

On Being Filled With the Holy Spirit II

by John Sung

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is essential for a Spirit-filled life, empowering believers to witness for Christ and bring glory to God.

Scripture: Acts 9:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John Sung emphasizes the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit, contrasting the superficial understanding of faith with the transformative power of the Spirit. He recounts Paul's encounter with believers in Ephesus who had not received the Holy Spirit, highlighting the importance of true repentance and the indwelling of the Spirit for genuine Christian life. Sung illustrates the dangers of relying solely on rituals like baptism without the Spirit's presence, using personal anecdotes to demonstrate the life-changing impact of the Holy Spirit. He stresses the need for sound doctrine and nurturing within the church to prevent believers from falling into heresy. Ultimately, Sung calls for a deep, Spirit-filled life that leads to effective witness and ministry.

Transcript

Acts 9

Vs 1 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples". Apollos knew the Bible. He led men in repentance and confession of sins. Like many Churches today, which know only daily confession and repentance, but nothing beyond.

Paul was God's servant. He was filled with the Spirit. Rivers of living water flowed from within him wherever he went. At Ephesus he looked up the Lord's people. O that God would make everyone to be like Paul having rivers of living water.

Vs 2. "He said unto them. Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Many have believed the Gospel for long, with several tens of years of Church membership. Paul didn't care about this. He only asked if they had received the Holy Spirit. They very honestly replied, "No. We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit sent down." Pity of pities! Today let me ask every believer, "Have you received the Holy Spirit?"

Vs 3 "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism." Today there are some who know they are baptized by pastor so-and-so. They know of repentance. Before they committed sin. Now they don't. How wonderful! But, really, this is not enough. Should Paul preach in Shanghai today, he would ask first of all, "Have you received the Holy Spirit?"

Vs 4 "Then said Paul. John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Repentance, confession of sins, baptism by sprinkling or immersion, is not enough. John preached the Gospel of repentance, preparing the hearts of the people to receive Jesus. Every believer's heart must have the Spirit of Jesus. The Holy Spirit within brings life. No Spirit, no life. Without life, one can repent today, confess sins and commit them all over again, because there is no one staying in his heart as Lord. The devil cast out yesterday brings in seven others today, making 8. Praying a second time the 8 devils are cast out. But if the heart is devoid of the Holy Spirit 64 devils will come in hereafter, Devil bringing in more devils.

In Amoy there was a woman demon-possessed, I told her to kneel. In the Name of the Lord Jesus I cast out the demon. I said to her, "Be quick, confess your sins, or else the demon will return." But she refused to confess, so the demon returned, this time more severe than before. She came to me again. I told her to kneel, but she refused to kneel. It took a long while before she knelt down. Now, it was harder to pray than the previous time. It took most earnest prayer before the demon left. I urged her to confess her sins. She again refused. Again the demon entered her. She came to me the third time for prayer. Because I was busy preaching, I asked her to come the next day. She raged with madness the same night. She broke everything that came her way. The next day I prayed very earnestly for her. She came to herself again after confession of sins: She poisoned to death her husband's mistress. This was never disclosed before. From this time forward the demon did not possess her.

Vs 5-7 "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them. and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." Unless sin in the heart is cleansed by Jesus' precious blood through prayer, the Holy Spirit will not fill us. Since Pentecost we need not pray through ten days for the Holy Spirit. A Spirit-filled man need just lay hands on the head of one who has truly repented and has his sins cleansed to bring the Spirit down upon him. For since Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been in this world. So, when Paul laid hands upon the twelve they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Today there are those not cleared of their sins, who pray the whole night for the Holy Spirit's filling. Instead of the Holy Spirit, it is the evil spirit that takes His place. Paul's hand was like the electrical line. The electricity of God passed through his body. The Church is surrounded by God's Spirit. So, there is inter-communication.

But it is not enough to be filled with the Spirit. We need to be firmly founded on the true doctrine. We need to study the truth. Paul stayed three years at Ephesus to thoroughly nurture them that they might be firmly established in the truth.

Vs 8 "And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." Paul preached three months at a stretch. This kept every Church member from being ensnared by heretical doctrines. It is easy to bring revival. It is hard to nurture. There are many strange doctrines these days --- compelling immersion, requiring tongues, etc., etc. These false doctrines easily confuse those whose faith is shallow. So, we must be firmly based in the Holy Scriptures. Without foundation we fall. It takes only one week to hold revival meetings. It takes three

months to hold nurture-meetings, and that is scarcely enough.

