

Filled With the Holy Spirit

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn back to the portion of scriptures that we read together in the book of Acts. We read that on the day of Pentecost, that the church had gathered together for prayer, and that they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

In verse 4 of chapter 2, we read, And they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now, to be filled with the Holy Spirit was not something that was new in the church. Many people tend to think that the Holy Spirit wasn't in the Old Testament, that it's a New Testament phenomenon.

But the Holy Spirit came upon believers in the Old Testament just as surely as it came upon them in the New Testament. But they weren't so aware of Him in the Old Testament as they were in the New Testament.

And when we read through the Old Testament, we see that the Holy Spirit sometimes came upon individuals, and sometimes it came upon groups.

[1 : 25] And we read that exactly the same happens in the New Testament. And we read of it happening to some people more than once.

And that helps us to understand this is not referring to being born again of the Holy Spirit, which must take place in the lives of every believer.

Every believer believes as a result of being born again of the Holy Spirit. But this is speaking about being filled continually with the Holy Spirit.

We read in chapter 4, when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and continued to speak the Word of God with boldness.

So it didn't just happen once. It was something that continued to happen. The group that we read of here on the day of Pentecost would have been present there in chapter 4, when the Holy Spirit came upon them again.

[2 : 40] And it shows us that even the apostles needed to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. It was something that was happening again and again and again.

Now, not only was that true of groups of people, it was also true of individuals. For example, when Peter stood before the authorities in chapter 4, we read of him, Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them.

Now, Peter was numbered with this group. He was numbered with the other group that we mentioned. And here he is being filled again as an individual with the Holy Spirit.

And we read the same concerning Paul when he was converted, when Ananias went to him. This is what Ananias said to him.

The Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me to you, so that you might again receive your sight, and that you might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

[3 : 51] And in chapter 13, verse 9, we read, When Paul was opposed by Elemaus, the sorcerer, Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked intently at him and said, So what we learn from these instances, and there are others, is that being filled with the Holy Spirit is something that we are constantly in need of.

And you might think to yourself, Well, that was a special time in the history of the church, and these were special people.

But you would be wrong if you think along these lines. The first thing I want to consider with you is that every Christian is required to be filled with the Holy Spirit continually.

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says in chapter 5, verse 18, Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.

He's talking to every member in the church. He's not talking to the apostles or missionaries or anybody that's called to take leadership roles in the church.

[5 : 16] He's talking to the ordinary members of the Holy Church. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So it wasn't confined to the apostles and to the people of that age. It's something that applies to every Christian. Because in that context that Paul speaks to the Ephesians, he then goes on to speak about the different relationships that they were going to have.

Husbands' relationship with wives, wives with husbands, parents with children, and children to parents, masters to servants, and servants to masters.

So to be filled with the Holy Spirit was not just for Christian work. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is something that we need to live Christian lives.

We are continually in need of being filled with the Holy Spirit so that we might live lives that are worthy of the calling with which God has called us.

[6 : 32] Because the tense in which Paul speaks there is the present tense. In other words, it means you need to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit.

So Paul is not referring to an experience of a moment, something that happens once in a lifetime. He's talking about everyday experience of the Christian.

The Christian should seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit every moment of his life so that he might live a life that will be to God's glory.

He is to be led by the Spirit. He is to crucify the flesh. He's turned away from his old life. He's turned into a new life. And in order to live this new life, he needs the Holy Spirit.

So secondly, we could ask the question, well, if we've already received the Holy Spirit, what exactly does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

[7 : 38] Well, as we've just seen, we're commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And if we're commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit, then the opposite is true.

And that is that we might not be filled. With the Holy Spirit. When we receive the Holy Spirit in the new birth, it's not a part of the Holy Spirit that we receive.

We receive a person. And the Holy Spirit can't be broken up into parts. When this person comes into our hearts, we receive the full person.

It's not a part of the person. And it's a person that's going to live with us forevermore. And we can, however, although we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts, we can know more or less of the ability of the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts.

We need to learn to trust Him. And we need to learn to give Him liberty over every aspect of our lives.

[8 : 56] Because it's as we give Him liberty over every aspect of our lives that we experience more of the potential that the Holy Spirit enables us to achieve.

and we should not try and restrain Him. Because we can restrain Him. We can quench Him and we can grieve Him. Paul warns the Thessalonians, Thessalonians, do not quench the Holy Spirit.

