

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

Ephesians 5:18

"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."

Now as we go down to Verse (25) to Chapter 6:1 - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."

Verse 3 - Now here is an unmistakable way John Calvin said, that if the sin of the Old Testament Times was to reject God, the Father, and the sin of the New Testament times - the rejection of God, the Son, then the sin of our age is the rejection of God, the Holy Spirit.

By in large this has been true. However, today, we have what is called the charismatic movement which has spread across this country and Europe, and in parts of England. Creating confusion in some instances and great blessings in others. Now I have read somewhat behind this movement and have listened to some scholars talk about it who have dealt with hundreds of these people. It has been in the Episcopal Church, the Methodist, the Baptists, and the Presbyterian.

Now there are many aspects of the movement, which we have watched. Now there is one aspect which may be devised of Satan. There are some churches that have been divided over this issue.

Another aspect of speaking in tongues is the demand that unless you produce the same kind of evidence that someone else has produced, you know nothing about the Holy Spirit. And this attitude has hurt and has brought grief to many lives.

On the other hand, there have been other extremes. There have been young people who have been caught up in this movement. And they have taken it somewhat

as an experiment. There are those who look upon it and believe that if they repeat certain things, and they go on repeating this, now then - repeat this after me. Of course they need the right condition and the right atmosphere and the right reputation and they continue this and count this by saying I have spoken in tongues. And yet this, many times, they wake up to the fact that it is very unreal.

Now there may be marks in some of these movements that conform to the Scriptures and that may glorify our Lord. Now any movement of the so-called Holy Spirit which does not make much of the deity of the Saviour, the blood of the cross, the wonderful resurrection, his ascension, and his glory is to be guarded against.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is solely to glorify Christ. And it is based on the Lordship of Christ. And it is based on the Word of God and the Spirit of God. When Jesus Christ is Lord, and the word of God dwells in me richly, and the Spirit of God fills me -- then this is the apex in the kind of Spiritual experience that God expects me to know normally.

The wonderful thing about it is this - as the Lordship of Christ extends in our life, it opens up new horizons in my personality, the Word of God goes deeper because there is greater capacity. And as the capacity is deepened, so the Spirit fills and my life becomes full of the Spirit and Jesus is sweeter than the day before. But now you put this out of the teaching, and you have lost the meaning and you have confused the whole issue. When the emphasis is given to the Holy Spirit without the word of God, it becomes ~~phantasm~~ When emphasis is given to the Word of God without the Spirit of God, it is legalism. And when the Lordship of Christ isn't the basis of it, nor the Word of God in it, then it is in error.

Now there is a movement in which people would say, is it possible for anyone to speak in tongues. Yes, it is interesting however to study the lives of great men, such as John Wesley, Whitfield, Moody, Finney, Carey, -- they did not speak in tongues. Or in the modern day, there is Billy Graham. However, I am not suggesting that a man cannot be given the gift of speaking in tongues. And when I talk about speaking in tongues,

I am not talking about now the experience on the day of (Pentecost). For I don't know that there is any evidence that Pentecost has ever been repeated. When this took place, they were heard in their native language, or native tongues. And there was no interpreter there, as I understand it. Having studied it very thoroughly and prayerfully, the gift of speaking in tongues can be used in the church -- but more often it is for a devotional life. Just as some prayers are uttered in gatherings or groanings, that cannot be expressed, because of the deep concern. At the other end of the line, there may be moments of joy and praise and worship in your devotional life in which you have prayed, and experienced as refreshing.

But what happens when this breaks through in the church. Paul tells us plainly in two chapters - to show how the gift of the tongue is superseded gift. There is something more important - it is prophesy. But speaking in tongues is also a secondary gift. It comes at the end of the list. It is a gift that adds more prominence in the more remote time of the church. (Corinth) was a church in which there was immorality, such was not named among the Gentiles. There was division. There was unspirituality. There was riotous behaviour at the Lord's table and all manner of things. The Corinthian Church was immature. And there is where the gift was most prominent. But supremely speaking in tongues is a safe-guarding gift. (It) is exercised in a local church. The Apostle Paul speaks here about it when he says is there an interpreter present - if I speak in tongues then I must do it with intelligence and the knowledge that there is an interpreter who can make what I say profitable and edified to the gathered church. And the next thing about it is, it must be under control. It must be under control of discerning believers. This is (not) an exercise to be carried on without restraint but it was unruly or unwholesome in the manner of speaking, then such conduct should be brought under discipline. So we must note that to exercise these gifts then, it must be under His discipline.

