

Filled With the Spirit

by Catherine Booth

Being filled with the Spirit is a gift available to all believers who comply with the conditions and conform to the injunctions of the Saviour.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Luke 11:13, Acts 1:4, Acts 2:4, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 2:10, Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, James 4:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Empowerment"

Description

Catherine Booth preaches about the importance of being filled with the Spirit, emphasizing that this exhortation is for all believers, not just a privileged few. She highlights the need for deep self-abasement, earnest appreciation of the Spirit's importance, and obedient faith as essential conditions for receiving the Holy Ghost. Booth urges believers to wait patiently, expectantly, and obediently for the Spirit's infilling, emphasizing the need for complete consecration and willingness to sacrifice all for the sake of being empowered by God's Spirit.

Transcript

ACTS i. 4.--"And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father."

EPHESIANS V. 18.--"Be filled with the Spirit."

I THOUGHT, perhaps, it would meet a difficulty of some who are present this afternoon, to state, with respect to last Sabbath's address, that this exhortation to be filled with the Spirit is given broadly to all believers. If my remarks, at that time, conveyed the idea to anyone, that there were merely a privileged few who are called to be thus filled with the Spirit--to be, as it were, the leaders of the rest, and others were to abide, and must abide, on a lower platform of Christian experience, I certainly did not intend them to do so. God forbid that I should insinuate anything of the kind, because I do not believe it. I believe that this injunction is given broadly to all believers everywhere, and in all times, and it is as much the privilege of the youngest and weakest believer here to be filled with the Spirit, as it is of the most advanced, if the believer will comply with the conditions, and conform to the injunctions of the Saviour, on which He has promised this gift. I do not find two standards of Christian experience here at all. I do not believe God ever intended there should be a lower life and a higher life, and I am afraid that those people who rest in the lower life will find themselves awfully mistaken at last. I believe that religion is all or nothing. God is either first or He is nowhere with us, individually. The very essence and core of religion is, "God first," and

allegiance and obedience to Him first.

If I cannot keep my father and mother and be faithful to God, then I must forsake my father and mother. If I cannot keep my husband or wife, and be faithful to Him, then I must forsake husband or wife. If I cannot keep my children and be faithful to Him, then, Jesus Christ says, forsake them. And if I cannot keep my houses and lands and be faithful to Him, then I must forsake them. If I cannot keep my business and be faithful to Him, then I must sacrifice my business, and if I cannot keep my health and be faithful to Him, then I must sacrifice it, and, last of all, if I cannot keep my life and be faithful to Him, then I must be prepared to lose it, and lay my neck on the block, if need be. That is my religion, and I do not know any other. I do not believe any other will stand on the right hand of the throne; and, if that be so, why, all other sorts must stand on the left. If this be not true, I am utterly and thoroughly mistaken in the first principles of Christianity, and I will come and sit down at anybody's feet who can convince me that I am wrong. So, pray, do not attach that idea to me that I think that any person can sit down, providing he has light, or with opportunities of getting light, without embracing this higher-life religion, and then get into Heaven in this shame-faced, sneaking way. No, no! God will have you, or He will not have you. He will know you, or will say, "Depart from Me, I know you not." The Lord help you every one.