How would they quench the Holy Spirit? Well, they can dampen down the fire and the enthusiasm that the Holy Spirit has for leading us into the paths of righteousness.

And that's us restraining Him. We are not giving Him full access to every aspect of our lives, and we're guilty of quenching Him.

If I can illustrate this, if you were to invite a guest into your home to stay with you for a while, if you want that person to feel at home, you don't confine him to his bedroom.

[10 : 11] You show him where the living room is, you show him where the kitchen is, you show him where the tea and the coffee are, the cereals, and you tell that person, make yourself at home, feel free to go wherever you want.

You give him liberty in the whole house to treat the house as if it's his own. And that's exactly what we need to do with the Holy Spirit.

We cannot restrain Him and seek to confine Him to certain aspects of our lives and refuse to give Him access into other areas of our lives.

If I can use another illustration, which illustrates the state of our hearts, which spiritually is a wilderness.

And you've all probably seen on television these countries that have dry, parched grounds. And if there's a body of water, maybe a lake, or if there's a river of water flowing through that land, they can irrigate the soil.

[11 : 21] They can make channels from that body of water to spread out over the soil to produce fruit or whatever they're seeking to grow.

And in the same way, the Holy Spirit comes in like a body of water. But we need to tap into it to irrigate the wilderness of our hearts so that our hearts will produce fruit that will be to God's glory. We have to give Him access to every area of our lives. There has to be a desire for willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and to guide us.

because that's why God has given His people the Holy Spirit. And there should be no restrictions imposed upon Him by us.

And when we pray, we ought to pray for the help that He is willing and able to give us. He must take control over our hearts and over every aspect of our lives.

[12 : 35] And we need to learn what the activities of the Holy Spirit is and what we're meant to enjoy by receiving the Holy Spirit continually.

And we must allow Him to bring on these activities in our lives. and that brings us to the third thing that we want to consider and ask the question, what are the ministries of the Holy Spirit?

Well, He's given to us to teach us. So we must come with teachable spirits. And if we refuse to read God's Word, we will never be taught.

If we refuse to come to church, we are not going to progress. We are restraining the Holy Spirit from teaching us.

Because He can only teach us according to the truth that He implants in our hearts. But if we never come under that truth, we're never going to have that in our hearts for that to grow.

[13 : 48] So we need to allow Him to teach us. We need to realize that we need to study what it is that the Holy Spirit has inspired the writers of all to write concerning God and concerning what God wants to do for us and concerning what He requires of us to do to live the lives that God wants us to live.

So we need to allow Him to teach us. He needs to lead us into the truth so that we might walk in the paths of righteousness because this is where we're going to receive God's blessing.

If we're walking in fellowship with God, no, we will never walk in fellowship with God unless we know where God is walking. God walks in the paths of righteousness and for us to experience fellowship with Him, we need to come off the path that we're on and come into His path.

And this is where the Holy Spirit wants to lead us. He wants to lead us into the truth because it's the truth that will liberate us so that we might walk in the paths of righteousness and enjoy communion with our God.

This is what Jesus died to attain for us. This is the blessing that Jesus was willing to lay down His life for so that we might be brought back to God, reconciled, back into communion with God so that we would walk in His ways rather than in our ways.

[15 : 26] Because His ways are far superior to our ways. His thoughts are far superior to our thoughts. It's not what we think that we should do or would like to do that's important.

It's what God thinks because He knows what's important. And we need to know what He thinks. We need to know His will. And we need to pray according to His will.

Well, if we deny ourselves reading the truth and coming to church where the truth is expounded and praying over the truth and joining with God's people to bring down these blessings, then we're restraining Him.

We're quenching Him. And we're not allowing Him to teach us. And one of the other activities that He enables us to achieve is that He teaches us how to pray.

And we must allow Him to pray through us. What do I mean by that? Well, I mean by that when we approach God in prayer, there's the danger that we might come with our list, that we might go through the habit of praying the same thing day in, day out.

[16 : 43] and we've already made up our minds what we're going to pray for. And we're not allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us what we should pray for. We should come with open minds and we should allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit to pray in accordance with what the Holy Spirit brings to our minds.

And that might take time. So we shouldn't be saying to ourselves, well, I'm going to do my daily devotions, however long you take to them, five, ten, twenty minutes, whatever.

And after that time has run out, you feel satisfied, I've done my duty. No, you should come giving yourself plenty of time and not rushing through it and allowing yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit as to whichever direction he might lead you to.

