

Filled With the Spirit

by William Fitch

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a continuous experience that requires moment-by-moment faith and a moment-by-moment Savior, and is characterized by purity of heart, hunger and thirst after righteousness, and yearning for God.

Duration: 28:07

Scripture: Ephesians 5:3

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of God's grace and mercy. He emphasizes that God chooses to be gracious and show mercy to whomever He desires. The preacher describes a powerful encounter with God where His love and forgiveness are experienced. He also shares a story from a Rwanda pastor who had a dream about Christ filling cups on a table, symbolizing the filling of believers with the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes with a reminder to separate oneself from immoral and sinful behaviors in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

This tape is all about being filled with the Holy Spirit. We read in Acts chapter 2, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

And it was from this experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, that they broke out unto the streets of Jerusalem, and the amazing happenings of the day of Pentecost took place. In the days of the early church, when the early fathers were writing their statements of faith, they boldly included the strongest affirmation of the deity and power of the Holy Spirit. Without hesitation, without compromise, without doubt, they attested that the Holy Spirit, given by the Father and the Son to the church on the day of Pentecost, was very God of very God.

Here is the Nicene Creed, And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeded from the Father and from the Son, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified. Even

more emphatic is the Athanasian Creed, where the statement concerning the Holy Spirit is made with a sweep and comprehensiveness, a definition and precision incomparable in any literature. There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. And in this Trinity none is of four or after other, none is greater or less than another, but the whole three persons are co-eternal together and co-equal, so that in all things as is aforesaid, the unity in Trinity, and Trinity in unity, is to be worshipped. The three persons of the Godhead work together.

They are one in substance, they are one in operation. God the Father is never present in any one place without the Son and the Holy Spirit, and yet in office they are distinguishable. The Father is the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

The Son is the revealer of the Father and the Redeemer of men. The Spirit is the agent of the Godhead and the indweller of the life of the child of God, his guide into all truth, the glorifier of the Saviour. It is axiomatic for us to say that all things come from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

Now in the perfect plan of God, the Holy Spirit was not fully known until after the ascension of Christ to the right hand of God the Father. He had told his disciples it was expedient for him to go away. If he did not depart, the Comforter would not be able to come.

But if I depart, I will send him unto you, John 16.7. When he ascended on high, he prayed the Father for the gift of the Spirit, and the Father, whose delight it is to glorify the Son, granted his request. All the excitement of this is focused in Paul's glowing words to the Ephesians in chapter 4, verses 8 to 13, how the glorified Christ, having ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, his Holy Spirit, and with him all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This was Pentecost.

On that unforgettable day, the coming of the Holy Spirit signified the absoluteness of the victory of Christ over death, Satan, and evil of every dimension. And this was sealed to those who belonged to Christ by their being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now Paul prayed that the church might know the fullness of God.

He said, For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, to the end, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Filled with all the fullness of God. Now that's what being filled with the Holy Spirit means.

It means being filled with all the fullness of God. This means that if the Holy Spirit is in filling my life, then if I do sin, I sin in the presence of the Holy Spirit. To sin, of course, would mean that I wasn't filled with the Holy Spirit.

For the Holy Spirit makes us free from the law of sin and death. It's when we're faithless and turned from the indwelling and infilling Spirit of God, that we are prone to temptation and liable to fall into sin. But the infilling of the Holy Spirit is given to us in order that we might have the victory over sin.

And this is what John means when he speaks about the victorious life. He who abides in him does not keep on sinning. To abide in Christ is to abide in the power of his Holy Spirit.

We are filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is impossible for us to continue in sin. But let me remind you that if you take your eyes for one moment away from the Lord, who is the Lord of your life, you may find yourself plummeting down again into sin and falling before all manner of temptations.

We must continually be being filled with the Holy Spirit. John adds in the same chapter, 1 John 3:9, Whatsoever is born of God sinneth not. That means he doesn't make it his habit to continue in sin.

If we are habitually drawn into sin, then plainly we are evidencing that the Spirit of holiness isn't dwelling within us. But to be filled with the Spirit demands that we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. And surely this is why, after the passage we've just quoted from Ephesians 3, that Paul breaks out into doxology, into the praise of the one who is able to do far more than we can ask or think.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Now this is the spontaneous song of them who are filled with the Spirit, of them who are filled with all the fullness of God. Now one very important thing that we must note is that this is a continuous experience.

