

How to Be Filled With the Spirit

by Brad Allen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of thirsting for God, coming to Jesus Christ, drinking from the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and believing and overflowing in order to live a spirit-filled life.

Duration: 34:38

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the phenomenon of people experiencing a spiritual awakening or revival during church camps or conferences, only to return to their normal lives and lose the fervor they once had. The preacher emphasizes that simply studying the Bible, praying earnestly, and attending conferences or listening to tapes will not bring about true transformation. He refers to a ceremony in the Bible where water was poured out in the temple, symbolizing the people's thirst for God's presence. However, the preacher highlights that true satisfaction and transformation can only come from Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes with examples from church history, such as George Fox, John Wesley, and George Whitfield, who experienced a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit and brought about significant change through their preaching.

Transcript

Isn't that a good song? God bless. God bless. Well, I can tell you one thing of a surety.

Nancy and I have been far more blessed this week than any of you have. It's been such a blessing to be here. Just to be around you, dear people, has been a joy.

It really has. I want you to turn to the Gospel of John tonight, chapter 7, verse 37. John 7, verse 37.

Y'all ready? On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, whom those believing in him would receive.

For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. On this occasion, our Lord Jesus was in the city of Jerusalem. We can't exactly pinpoint where he was, but we're pretty sure he was in the area of the temple.

Probably he was sitting on the steps of the temple, because here it says he stood up and cried out. So he was sitting down. He was there observing the Jewish feast of tabernacles.

The feast of tabernacles was a seven-day celebration. And it says here, it was the last day of the feast, so it was the seventh day of the feast. Jesus was sitting there, and he was observing a very peculiar ceremony that the Jewish people did every day for seven days.

One of the Jewish priests would go into the temple on the feast of tabernacles every day, get a golden pitcher, come outside, and he would start walking down toward the Pool of Siloam, downhill, and a vast multitude of people would follow the priest. When the priest got to the Pool of Siloam, he would bend over and fill the golden pitcher up with water, and he would turn around and hold it up high like this and start marching back up the hill toward the temple. And as they walked up the little pathway, this multitude of people, there would be shouting and singing, the sound of trumpets and cymbals, and the priest out in front holding up the golden pitcher full of water.

And when the priest reached the temple, he would pour out the water by the altar in the temple, while all the people, this multitude of people, they would sing Isaiah chapter 12, verse 3, which says this, Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation. Our Lord was sitting there watching this ceremony. And although it was very impressive, he must have been struck with the futility of it all.

For you see, after all the shouting and all the singing and all the clanging of the cymbals, when all of that was over, the people went home with their same old heartaches and same old fears. Nothing had changed. But you see, the truth is, there was one among them that day in that throng of people, there was one there who could satisfy the thirsty soul.

He was there. He was there in the... Little did the people realize that the fulfillment of the verse from Isaiah that they were singing, the fulfillment of that verse was right there. Jesus Christ.

So Jesus did a most unusual thing. The Bible says, He stood and cried out to the people, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. Cried out.

This is unusual because you see it says in Matthew chapter 12, verse 9, He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. So on this particular day, I ask the question, Why did Jesus cry out, shout out aloud? I think it's because He had something extraordinary to say. It's almost like Jesus was saying to this crowd of people, You thirst for something you know not what.

All of these chalah ceremonies, these empty pictures from Siloam can never satisfy what's wrong with you. He said, Come to me and drink. And you can find life and overflowing life.

And it says this He spoke concerning the Holy Spirit. Over 1,900 years have come and gone and today a thirsting world is still searching, looking, wondering where the answer is. There are broken cisterns, there are empty pictures from Siloam all over our nation tonight.

People looking for this and looking for that. As a pastor across the years, I continually talk to people, Christian people, people who had been saved, who had been born again. I continually talk to these people who were convinced that they had missed something along the way.

They weren't sure what it was. But there was something in the filling of the Holy Spirit that they had missed out on. They didn't know the way or what to do.

They didn't understand it. Oh, I understand. There are a lot of people in church who get happy every now and then.

Revival meeting, spiritual awakening conference. Young people go into church camp and they come back all happy and giddy. People who scale the utmost height and catch a gleam of glory bright and then two weeks later they're back home and they just settle down into the same old, same old, just like it was.

It is plainly stated here in the Bible that our Lord was speaking about the Holy Spirit. This spoke He of the Holy Spirit. Now there are Christians galore across this nation in churches who have studied the Bible, who prayed earnestly, who have sought a deeper blessing, who've gone from Bible conference to Bible conference.