And praying what he brings before you. Not what you've brought before him, but what he brings before you. Let him pray through you. And this is what the Holy Spirit enables us to do.

And thirdly, God has given us the Holy Spirit so that we might glorify him. And this was the chief purpose that he had in mind when he created man.

[18 : 08] that we might glorify him. That we might show forth his glory. That we might testify to the glory that God possesses.

That we would not be ashamed of him. And that we would be willing to state to anybody that asks for us the reason for the hope that is in us to unashamedly tell them this is why I hope in God. This is what my God has done for me. This is what my God can do for you. And we should be willing to do that. That we would testify with our mouths and not only testify with our mouths but live lives that will bear witness to that testimony.

That we live in accordance with what we say. Because this is where our witness is very often marred. We say one thing and we do another. And the world can rightly accuse us of being hypocrites.

Because if that's how we are then that's what we are. We are hypocrites. We need to be consistent. And we need to be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to do what he requires us to do.

[19 : 28] So that we might show forth God's glory. That God is indeed working in our hearts and that this is what we are working out in our lives.

That's the witness that the world must see. That this is not my work, this is God's work in me and shining through me. Becoming a written epistle that can be seen and read by all people.

Now Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit God's as having been given to us as a seal or as an earnest, as a guarantee, a guarantee of our inheritance.

And the Holy Spirit gives us that. He gives us a foretaste of heaven. When the Holy Spirit is ministering to our spirits, he gives us confidence and boldness to come to the throne of God and to call God our Father.

He gives us that assurance that we are the children of God. And we need that. We need that foretaste. We need that assurance.

[20 : 42] And if we haven't got it, we should be striving for it so that we might have that boldness at the throne of grace. Because it means that we belong to God.

And that as such that we are under his ownership. And it's not just part of our lives that he owns. It ought to be evident that he owns all of our lives.

That he plays a role in everything that we do. Not just when we come to church, but when we go to work, when we speak to our families, when we speak to our friends, when we seek to help our friends and neighbors, whatever, they should be seeing God in us.

They should be seeing that the Holy Spirit is working within us, that he has transformed our lives, that we're not living for our own glory, but that we're living for the glory of God, because we belong to God.

Now, the Spirit thrives with us continually. continually. He prompts us to walk along these lines, lines that we find written in the Word of God.

[21 : 58] And this is how we are filled with the Holy Spirit. And those who are being continually filled with the Holy Spirit wouldn't dream of living a life any other way.

Because when we're being ministered to by the Holy Spirit and when we receive that assurance, this is what brings the joy of salvation into our lives.

Because underneath we have this peace. Even in the midst of the greatest trials and troubles that we might go through in this life, there is this sense of peace.

And that gives you joy, even when you're struggling and when you're dealing with hardships. There is this joy that you are walking in God's will, that God has not been taken by surprise, that he has ordained whatever it is that you're experiencing.

And if it's something difficult, you're willing to accept it. You're reconciled to his will because you believe that if this is what he has given to you, that it will yet work out for your eternal good.

[23 : 20] And you're satisfied. You're content with your lot, even though by worldly standards it might be a very hard lot. This is what the Holy Spirit does in the lives of his people.

And we need to ask for him continually. We need to ask that he would lead us, that he would guide us, that he would uphold us, that he would keep us, and that we would live continually in dependence upon him.

That we would daily desire to fill us with your Holy Spirit. Let us be led by your Spirit so that we don't grieve him. Because if we're grieving him, then we are rebelling against God.

We are not allowing God to do his work in our souls. Because it's through the Holy Spirit that he brings his work on in our souls.

And although we may be saved, we haven't yet reached our destination. There's a lot of work to be done yet. We need to be sanctified before we will be glorified.

[24 : 36] And it's the Holy Spirit that brings on that work. And the final point I want to make is that being filled with the Spirit will help us to witness.

We've already touched upon that partly. But on the day of Pentecost, we read that they were no sooner filled with the Holy Spirit than that they were able to speak.

Prior to that, they were terrified. Part of the reason that they were in this room was because they were afraid of the rest of the Jews, that they would be next.

They had seen what they had done to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they were afraid that they might be next in line. But once they were filled with the Holy Spirit, we read that they began to speak.

In verse 14, we read, Peter standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice. Here's the Peter that denied him three times on the eve of his crucifixion.

[25 : 47] When asked, are you a disciple of that man? He denied it, and he did it swearing and cursing the third time. But here he is now boldly standing up and speaking with confidence.

