

Now--not Tomorrow

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Spirit in the present tense, regardless of our past experiences or current circumstances.

Scripture: John 1:18, 1 Corinthians 12:3, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Grace Of God", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Roy Hession emphasizes the urgent call to be filled with the Holy Spirit now, rather than postponing this experience until we feel more worthy or improved. He highlights that God's grace is available to all believers, regardless of their past experiences or perceived shortcomings, and that the fullness of the Spirit is essential for a fruitful Christian life. Hession intentionally avoids discussing the gifts of the Spirit, focusing instead on the core message of grace that unites all believers at the foot of the Cross. He encourages a continuous reliance on God's grace, which is accessible to everyone who acknowledges their need. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a present-tense relationship with the Holy Spirit, fostering joy and fruitfulness in the believer's life.

Transcript

'BE filled-Now' is more than the title of this small book. It actually summarises in three words the heart of the message of grace to which these chapters lead. It is not, be filled tomorrow, when we hope we shall have improved, but be filled now in the midst of our failure and current need-as we are, where we are. And after this now, the next now. Such an experience of present tense blessedness for needy people can only be possible as we are given a new sight of the grace of God making every blessing available on street level. It is in this context we are to hear the word, 'be filled with the Spirit'.

The place and function of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer and of the Church as a whole is vastly important. If it is a basic truth of the Christian faith that no man can know God except in the face of Jesus Christ (John 1. 18; 2 Cor. 4. 6), it is also true that no man can see that face and acknowledge Him as Lord except by the revelation of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 3). Moreover, the apostolic injunction, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5. 18) still stands binding on every believer, and he ignores it at the peril of missing the fruitfulness and joy which such fullness brings.

In treating this subject of being filled with the Holy Spirit, I have avoided dealing with the matter of the gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, healing and the like (1 Cor. 12. 8-10). This may seem strange in view of the current widespread interest among Christians in this subject, and the fact that an increasing

number in many denominations across the world now are testifying to receiving an experience of the Holy Spirit to the accompaniment of such manifestations and gifts. Any new writing on the subject of the Holy Spirit might be bound to take cognisance of this fact and have much to say about it. To omit this side may seem to make such a writing irrelevant to the current movements in the Church; it even might make some feel frustrated and impatient, for this seems to be what so many want to hear about. I have however omitted doing so quite purposely, and that for two reasons.

First, the experience of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit tends to divide Christians into two groups, (dare we say it?) the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Satan can tempt us either to despise one another or to disagree with one another. The message of the grace of God in the present tense, however, is for both. The one who has had experience of the gifts of the Spirit may yet need to learn how to go on being filled with the Spirit, when sin and falling short have brought dryness. In such times the memory of great experiences in the past will do nothing to help him-rather it may depress him. He needs to see the grace of God perfectly adapted to his need, and that continuously, and come again as a sinner. On the other hand, the one who cannot claim to have had these experiences need not feel himself deprived on that account. The grace of God is like an ocean of water ever seeking depth, that is need, that it might fill it. The true meaning of grace is the undeserved love of God. The emphasis must always be on the fact that it is undeserved, if grace is to be grace. That being so, the only qualification to make us fit candidates for that grace is, not the possessing of this or that gift, but need fully and frankly confessed. As we have said, grace makes the fullness of the Spirit available for both groups on street level, at the foot of the Cross.

The other reason is that quite obviously from Paul's writing in his first epistle to the Corinthians, speaking in tongues and the other gifts, though recognised and given their place, are incidental, not the heart of the Spirit-filled life. My purpose has been to leave aside for the time being that which is incidental, and to share only what I see to be inward and essential. And here I write only as a learner and a fellow-discoverer of the grace of God and the fullness of the Spirit.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/roy-hession/nownot-tomorrow/>

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