As far as the Word of God is concerned, I am persuaded that this gift of tongues may not even be for the women in the church. For (Paul), on one occasion said, let the women keep silent. Obviously they are not to keep silent in seeing or in praying, for

he has already spoken concerning the testimony and the singing. I Cor. 14:33, 35.

The thing which concerns us or grieves us is that often people are confused about this without a study of the Scriptures. We have been baptized into the one body by the Spirit. Now only some speak in tongues and only some prophesy. How can I say that everybody must speak in tongues.

Now the main burden of this message is -- that I would speak to this congregation today, that many of you are being robbed of the fullness of the Holy Spirit which is your heritage in Jesus Christ. For while the gift is once and for all, the filling is for everyday.

We must understand the different kinds of life. Vegetation - vegetable. Animal and rational. And there is another - spiritual life which rises far above. Now the rational man has a film before his eyes. He views things through the medium of sense and not of faith. He distorts them. They are altogether hidden from him. But in the spiritual man he has eye sauve which has cleared away the film and has enabled him to discern things as they really are. Faith also assists him, by bringing remote objects to his mind .

This is the work of the Holy Spirit as a teacher. That is why many times young converts need this feeling and knowledge to discover the riches as he is able to guide them in the doctrine. The nature and the difficulty of the Christian life is discovered in the deceitfulness of sin. And the Holy Spirit of God operates in a man -- the anointing of the spirit's for two things.

First to understand the word of God. If the Bible doesn't flash with meaning as you study its pages, you might ask yourself if you have ever claimed the anointing of the Spirit. John 14:26. The Holy Ghost will teach you all things. He will open these things up to you, and give you understanding of the word of God. And it will become a new thing to you. I am going so far as to say, the anointing comes only upon a spirit-filled man.

Our Blessed Saviour was filled with the Holy Spirit, from his Mother's womb. But he wasn't anointed until he ~~stood~~ stood on the banks of Jordan to start his ministry. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is something over and above the filling. The filling of the Holy Spirit is for normal life. And the anointing of the Holy Spirit is for the spiritual life of service unto God. This gives you the ability to understand the word of God. It gives you the authority to communicate the word of God. Now this is what we need in our Sunday School teachers and in our Pulpits today. A fullness of the Spirit - with the mighty anointing of the Spirit, will the man have the ability to communicate the word of God.

Now the importance of the Spirit-Filled life. Did you know that you are living in sin if you don't know the conscious fullness of the Holy Spirit every moment of your life. That goes for every Christian here. Verse 18 - be filled with the Spirit. It is a command to be obeyed. I am persuaded that as in the studying of the Bible, that the only ministry that will survive the judgment of Christ is the ministry upon which the Holy Spirit breathes in power. Anything I do as a Christian preacher that isn't done in the fullness of the Holy Spirit will wither up on the vine and die.

On the cathedral in Milan, Italy - 3 significant inscriptions are over the doorway. Over the right hand side is a wreath of flowers with the Proverb - all that pleases is but for a moment. Over the left hand entrance - a cross and a crown under which words - all that troubles is but for a moment. But over the central door is a simpler sentence - nothing is importance save that which is eternal. Now I don't believe we touch anything for eternity, unless we do it in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Now only does the Word of God command it, but the work of God, demands this. Read through the book of Acts and you will notice how many times the fullness of the Holy Spirit is mentioned. The fullness of the spirit seems to include at times the anointing of the Spirit as well. Think of Chapter 4 - Peter gets up to Preach. Here is a man who cringed at the giggle of a little girl. When Jesus needed his support, he was ashamed. But repentance came, he know is about to strengthen his Brethren. And on the

Penecost the Holy Spirit comes upon him, in power, and filled with the Holy Spirit, he stands up to speak with great boldness. Even the first Deacon who could face the religious leaders of the day with the knowledge of the Scripture needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And just as they were throwing stones at him - putting him to death - Acts 7:55-60 says, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly to the Heavens. And saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of the Father. And he fell asleep.