This Pentecost is offered to all believers. It comes, or it would come, in the experience of every believer, if he would have it. God wants you to have it. God calls you to it. Jesus Christ has bought it for you, and you may have it and live in its power as much as these apostles did, if you will--every one of you. My dear friends, you may have it, be filled with it, and no one but God knows what He would do with you, and what He would make of you if you were thus filled, for the experience of Peter shows you how utterly different a man is before he gets a Pentecostal baptism and after he gets it. The man who could not stand the questionings of a servant-maid before he got this power, dared to be crucified after he got it. I may just say, that here is the great cause of the decline of so many who begin well. Oh! there is no more common lament on the lips of really spiritual teachers, everywhere, than this, that so many begin well. "Ye did run well," we might truly say of thousands in this land today, "Ye did run well." They begin in the Spirit, and then, as the Apostle says, "They go on to be made perfect by the flesh." How is this? Because, you see, the Spirit puts before every soul this walk of full consecration and whole-hearted devotedness to God, and, instead of being obedient to the heavenly vision, the soul shrinks back and says, 'That is too much--that is too close--that is too great a sacrifice,' and they decline, and, instead of giving up a profession and going back into the world (there would be ten times more hope of them if they did that) they cling on to the profession and kindle a fire of their own, and walk in the sparks they have kindled. But He says He is against them, and "they shall lie down in sorrow." Oh! there is a deal of this. People must have a God and a religion. They will have one, and when they shrink from the true one, and will not follow the Divine counsel, then they make one for themselves, and a great many of them go to sleep and never wake again. They go out of the world comfortably under the influence of narcotics, and they never wake. They die deceived; or, if they do awake, we know what sort of an awakening it is, and what sort of deathbed theirs is. Our poor Salvation Army people--these "fishermen,"--these young women--are sent for to pray with these people when they get awakened. And oh! what scenes are witnessed. Oh! see to it that you get awake and keep awake, and be willing to follow the Spirit's teaching, in everything, at all costs and sacrifices.

I want you to note, first, how these people waited.

"Tarry at Jerusalem till ye be endued with POWER." Mark, that is not truth merely. They had got truth before. There is something besides truth needed. Paul says his Gospel and his preaching were not merely

in word, but in power, and in the demonstration of the Spirit. What would be the first thing that would strike you that these disciples would be thinking of, as they wended their way back from Olivet, having taken leave of their now glorified Master? Back again to the upper room at Jerusalem. Imagine what state of mind would be theirs. How would they wait for the promise?

Methinks the first feeling would be that of deep self-abasement. As they thought of the past; now that the full glory of His Divinity, and the Divinity of His mission had burst upon them, and, as they thought of their three years' sojourn with Him, and of all their darkness and blindness of heart, and all they had lost--all that they might have known--all He would have revealed to them, if they would have received it--as the thought of it all burst upon them just as, next day, when you find out who a person was, or some particular circumstance respecting a person that you did not fully understand at the time, and, when the person is gone, and it all breaks upon you, you say, 'What a fool I was,' and so methinks these apostles would say, indeed, as He said, "Oh, fools, and slow of heart to believe!" They were cured. Peter certainly was of self-sufficiency, of pride, and all of them would go back again in deep self-abasement.

Can you not think you see them, as they assembled in the upper room? I should not be surprised at all if Peter, with his impulsive nature--and it is a glorious thing to have an impulsive nature when it is impulsive for good--to be zealously affected always in a good cause--threw himself on his face before his risen Master in deepest humiliation and broken-heartedness for his base ingratitude in having denied Him. And how do you think Thomas and all of them would feel as they remembered the scene in the Garden, and how they all in the hour of His agony, forsook Him and fled? How would they all feel? Oh! they would feel indeed unholy, untrue, cowards, and would go down, over and over again, on their faces, to wait in deep self-abasement.

And now, friends, this is the very first and indispensable condition of receiving the Holy Ghost. You must first realize your past impurity, unholiness, disobedience, and ingratitude. You must not be afraid to know the worst of yourselves. You must look back at the time when your hand has been with Him on the table, and yet you have virtually betrayed Him. You must look at your unfaithfulness and disobedience, at your shrinking from the cross, at your cleaving to the world, and if you want to be filled with the Spirit, you must be willing to know the worst of yourself, and tell the Lord the worst of yourself.

You must say, 'Now, Lord, am I low enough? Now, Lord, am I down far enough in the dust for Thee to come and lift me up? I abhor myself. I loathe myself in dust and ashes, and I want Thee to come and fill me with Thy Spirit.' You will have to be emptied of self. When people are self-sufficient, God always leaves them alone to prove their self-sufficiency. When people think they can do for themselves, He lets them fall down and see their weakness. We must realize our utter helplessness and weakness--we must be utterly lost in our own sight.