By that I don't mean it's an experience that we arrive at and cannot fall back from. By a continuous experience I mean it is an experience that we are to be experiencing continuously. Some years ago I noted some words of Dr. Charles Inwood at the Keswick Convention in England.

I can't recall fully the message that he gave, nor can I find the message in any of the published annual reports. But my notes carry this unique statement from him and do not have burned their way right into my heart and mind. Speaking of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Spirit, he says, There is no such thing as a once-for-all fullness.

It is a continuous appropriation of a continuous supply from the Lord Christ Himself. It is a moment-by-moment faith in a moment-by-moment Savior, for a moment-by-moment cleansing and a moment-by-moment filling. As I trust Him, He fills me.

The moment I begin to believe, that moment I begin to receive. And as long as I keep believing, praise the Lord, so long I keep receiving. Well now that's an all-important fact.

There is no such thing as a permanent filling. There is no such thing as a once-for-all filling. The reverse is the truth.

I come in my emptiness to the Lord today with a prayer that I may be filled. And He answers that prayer. He fills me.

As the day goes on, I continue making the same prayer. And as the days pass by, another miracle happens. I find that I have an increased capacity for holiness, for fullness, for all God's fullness.

It's in this way that we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This infilling of the Spirit is always associated with a deep longing for it. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled.

Matthew 5 and 6. Likewise with thirst, he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst again. John 4, 14. So did our Lord speak to the woman of Samaria by Jacob's well.

And He went on. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Later on He emphasized the same truth.

He that believeth on me, as the scriptures say, out of him there shall flow rivers of living water. John 7, 37. And John adds this comment.

This he spoke concerning the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7, 39.

We know from the subsequent history of our Lord's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, that the Holy Spirit was given when Christ was glorified. When Christ took His place at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, He prayed the Father that He would pour forth the Holy Spirit upon the church. And on the day of Pentecost it happened.

And it is also true in daily experience. If Jesus isn't glorified in my life, the Spirit will not be able to fill me. It is when we acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all, and work to that role, that the Holy Spirit can fill and possess me to the uttermost.

Blessed indeed are they that know this truth. They glorify Christ continually. They are filled with the Spirit.

And from the Old Testament there comes the word, I will pour water on him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. Isaiah 44, 3. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is an accompaniment of such thirst. I read recently in Jonathan Goforth's journal, I began to experience a growing dissatisfaction with the results of my work.

Restless, discontented, I was led to a more intensive study of the Scriptures. Every passage that had any bearing on the price of, or the road to, accession of power became life and breath to me. If Charles Finney is right, I vowed to myself, then I'm going to find out what these spiritual laws of renewal and revival are, and I will obey them, no matter the cost.

You know, that's true thirst. God satisfied Goforth. Revival fires broke out as he blazed a trail for God in the Orient.

And these revival fires were not of his making. They were of God's creation. They were the evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, of one man's life absolutely dedicated to God.

And for this thirst we should pray. The Achilles heel of our spiritual life is lack of desire. We have not, because we desire not.

If we are going to be filled, we must of course be emptied, first of all. It may seem a simple truism that God can only fill what has first been emptied, and yet we fail so often here. We ask for fullness.

We come to God, and we ask him to fill us with himself, but we're already full. We're full of our own selves. We're full of self, which means that we're full of sin, and God cannot pour his Spirit into that which is unclean.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of your redemption. Ephesians 4.30. That's Paul's counsel to believers who wish to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and around that verse he has grouped a series of things from which the believer will separate himself. Listen.

Neither the immoral, nor the dirty-minded, nor the covetous has any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Steer clear of the activities of darkness. Let your life show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are.

You know the sort of things I mean. To detail them is really too shameful. That's how Phillips paraphrases that passage from Ephesians.

From all such things we must be delivered. We must empty ourselves of all double-mindedness, greed, love of money, envy, anger, ease, uncleanness. It is the emptied vessel, purified by the blood of our dear Redeemer, which the Holy Spirit will alone fill.

Out of the heart of the Rwanda revival, this story comes. Rwanda is an area in the eastern parts of Africa, and there's been an amazing revival there, going on for many years, and still going on. Well, one Rwanda pastor, with whom the Holy Spirit had been striving for many months over certain things in his life which he knew were not pleasing his Lord, he dreamed a dream.