He is no longer a shame to confess him. And he makes it clear to them the reason that this has happened. And he preached the gospel to them.

In chapter four, at verse eight, we read concerning him, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, verse 31 of chapter four, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts chapter nine, referring to Paul, at verse 20, Paul straight away preached Christ. Chapter 13, verse nine, Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, they weren't afraid to witness once they received the Holy Spirit.

And this is where we're lacking in our day. And the reason that we're afraid is because we're not living in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

[27 : 04] We're living in dependence upon ourselves. And we're coming up with all kinds of development plans and strategies of what must be done. Well, we don't need to be looking to development plans and strategies.

The Bible teaches us what needs to be done. We need to live in dependence upon God. And we need to acknowledge we need the strength, we need the guidance and the help that the Holy Spirit can afford us.

And when we're living in dependence upon God, we will then not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because that's what we learn in all of these instances when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke.

What did they speak? Did they tell people the latest gossip or the weather forecast? No. They always spoke the truth. They spoke the gospel.

They preached the gospel because they were not ashamed of Jesus Christ. And they were able to do so boldly. And we read in these instances that thousands were converted.

[28 : 18] But let's not assume that every time that we live in dependence upon the Holy Spirit and we boldly proclaim Christ, that people are going to be converted.

Because we read in other parts of Acts that when they preached the gospel that they were persecuted. they didn't always have converts as a result of teaching the truth.

We read the same in the Old Testament. When the prophets came, they stoned them and put them to death because the people weren't willing to accept the truth.

They didn't want to hear the truth. So it has one of two results. They will either succumb to what you're teaching them or they will persecute you.

Now we shouldn't be afraid of being persecuted for righteousness sake because that's a great blessing. The disciples rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer for Christ.

[29 : 19] So regardless of the outcome, we should never be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, our desire ought always to be that people would be converted and that that's the reason that we want to share the gospel with them.

But we might expect that we will be persecuted because people don't want to hear the gospel. Even from friends and family, if we speak to them about Christ and their need of salvation, we need to expect sometimes that it will put a strain on the relationship.

We shouldn't fear that. We should be willing to suffer and we should consider it a great honor that we're suffering for righteousness sake.

That we are not suffering because we've done something wrong and we deserve to suffer, but that we're suffering because we're desiring to do that which is good.

And who knows, although we might suffer persecution for a while, how the seed that has been sown might yet be brought to life by God.

[30 : 35] Because as we learn in history, it was through the blood of the martyrs that the church grew. They were persecuted and many of them paid with their lives.

But it affected people to the extent that they themselves came to know Christ as a result of the witness that these faithful martyrs gave of their being unashamedly bold enough to profess the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's how we should be. That's what we should desire to be. Because that's why the Holy Spirit has been given to us. So that we might seek to be led, taught by him, and seek to have the boldness which he enables us to have when we allow ourselves to be filled with him and give him access to every aspect of our lives.

So that whatever we do, that we do all things to the glory of God, which is our chief end. This is the reason we were created and this is the reason that we were redeemed, that we might glorify God, because in doing so we will enjoy him forever.

May God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we give you thanks for the gift that Jesus earned for the church, and that you're able to send your Holy Spirit into our hearts, not only that we might be born again of the Holy Spirit, but that we might live under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as he teaches us and as he guides us and as he leads us into the paths of righteousness, even for your own name's sake, so that your name may be glorified, and that we might receive the blessings which we may deny ourselves by quenching the work of your Spirit within us.

[32 : 43] Lord, lead us and have mercy upon us for our shortcomings, for we ask it in Jesus' precious name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 143, on page 440.

Page 440. And we're going to sing from verse 8. Down to the end of the psalm, Psalm 143, verse 8. Because I trust in thee, O Lord, cause me to hear. Because I trust in thee, O Lord, cause me to hear, thy lovingkindness free, when morning doth appear, cause me to know the way, where in my past should be.

For why my soul on high, I do lift up to thee.

From my fierce enemy, thee, in safety do me guide.

[34 : 41] Because I flee to thee, Lord, that thou mayst me hide.

My God, alone art thou, teach me thy righteousness, thy spirit could lead me to the land of the brightness.

O Lord, for thy name's sake, be pleased to quicken me, and for thy truth for take, my soul from misery, and all thy grace destroy, my foes and put to shame, all whom my soul annoy, for I thy servant am.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with you all, now and forever more. Amen.

Amen.