Some of you, I think, have come to that, and others are not quite low enough. You must get down lower, my brother. God's way to exaltation is through the Valley of Humiliation. You must get lower--lower. You can never get too low in your own estimation in order to be filled with the Spirit of God. They waited, secondly, in earnest appreciation of its importance. Ah! they had enough to make them do it. How do you think they felt when they got into the upper room? We are told that there were about 120 of them.

How do you think they felt as they thought of the past, remembered the ignominious crucifixion of their Lord, looked forward to the future, and contemplated the work to which He had called them? And what was it? It was not to go and set up an idol of Jesus Christ alongside of other idols in the temples of

heathen gods, but it was to go into the city of Jerusalem, where they had just crucified Him between two thieves, and proclaim Him as the long-expected Messiah of the Jews.

It was to begin to set up the Royal Spiritual Kingdom in contradistinction to their temporal and earthly kingdom, and then to go out from Jerusalem and subjugate the world to His sway! How would they feel? Poor Peter, and Thomas, and John, and Mary and the rest of the women (thanks to the Holy Ghost, He has taken care to put it in that they were there)--how would they feel? They would feel, 'We might as well stop and die here, as go out as we are, until we do get the equipment of power.

We want something more than we have got.' And there they waited, and they said, 'Lord, pour it out upon us; we are ready. We are helpless, we are powerless--we can do nothing. Thou knowest what Thou hast called us to do, and Thou hast promised this power to perform it. Now, here we are. It is useless for us to begin until we get power.' They appreciated its importance. God never gave this gift to any human soul who had not come to the point that he would sell all he had to get it.

Oh! it is the most precious gift He has to give in earth or in Heaven--to be filled with the Spirit, filled with Himself (as we said last Sunday), taken possession of by God; moved, inspired, energized, empowered by God, by the great indwelling Spirit moving through all our faculties, and energizing our whole being for Him. That is the greatest and most glorious gift He has. He is not likely to give it to people who do not highly appreciate it, and so highly that they are willing to forego all other gifts for it--everything else, creature love, creature comfort, ease, enjoyment, and aggrandizement for this one thing.

Have you come to that? Are you telling the Lord so? Are you sincere? If you are really sincere in what some of you write me, then some of you have come to it; but, oh, how people can deceive themselves. My heart has been awfully pained during this last week with one or two instances of this kind that have come to my notice. I have been half the week, I think, with Elijah under the juniper tree. I have cried, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" Who will thus take hold of God for this special and full salvation?

Alas! How few. One draws back for one reason, and another for another. One feels how far they come with us. You can hear the tread of their feet, and you can hear how they falter and draw back. None but those who travail for souls can ever understand the agony of feeling that souls are drawing back when you have brought them on the road so far. I have thought many a time of the Saviour, when so many who had been hearing Him forsook Him and fled. It was after He had been trying to lead them higher, even to real spiritual union with Himself.

They were not willing to go all the way--to pay all the price to suffer all the consequences--but, if you want this blessing, I know no other way. I had to come to this before I got it. The last idol of my soul had to be renounced, and it was hard work, as it always is, because we love idols. Idols would not be idols if they were not beloved. But we have to lay our real Isaac, our beloved and only Isaac, upon the altar. It is hard work, but it has to be done, because He is a jealous God, and will have no rivals. Do you so appreciate this blessing that you are willing to give up your Isaac? If so, you may have it this afternoon. He will fill you with His Spirit.