And in his dream he saw a long, narrow room in which was a table prepared for a meal, with dishes for food and cups from which to drink. The table was covered with a spotless cloth of white. Suddenly into the room Christ came.

He carried in his hand a chalice with which he approached the table and began to pour into the cups as though in preparation for guests who would soon appear. But there were some cups bypassed, and into them he poured nothing. Then, having gone round all the table, he vanished as quickly as he had come.

From his watch-stance the Rwanda pastor rose hurriedly, for he wondered why it was that Christ had not filled all the cups. He crept to the table, and when he reached it and looked within the cups that were still empty, he saw they were altogether unclean. Yes, indeed, they were unclean.

And into a heart that is harboring evil thoughts and unclean imaginations, Christ will never pour his Spirit. If we would know the fullness of God and be filled with the immeasurable fullness of his Spirit, then we must empty ourselves of everything that grieves our Lord. When that happens, you and I may know the wonder of the Spirit without measure.

In John 3, 34 we read, He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure. In the authorized version the words unto him are added, but they are not in the original text. Doubtless it is true that our Lord exemplifies preeminently the life filled with the Spirit, the life in which the Spirit is found without measure.

But this is also true in the age of the Holy Spirit of every believer. Without measure he is given to us. We may have all of the Holy Spirit we desire to have if we are prepared to meet God's conditions, purity of heart, hunger and thirst after righteousness, yearning for God.

Where you find these things, you will find the Holy Spirit being given without measure. And all this is pure grace. It's never merit.

We don't qualify for it by some unusual excellence of gift or ability. No, we receive this as we manifest a broken and contrite heart which the Lord never despises. God always fills those lives with his Spirit who eagerly seek for this.

And when he does so, he gifts us also with the gifts and powers of the Spirit so that we can go forth and tell others about the wonderful salvation we have found in Christ. Witnesses are never lacking when the Holy Spirit is given within his church without measure. Some wonderful words of John Wesley may fittingly be quoted here.

He's been speaking about the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer and is proceeding to show the effects of this Spirit-filled life. I quote from Sermon 9 of his volume, the 44 Sermons. This man is no longer under law, he is under grace.

He has received the Spirit of adoption whereby he now cries, Abba, Father. He has cried unto the Lord in his trouble and God has delivered him from all his distress. His eyes are opened in quite another manner than before, even to see a loving, gracious God.

While he is calling, I beseech thee, show me thy glory, he hears a voice within his inmost soul. I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.

And it is not long before the Lord descends in the cloud and proclaims the name of the Lord. Then he sees, but not with the eyes of flesh and blood, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquities and transgressions and sins. Heavenly healing light now breaks upon his soul.

He looks on him whom he pierced, and God who shineth out of darkness shines within his heart. He sees the light of the glorious love of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He has a divine evidence of things not seen by sense, even of the deep things of God, and overpowered with the sight, his soul cries out, My Lord and my God.

This passage would be worth quoting even if it were for nothing else than to demonstrate how Wesley quoted so copiously from Scripture, and how Scripture was indeed woven into the very texture of his thought and speech. But there's a further reason than that. Here is manifested the life of the Holy Spirit poured forth without measure upon all believers, and in that without measure you and I may share.

And this is a divine commandment to be filled with the Spirit. We must never forget this. We must never forget that when St. Paul speaks about the fullness of the Holy Spirit to the church in Ephesus, he uses the imperative, be filled with the Spirit.

In other words, it's a commandment. It's a duty. The verb is imperative.

We're commanded to be filled. We're expected to have the Holy Spirit in free and uninhibited power within our personalities. We should constantly be allowing him to have his own way, for in no other way will Christlikeness be known in us.

The Christian life is a supernatural life, and can only be lived from supernatural resources. There are no powers latent within ourselves that will help us live the Christian life, no matter what our disposition may be. It's essentially hostile to God.

It is only as we are possessed by, filled with the Holy Spirit, that we are able to obey the divine commandment. Even as an officer in any army will give the order and expect it obeyed, so must we obey the commandment of our Lord, be filled with the Spirit. Should that not be our prayer, let's make it our

prayer.

Heavenly Father, fill our hearts today with your Holy Spirit. Empty us of self, of everything, of sin, of everything that grieves thee, and then fill us with everything of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, that we may truly be filled with all the fullness of God. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

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