Peter, who was full of the Holy Ghost, preached it. And Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, suffers. We read regarding Barnabas, being full of the Holy Ghost, and faith, exorted them all. Acts 11:23, 24. Here is a man who was full of the Spirit.

As you turn the pages, you come to the amazing story of Saul - called Paul. On a missionary journey to Cyprus where the word of God was hindered by Elymas. The Bible says that he being filled with the Holy Spirit set his eyes on Elymas and said, Oh full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness - wilt thou not cease to pervert the right way for the Lord. Acts 13:9, 10. And God struck the man with blindness.

Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost to preach. Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost to suffer. And Barnabas was filled with the Holy Ghost to exort. And Paul filled with the Holy Ghost to rebuke. The work of God demands this. And it is a pity when the Preacher, regardless of his place in the ministry, who is not filled with the Holy Spirit - does not see the importance of this.

The next thing is the implications of the Spirit-Filled life. I think there are two or three things to be said about this.

1 - First of all, there must be an abandonment to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Verse 18 - be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. Now here is an illustration that Paul draws a comparison - which should be well understood.

He said, just as a drunkard abandons himself to liquor, which affects his mind, body, his speech and his behaviour - so the believer must abandon himself to the Holy Spirit. Instead of devil intoxication there must be divine intoxication. And we need to press home that the Holy Spirit now is not a liquid or influence, but a person. God's Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit comes in - my life, at the time I was regenerated, that is when he does come in. He comes in totally. He does not come in on the installment plan. But it is possible for the Spirit of God to be present in our life, without being president and head of my life. He may be in my life and be dormant. It is possible to know the gift of the spirit without the fullness of the Spirit.

And unless the Holy Spirit is filling your life - one or two things are happening. He is being grieved or he is being quenched. Grieved that sin in the life and quenched that is self in the life. Now we need to get these things correct. For here is the negative, be not drunk. There was common drunkardness in that time. And the idea is to be not like the Prodigal of that day but to take a positive attitude in this. Because in those days the opportunity for strong drink was tremendous. They were evil days. And they were characterized with an abundance of evil and strong drink was one of the main things. Because it was a city of luxury - and we read that Alexander the Great died a sacrifice to one of the gods, offered a prize to one who would drink the most wine. And 30 of the rivals died in the act of competition. Plato boasted of the immense quantity of liquors which they would swill uninjured. One man could swallow one gallon at a time.

Now the positive side is be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the contrast. Not only were they to possess the Spirit but they were to be filled like a vessel - overflowing with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:15, 16. Filled with the Spirit, they were to feel no appetite for the things of the world. And they were to speak to one another in songs and spiritual songs. Here was a positive thing, that was to take place and this should be a part of the music in the choir. And anyone singing music should not

do so except in the Spirit and Spirit-controlled. In concert with the Spiritual.

2 - Now the second condition in an abiding and indwelling spirit - Verse 18. It presents and gives the thought of continuance. That is be filled with the fullness habitual - which is normal, in the spirit. Jesus taught this in John 15 - if you abide in me and my works in you - ye shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. There is only one way to abide and that is moment by moment in the Holy Spirit. And that we allow the word of God to control our lives as the sap of the vine controls the abiding branch.

When I cease to obey what God has revealed to me and his word, fellowship is broken. And I must seek restoration at once, by claiming the great cleansing promise. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I John 1:9. Trust and obey, there is no other way to be happy in Jesus.

I wonder how many of us are going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ and are going to put 6, 7, 20, 40 years - that we have lived in disobedience. We may have shouted our heads off about being filled with the Holy Spirit but there is nothing in the Scripture that indicates that one can be filled with the Holy Spirit while living in disobedience. God gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey him. Acts 5:32.

