to be doing anything in our lives; but He urges us to be still and know that He is God. If we listen, we will hear the voice of the Lord. Without Him we can do nothing. So if you want the solution to all these practical issues and problems of the Christian life, let the Holy Spirit fill you. If you are not full of the Holy Spirit, seek that blessing. It is yours; it is a gift from God. Be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Know that fullness within. Get thrilled with Jesus; the Holy Spirit will thrill you with Jesus. Then go on letting the Holy Spirit

fill you with Jesus and all the wonderful treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in Him. Keep on being filled by the Holy Spirit!

And now a benediction:

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15 v 13

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