Third, and lastly, they waited in obedient faith. How do we know? Because they did as He bid them that is the evidence. He said, "Go, tarry in the city of Jerusalem." Peter might have said, when he had seen his Lord off to Heaven, 'Well, what am I going to do now? I have been a long time running after the Lord in Palestine, I must betake myself to the fishing. I can wait as well on the sea beach as in Jerusalem. I wonder why the Lord told me to go to Jerusalem? I think it was rather unreasonable. He might have

thought of my old father and mother at home. I think I shall go back to my fishing-nets.' No, no, they had been cured of their unbelief by the last few days' experience. They had learned better than to dictate to their Master, and they knew He had a good purpose in sending them to Jerusalem, and so they went there and did as He bade them--straight. Back to that upper room they went. Mary might have said, 'I have been running about ministering to the Saviour a long time, I'm afraid my friends will think I am neglecting home duties and the claims of old friends. I really must go home and see to matters a bit; I may as well wait there for the Holy Ghost as at Jerusalem.' No, Mary had learned better. She went back to Jerusalem. We have got their names. And they entered into the upper room, and shut the door, and waited--obedient faith! One of your poets said--

"Obedient faith that waits on Thee,

Thou never wilt reprove."

No, it is the disobedient faith that is sent empty away. Oh! people are crying out about their faith, but it is their disobedient faith. If the Lord has told you to wait in any particular place, or way, or company, or time, and you disobey Him, you will never get it, and you will have to come to those conditions at last, even if it is on your dying bed!

Obedient faith! While there is a spark of insubordination, or rebellion, or dictation, you will never get it. Truly submissive and obedient souls only enter this kingdom. Anywhere He tells you to go, anything He tells you to sacrifice, or fly from, you will have to do. This is one of His choice gifts that He has reserved for His choice servants, those who serve Him with all their hearts.--Obedient faith!

But you say, 'How do you know it was faith?' Oh, because we know they did as He bade them. Now, faith is inseparable from expectation. Where there is real faith there is always expectation, and when I hear people praying, as I often do, from their throats, for the Holy Ghost, and see how they talk the minute they get up from their knees, and know how they live and whom they associate with, and how they spend their time, I say, 'Yes, you may pray till your dying day, but you will never get it.' If they expected anything, they would wait for it: common sense tells us that.

Those people waited. How long? What a hue and cry there is now about us Salvation Army people spending whole nights in prayer. People--Christians, grey-headed Christians, up and down the country--say to me, 'I don't know how you get the time over. It must be such an immensely long time. Do you really mean to say that you spend all night in prayer?' I say, 'Yes, with just an interval for putting the truth and showing the people how to apply it to their own consciences.' Then they say, 'It must seem an awfully long time.' I suppose it does, to them, to spend one whole night in prayer; but here, we are told, they waited ten days, till the Day of Pentecost was fully come. I have no doubt they went as far into the night as they could keep their natural powers awake. They waited. They did not set the Lord a time. They were wiser. They did not say, 'Now we will go and have a couple of days of it. That will be a long time. We will just shut out all else and wait on the Lord for a couple of days, and if He does not come by that time, it will be outrageous to wait beyond it. Whoever heard of a prayer-meeting two days and two nights' long?' They did not set the Lord a time! They went and waited till it came.

You say, "No; I have not got it." No; because you did not wait until it came. You got hungry, or you fell asleep, or hugged your idol. You did not wait TILL IT CAME.

Suppose they had given up on the fifth day and said, 'There must be some mistake. He knows we are here, all ready, and the world is perishing for our message. There must be some mistake. We had better begin.' But no, they waited on, and on, and on, until it came. Can you imagine what sort of prayers went up from the upper room? Do you think they were the lazy, lackadaisical, prayers that we hear every now and then for the Holy Spirit?

Oh! how would Peter agonize and wrestle: how would Thomas plead; how would Mary weep, beseech, and entreat, and how were they all of one heart and of one accord. They wanted the one thing, and they were there to get it. They cared for nothing else but that. They cried for it as hungry children cry for bread. They wanted it. Did the Lord ever disappoint anybody who waited like that? Can anybody say so here? Did you ever hear of such a case? Never. HE CAME.