They've listened to tapes by the hundreds. I'll tell you one thing. If listening to tapes would save the world, Baptist would have saved the world years ago.

Listen to tapes by the thousands and thousands. People who have notebooks crammed with notes from teachers galore and all of these people are still pouring out the pitiful waters of Siloam. Some, some have surrendered dozens of times, come to the altar time and time again.

They claim the blessing but they still live in a gray world. Christian people who, they do not wear the garment of praise but they have the spirit of heaviness and they're saved. They're Christian people.

Now I want you to understand something and I believe this with all my heart. When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ and are born again, the Holy Spirit comes and lives in us. You cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit coming in.

Paul wrote to the Romans and said, If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you're none of His. The Holy Spirit comes and lives in you. But God's gift of the Spirit is one thing.

Our appropriation of that gift is quite another thing. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is ours positionally but what is ours positionally is not always our actual condition. The average Christian, the average Christian in the average church is so ignorant of or indifferent to the filling of the Holy Spirit of God.

Now people ask me, Brad, do you believe in a second blessing? Yeah, I believe in a third and a fourth and a seventh too. On and on. Look at history, church history.

Old George Fox over in Scotland. George Fox, he was saved. He knew the Lord.

And lying for days, those days lying there in his home in a trance and came out of that trance in a new experience with Jesus Christ because he was flooded, filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Or look at Wesley, John Wesley and George Whitefield who gathered that night in Aldersgate in London, England and they prayed until three o'clock one morning when suddenly great power came on them and John Wesley and George Whitefield changed the course of England with their preaching. Or think of old Christmas Evans, the Welsh evangelist.

Over in Wales, Christmas Evans was saved. He was preaching. He started to church one Sunday morning.

He was going to preach. He rode horseback. He was riding along horseback and all of a sudden it started snowing.

He got to looking at the snow and the cold and it reminded him of the coldness of his own heart. And on that horse's back before he got to church, God filled Christmas Evans with his Holy Spirit and the preaching of Christmas Evans changed Wales. Great revival came, great revival.

Or think of old Burns of Kilsyth in Scotland. One night young Burns lived in the village of Kilsyth. He spent all night in prayer one night.

At the breakfast table the next morning he told his mother, he said, Mother, God has given me Kilsyth today. And he went out in a greater power than he'd ever known. Great revival came to Kilsyth.

It began to spread. It spread all over Scotland. Burns went to China with the China Inland Mission and great revival came to China where he was preaching the gospel.

That's what power of the Holy Spirit will do. Or old Charles Finney, the Presbyterian evangelist. Charles Finney was a lawyer.

He was under conviction for quite some time. Late one afternoon he was out here in the woods pacing, just pacing among the trees, pacing, pacing, pacing. He was under conviction and finally out there in the woods he asked Jesus Christ to come into his life and save him, and he was saved.

He came back to the courthouse where his office was and there was a judge that was moving all of his stuff, his furniture and books, to another office. And Charles Finney helped him move everything. And when they finished moving all of that, Charles Finney went to his office.

He said, I opened the door to my office and I went in and he said, I shut the door behind me and all of a sudden something came over me. He said, I had not so much as heard about the filling of the Holy Spirit, but suddenly the Holy Spirit came upon me in great power. Charles Finney started preaching.

You want to know what he did? One time he went into this town. There was a manufacturing plant. There was an aisle right down the middle of the plant.

There were workers over here and workers over here. The manager of the plant took Charles Finney through the manufacturing plant. They were walking down this hallway right in the middle, just an aisle, and Charles Finney never spoke a word to anyone.

And as he walked, the workers on both sides began to fall down and cry out to God for salvation. That's power. That's power of God.

It is to this fullness of the Holy Spirit that our Lord Jesus is inviting us tonight. People say, well, how are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Well, wouldn't it be a pretty good idea to take our Lord's outline here and kind of do it like he said? He didn't make too many mistakes, you know. Jesus said the filling of the Holy Spirit was a five-fold experience.

Thirsting, coming, drinking, believing, overflowing. Let me just touch on those just a moment. Jesus said, first of all, thirsting.

If anyone thirsts, if anyone thirsts, but my question is, who's thirsty today for God? Who's thirsty for God? We Americans, we Americans have become so shallow along all lines that we never go deeply into any matter. We flip like butterflies from one thing over to the other. We just go on.

Wanting a drink is not thirsting. Thirsting. Dr. Torrey said when he went to visit the troops on the battlefield in the Spanish-American War, he said dust filled the air day and night.