Vs 9 "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus." A group of hard-hearted fellows, under Satan's influence, blasphemed the Way before the congregation. Paul saw he could not preach here, but for the sake of the flock, he shifted to the school of Tyrannus. Whenever I leave a place after holding meetings, I often wonder, when leaving, how many can remain steadfast, that I might see them in heaven. There were so few who could, nurture. So Paul did his best. From the synagogue he shifted to a school. This time I went to Southeast Asia again. There were 800 who believed the Lord in my first visit. After the revival the churches became flourishing. Over 80 organized preaching bands went out to work. Since the Church leaders there opposed, some 50 preaching bands separated. When I returned this time, only 300 remained. The rest were scattered. I prayed earnestly. They came back. Another 80 preaching bands were formed. So, we need to take root in the truth. Then we will not be shaken. Paul spent three months to nurture the believers. He left with reluctance. Ch. 20:20 says, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house". Vs. 31 says, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Vs 10 "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." During the three years Paul held not only nurture-meetings but also evangelistic meetings. He made known the salvation message to everybody, to every one in the city. On one hand he rooted the Church firmly lest it be swayed by heretical teachings. On the other hand he fought the battle against the outside world. During the three years at Ephesus Paul coveted not a single dollar. As it is recorded in Ch. 20:23, 34 "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered, unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." He drew no salary during the three years. While making tents he preached. He was a volunteer preacher. Some say it is impossible to make money and preach. Let's look at Paul. He earned and supplied others. Was it due to craziness that Paul worked so hard in the preaching ministry?

In two years he preached to everyone the Word. He preached with tears, tears that watered the seed of the Word. Not in vain! We give out gospel tracts sometimes in buses, sometimes on board ship, and we preach to them. Then they disperse. Do not fear! All these works are not in vain. God will wipe Paul's tears. I've preached to several hundred thousand in eight years. When I leave, then they cool down. But I do not fear, because he that sowed with tears will one day see a great reaping. We do not see the seed sprouts at present. After three years we will see the Holy Spirit mightily at work.

Vs 11 "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul."

Vs 12 "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them." Paul's handkerchiefs and clothing could heal diseases and cast out evil spirits. Power from the smallest objects used by Paul. I believe from my strenuous efforts now, such as some small tracts, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, miracles will result. Yes, even little things from the body of one given to God's work will work wonders, not in vain, never in vain.

When I went to Southeast Asia the first time 5,000 repented. I wrote some words, letters, little things, but with a convicting power. There I told a little girl, "I want you to be a preacher." For a whole year this little girl told her mother. "Mr. Sung wants me to be a preacher." I told a preacher in Malacca, "Don't be afraid.

When you return you will receive a double portion of power." Since then his Church has become revived. Unconsciously, a word was spoken in power.

Vs 13 "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preached." Some hypocrites, opportunists used Paul's name to get dishonest gain. When Satan loses out to Paul then he masquerades as a preacher under him!

Vs 14 "And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests, which did so." But the Holy Spirit works to thwart the priest's sons from their opportunism.

Vs 15,16 "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Not only could they not cast out demons, but also were they stripped naked.

In Chuanchow, Fukien there was a woman preacher who practiced exorcism. Instead she became possessed for three whole years. When the Holy Spirit is working the true and false are put in their proper light. No cover-up!

Vs 17 "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." Paul preached the truth. The whole city knew this. All the idol-manufacturers in Ephesus lost their trade.

Vs 18,19 "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." When the Holy Spirit worked at His appointed time, the people felt Paul's preaching was the truth. So they came before him to repent and confess their sins --- the great outworking of the Holy Spirit. The seed Paul had sown now sprouted, without loss.

Vs 20 "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." This is the result of tearful sowing. All in this world is vain. Preaching is not in vain. Ephesus is now gone to ashes. Not Paul's work. Though Paul was crucified in Rome, his work did not perish. One day the trumpet will sound. Paul will be rapture into the sky. There he'll meet with his Ephesian Christians. If his work was worthless he would not have spent three laborious years there. Why should Paul go through great odds to labor for the Lord. Read I Cor. 15:30-32, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantaged it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for the morrow we die." and Vs. 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Formerly I studied science with all my might. Thank the Lord I became filled with the Spirit on Feb. 11, 1927. The Lord made me see all is vanity. The next day a classmate presented me with a globe. I asked the Lord, "What does this mean?" The Lord said, "I want to send you to witness for me to the whole world." I said, "I'm not worthy." During the last nine years of my travels I have seen several hundred thousand born again. I believe sowing with tears is not in vain. One day in heaven I'll see many shake hands with me, I was saved when you preached to me that day." May the Holy Spirit come on each one of you that

you may witness for Him.

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