Oh! but there are some people, nowadays, who set God times in everything. They think a good deal more about their dinners than about Him. They think a great deal more about intercourse with their friends and doing the polite to them, than they do about the precious waiting Holy Spirit of God. They think a great deal more about their businesses. 'Oh!' they say, 'it is business, and business must be attended to.' But what about the Holy Ghost and the Kingdom? Must not the Kingdom of God be attended to? Must not your soul be saved, and must you not become a temple of the indwelling Spirit of God? Put a MUST in there, if you please. Far more important is the soul than the body. Friends, are these things so, or am I only imagining them? Are these great truths, or are they fables? These are the most common-sense, simple exhibitions and illustrations of these truths that could possibly be given. Was it not so? Did they not thus wait, and did not the Holy Ghost come?--and when He came He sat upon each of them. Bless His name.

People have a wonderful habit of losing sight of the little words of the Bible--the people who make a great to-do about the Word in other ways, often say 'I never saw that till you directed my attention to it.' Suppose I were to say that this afternoon something happened to each person, would you imagine I meant the men, and not the women? Of course you would say, I meant everyone. And it filled them all--the women as well as the men, and they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. He came.

And, my friends, He comes yet. My bodily senses have been quite cognizant of His coming sometimes. We only know that we feel something that so influences our bodies that, we cannot describe it.

In the North, when I was there, we had an all-night of prayer, at which one thousand people, admitted by ticket, waited all night on God. The meeting began at ten, and went on until six in the morning, and there were strong men, men in middle life, and old men, lying on their faces on the floor. There were doctors there, who examined them and tried to account for it from physical causes, but they could not. It was the power of God. The Holy Ghost does come, and because, in coming thus into our souls, and thus filling us, He sometimes prostrates our bodies, people rebel, as they did on this occasion, and reject the manifestation, and say, 'Excitement! fanaticism!' What right have you to say that the Holy Spirit coming into a human soul can operate upon that soul to the full extent without, to some degree, prostrating the body? We know how people fall under great emotions of anger, grief, and joy. Why? Because the influence of the mind has so affected the body that the body cannot bear it, and when the Holy Spirit of God comes into a human soul and opens its eyes, and quickens its perceptions, and enlarges its capacity, and swells it with glory, is it an unlikely or improbable thing that the body should sometimes be prostrated under His power? What did Paul say? "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," and I have been into "the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful to utter." Do you think God intended such experiences and visions only for Paul and the Apostles? Ah! there have been many since

his day who have had such experiences, and many more of God's people might have them, if they would, but they are not willing to be wrapped in His arms; they are not willing to be pressed to His bosom; they are not willing to know Him in the Scriptural sense; they are not willing to be given up and consumed by His Spirit. Their heart and flesh do not cry out after the living God, as David's did. They are not panting after Him as the hart after the water-brooks. They are not longing to come and appear before God. If they were so longing that they could not live without it, then God would come and be revealed to them. Will you, then, wait in obedient faith?

Oh! I have the most awful realization that you will be eternally better or worse for these services, and so I want you to come up higher, I don't want you to go back, and get cold and indifferent to these things, because here is the hope of the world, if there is any hope for it, in people getting filled with the Spirit, people getting so woke up to God and His glory, and the interests of His kingdom, that they should be just as anxious for souls as other people are for sovereigns. Filled with the Spirit, having eyes to see spiritual sights which others do not see, ears to hear the crying of the famishing multitudes who are dying for lack of knowledge; hearts to feel so that they could go and weep over them. Hands to break the bread of life; and, if need be, a zeal that will lead them to die for them. This is what we want, and it only comes with the fullness of the Spirit.

Are you willing, my brother? are you willing, my sister? If so, stop with us this afternoon. Never mind the dinner; never mind the tea. You have taken care of the outer man long enough, now look after the inner man. Never mind the children, mother, just now, the Lord will take care of them. Never mind anything, you who are athirst, but, getting this blessed Holy Spirit of God, this full baptism of it on your souls. The Lord help you. Amen!

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