He said we ate dust, we drank dust, we slept dust, we dreamed dust, and he said there was no water fit to drink. He said for the first time in my life, I understood what it meant to be thirsty, to really thirst. You ask some foreign missionary that maybe is serving in a foreign country where there's no water fit to drink, and every pore of the body is crying out for just a drink of water.

It's a time when the desert seems to be on the inside of you. That's thirsting. That's thirst.

That's not just going over to the sink and turning on a tap and getting a glass of water. We're not thirsty physically. Do you know anything about that type of spiritual thirst? Has your soul ever panted after the fullness of the Spirit as the heart pants after the water brooks? Really thirsting.

Really thirsting. You see, one must thirst deeply to drink deeply of the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, deep desire is followed by deep delight.

Thirsting, Jesus said. Second, coming. If any man thirst, Jesus said, let him come to me.

Coming. There must be a drawing near to Jesus Christ in absolute surrender if you're going to be filled with the Spirit. Everything that offends must be renounced.

If there's something in your life that offends, you have to abandon it and let it go. You see, Christians today, Christian people in churches, they march to the front of the church just to lay it all on the altar. Years ago, I heard about a preacher gave an invitation, had a lady in the church that was a big gossip.

She came down during the invitation. She said, preacher, I just want to lay my tongue on the altar. He said, ma'am, I don't think the altar's long enough to hold it.

People come, they say, I'm just going to lay it all on the altar. And then they complain that it made no difference in their lives. No wonder.

The depths have never been stirred. And if the depths are not stirred, the depths will never be filled. You let a man or a woman or a young person thirst for water deeply enough, and that person will gladly renounce anything for one drink of water.

And you let a man, a woman, or a young person thirst deeply for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and you'll gladly renounce anything for the Holy Spirit to fill your life. Thirsting, coming, third, drinking. Jesus said, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.

Now, here's the place that a lot of earnest believers in Christ get all confused. You see, it's not easy. It's not easy for faith to receive what our sight cannot perceive.

It's not easy. You see, just as we receive Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin when we're saved, just so we are to receive the Holy Spirit in fullness. The Apostle Paul wrote these words, as you have received Christ, so walk you in him.

How did you receive him? By your good works? Not at all. You received him by the grace of God through faith. And that's how you're to walk.

That's the avenue to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Listen to what the Bible speaks of. The Bible speaks of being baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 1. It speaks of being filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2 and 4. It speaks of the Holy Spirit falling upon believers in Acts chapter 10.

It speaks of the Holy Spirit coming upon them in Acts chapter 19. And it speaks of believers receiving the Spirit in Acts chapter 8. Now, I realize that good men and women differ greatly on the meaning of all these terms. You've heard all the arguments.

Well, some say, well, you receive all of the Holy Spirit when you're saved. Others say, no, there's the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Well, it's this, it's that.

But I can tell you one thing. We have argued over the expressions a lot more than we've enjoyed the experience. We just need more of the Holy Spirit to come and fill us and use us.

And, Jesus, thirsting, coming, drinking. Drink is not passive. It's active.

It's something we are to do. The thirsty man or woman might contemplate and appreciate water that's set before him or her and just sit there. For instance, if I came to your house tomorrow afternoon, what would you think of me if I came to your house and I rang your doorbell and you came to the door and I just grabbed my throat and I said, could you get me a drink of water? I'm dying of thirst.

Man, you'd say, Brad, come in here. And you'd run over, you'd either get a bottle of water out of the refrigerator or you'd turn on the tap and I'd sit down at your kitchen table and you'd put a big old glass of water in front of me and I'd just sit there and look at it and you'd finally say, well, are you going to drink? Well, I'm just waiting for something to happen. No.

You know what I'd do? I would drink. Drink. Jesus said, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

There must come that moment of contact, a fixed, definite step at a certain hour, at a certain moment, a clear-cut act of drinking of the Holy Spirit of God. And I want to remind you one thing. It's not by feeling.

It's by faith. Dr. Len Broughton, many, many years ago, he was a longtime pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Broughton was a pastor.

He was convicted of powerlessness in his life. In a service, he went forward and knelt, and he surrendered, and by faith, he accepted the fullness of the Holy Spirit into his life. He was talking to a friend the next day about this.

The friend asked him, said, Well, how did you feel? Dr. Broughton said, I didn't ask for feeling. I was asking for the Holy Spirit. And the friend said, Well, how do you know you have anything more than what you had before? And Dr. Broughton said, I know it just as I know that I have Christ.

I know it by faith. By faith. Thirsting, coming, drinking, believing.