*Some Day Jesus in old hat - out of date - Ans. for that!*

But that is not all. There must be an appropriation of the indwelling spirit as it is translated. Drink deeply of God's Spirit. Verse 18. That is what Jesus taught in John 7. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living waters. Now, I want to tell you, I long for my life to be a river of living water like that. And wherever I go, the river of love, the river of power, the river of prayer just flows from my life. Why? Because I am deeply thinking of the Holy Spirit, as the need comes along.

There are these conditions then. The abandonment, the abiding, and the appropriation. In the last place, the indication of the spirit-filled life.

115



It must be full of obedience and we can expect something that will indicate this.

In the verse which follows the text, there are five indications that would characterize the spirit-filled believer.

1 - <sup>v. 19</sup> First, the speaking. Speaking in the expression of God-given truth. We were talking about tongues. There is something more important that. It is speaking the truth. One to another. Wherever we read of spirit-filled men and women, it is always associated with speaking. <sup>Woman at Well</sup> ~~The woman could not keep quiet~~ after she had been filled with the Holy Ghost. Her message was come, see a man, the Christ. John 4:29.

On the day of Pentecost, the day of filling of the Holy Spirit - it was accompanied by speaking. Acts 2:4. If you want to know the remedy for spiritual lock-jaw, a certain cure is to be spirit-filled.

2 - <sup>v. 19</sup> Second, singing - the expression of God-given joy. We have lost our joy to the Christian Church. Joy is one of the outstanding marks of revival. That is why some of the great hymns of the faith have been produced in days when men were filled with the Holy Spirit. Although in prison, danger, or death - like Paul and Silas, they sang praises. Acts 16:25. Why do they sing? Because they are filled with the Holy Ghost.

3 - <sup>v. 20</sup> Those that are filled with the spirit will also be revealed in sacrificing. The expression of God-given things. The writer of Hebrews said, offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually - that is the fruit of our lips. 13:15.

Have you ever noticed the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was born of the Spirit, he did work in the Spirit, and he had a Spirit-Filled life.

4 - <sup>v. 21-22</sup> The Fourth indication is in (submission or submitting). This is the expression of God-given love. And this submission of love is all the relation of life. It is only this truth, that you have a living experience. What a difference it would make between some husbands and wives, between some children and parents, between some masters and servants. There would be such problems as frustrated lives. Broken homes, disappointed business careers. The same would be true of you and your church membership. What a

challenge to be spirit filled.

5 - 6:13 -

Finally, there must be standing for Christ. Having done all - stand. Verse 13.  
 This is speaking of a God-given truth and saying and expression of God-given joy.  
 And sacrifice - an expression of a God-given thanks. Then submission is the expression  
 of God-given love. Standing for Christ is an expression of a God-given victory. Put  
 on the whole armour of God, that you will be able to stand.

Do you know what it is to be filled with the holy spirit. D. L. Moody was a  
 great man who conducted great crusades and received mighty blessings. But something  
 was missing in his life. Some women in the church began to pray for him. And they  
 told him why. It annoyed him. He fought back with resentment but something happened.  
 He suddenly realized that perhaps these women were right. So he decided that he was  
going to pray with them. And a deep sense of need came upon his soul. And you know  
 the story - walking the streets, the Holy Ghost came upon him and the glory of God  
filled his soul. He rushed to a friends house to pray and he cried, o God, stay your  
hand, stay your hand! The Glory of God filled his soul. He went out to preach the  
same sermons and the same illustrations. But now multitudes were won to Jesus Christ.  
 He had a totally transformed life. Now this happened to Finney and it can happen to  
you. Has it happened to you? For this I pray, for this I plead, Thy spirit's fullness  
- flood my soul. Be thou in throned, Lord, within my heart and all my yielded life  
 control.

*Joel 2:28-32 - Promise - Pour out my spirit upon all flesh -  
 Promise extends through our times*