Jesus said, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He that believes in me. Right here, he that believes.

This is the secret to the spirit-filled life. Right here, this phrase. The word believing here in the Greek language, it is a word, it's in a tense that means continuous action.

Keep on believing. We are to drink, and we're to keep on drinking. We're to drink, we're to keep on drinking.

We're to believe, we're to keep on believing. Many have thirsted. They come to the Lord.

They've surrendered. They say, well, I received the Spirit's fullness, and they see no difference. They say, well, it didn't last.

The peace and power in my life, they've departed. The reason is evident. They drank, but they didn't keep on drinking.

You know, our problem is, we are accustomed to speaking of ourselves as empty vessels to be filled each day with the Holy Spirit. That's not scriptural. We're not empty pitchers to be filled up every morning.

We are fountains that are supposed to be overflowing every day. Thirsting, coming, drinking, believing, last, overflowing. If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He who believes in me, out of his belly, out of his gut, out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. You know what's shocking? You read the book of Acts, and as you read through the book of Acts, it is surprising to meet believers who were not filled with the Holy Spirit. But in churches today, it's surprising to meet believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I need to warn you about something. The primary purpose of the filling of the Holy Spirit is not to make you holy or happy. The primary purpose of the filling of the Holy Spirit is to empower you to testify and serve the living God.

That's what it's about. My last three pastorates. My last pastorate, I was pastor of First Baptist Church, Duncan, Oklahoma, for 17 years.

I was pastor of Central Baptist Church in Lawton, Oklahoma, for 15 years. And I was pastor of Little Town First Baptist Church, Sentinel, Oklahoma, out in western Oklahoma, for four and a half years. During these years that I've preached these spiritual awakening conferences, I've been privileged, honored.

I've been invited back to all three of those churches to preach a spiritual awakening conference. When I went back to those three churches, I stood in the pulpit of those churches and apologized to them for something I did. I told them how sorry I was.

Here's what I apologized for. I have no idea, during all of those years, 30-something years, 36 years or so, I have no idea how many preachers and deacons we ordained in those churches during those years, a bunch of them. And at every ordination service, I would come to the time and I'd say, here's the man being ordained as a preacher, this one is ordained as a deacon, whatever.

It would come time and I would ask the person, the candidate, to kneel right down here. And people would come by to lay hands on them. And I would always say, I would always say to the church, now, the laying on of hands does not impart any special power, it is simply a sign of the approval of this church on your life.

And I told these three churches, I said, I was dead wrong. I was wrong. I should listen to some scripture here.

Let me read it. Acts 6, they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter 9, Ananias went his way, entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, he said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared to you in the way as you came, sent me that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts chapter 5, And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. Acts chapter 6, When they ordained those first seven deacons, whom they set before the apostles, and when they prayed, they laid their hands on them, and the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of Jewish priests were obedient to the faith. In Acts chapter 8, Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

1 Timothy chapter 4, Paul wrote to Timothy and said, Neglect not the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands by the presbytery. 2 Timothy chapter 1, Wherefore I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God which is in you by the putting on of my hands. Numbers chapter 27, Take Joshua, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hands on him.

Deuteronomy chapter 34, Joshua was full of the Spirit and wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. There is something, I don't believe in magic or anything, but there is something transferable, there is something, a channel, that when hands are laid on a man or a woman, and certain things exist, they can receive the fullness of the Spirit of God. In just a moment I'm going to ask you to come, if you want to.

I'm going to lay hands on you. But I want to caution you about this. This must be present in your life.

You must be repentant, submitted to the Lord. You must consciously surrender all self-control of your life and turn it over to Jesus Christ. You must, you must forgive others unconditionally.

If you're holding bitterness or hatred in your heart for any person, you're not going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, period. You must break all association with the occult. If you're into magic and Ouija boards and voodoo, I noticed out west on 82 Highway, on the south side, there's a building out there, you can go to a psychic, get you, find out a lot of stuff.

If you're into any of that, you've got to say goodbye to that, abandon it. You have to release your faith and open up and drop resistance, and then, then receive. Then just spiritually inhale.

Jesus said, drink. I'd ask you to do that tonight. We're not going to sing an invitation.

I'm just going to stand here. And if you need to be saved here tonight, I ask you to come. If you want to know Jesus Christ in salvation, you come tonight.

If you're here tonight, you have been saved, but you say, Brad, I need to know the fullness of the Holy Spirit in my life, you come. I want to lay hands on you, pray for you. You just come.

Just get up from where you're seated right now, and you come right now.

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