

Be Filled With the Spirit

by Tom Palmer

To be filled with the Spirit, we need to empty and cleanse our lives of sin and self, making ourselves available and usable for the Holy Spirit to take control.

Duration: 36:38

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Surrender Control"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses a pair of gloves as an illustration to convey a message to young people. He emphasizes that despite their intentions and commitments, they are unable to fulfill their obligations to God on their own. The gloves represent the young people, who are initially unable to perform simple tasks like waving or shaking hands. However, when the gloves are controlled by another influence, they are able to do everything they are supposed to do. The speaker urges the young people to understand that they need to surrender control to God in order to fulfill their commitments and live a life that pleases Him.

Transcript

All right, let's take our Bibles and get them open to the book of Ephesians chapter 5 this morning. Young people, I'm just going to tell you right up front, I don't know when I have been more excited for a preaching opportunity than I am this morning. I woke up this morning having already preached the message several times in my sleep.

It just, I went home last night and my clock was wound. I mean, that's just the way it was after that service and I'm not sure why but I was kind of sleepy by the time that service started last night. I just was, I couldn't help it and yet by the time we left here after two and a half hours of meeting with God, boy, I was excited.

It just thrilled me. I stood back there with that group of you young people around in a circle and I'll tell you that just overwhelmed me. What a thrill to stand with young people who are giving it all for God and you know, I know there are those who always have to show up to, yeah, well, you know what the statistics prove, you know, only this many of, oh phooey.

Thank God for young people who were sincere with God last night. God knows where they'll be five, ten, twenty years from now, but we'll get there when we get there. I just was rejoicing last night and that was a great, great blessing for me.

Folks, if I've ever been accused of anything in my preaching, it's that I'm a rather simple preacher. I've had folks on various occasions come up to me after I've preached and say, you know, brother Palmer, you are a simple preacher. You know, I always say, thank the Lord.

Thank you for the compliment. And I guess the reason is because that has always been my desire. I like to put the cookie jar on the bottom shelf so anybody can get their hand in it.

If I got up here this morning and said, well, I am going to conclude this conference with a discourse on pneumatology, most of you would sit there and say, what? Come to think of it, if I got up here and said, I am going to exhort you this morning on the filling of the spirit, some of you would go, oh. But young people in reality, I just want to take the word of God this morning and talk to you about what it means for you as a young person to be filled with the spirit of God. In Ephesians chapter 5 and verse number 18, we'll just look at this one verse as we begin.

The Bible says, and be not drunk with wine wherein is excess. Now, we could preach a good sermon on that. Notice the last part of the verse, but be filled with the spirit.

Let's pray and ask God to teach us this truth today, so that two hours from now on the bus or in the van or hitchhiking out along Interstate 85 trying to get home, you can still be filled with the spirit of God. Let's pray. Father, please teach us today this truth.

Lord, whatever it takes, I pray that your spirit right now will open our understanding, not just simply to information, but to the application of God's truth. Help me now as I preach, and we'll thank you for what you will do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Gang, I loved your testimonies last night, but I got to tell you what I was thinking. One by one, you stepped up to the microphone and you said things like this, I'm gonna go make a difference for God in that public high school. Or you said, I'm going to take steps in my life to keep my life pure.

Or I am going to prepare to be a preacher, or I am going to go to a mission field someday, or I am going to go home and respond better to my parents or to brothers and sisters, or I am going to go home and memorize scripture and thank God for every one of those testimonies. But gang, as I sat back there listening to you, do you know what I was thinking? You can't do it. You can't do it.

You say, but brother Tom, you don't understand. Brother Will Galkin preached the message and gave the invitation, and I hear the kids that make decisions in his meetings really stick to it. You can't do it.

You say, but after he, the invitation we, we went to our leaders and we shared with our leaders and they hugged us and they prayed for us. This time it's for real. You can't do it.

You say, but brother Tom, I stood up and gave a public testimony. I am now accountable to all those people. I know you still can't do it.

You in and of yourself can't do one thing that you have committed to God to do during this prayer advance. Let me illustrate something to you this morning. I brought a pair of gloves this morning, not because my hands were cold, but because I want these gloves to teach us something.

Just gonna lay them there. Let's suppose I have a little conversation with these gloves. And I say, all right gloves, you are now being watched by an audience of about 400,000 people.

You have to perform well. If ever you guys were going to do the job, this is it. All right.

Glove, will you just wave at the audience? I thought I had a good pair of gloves here, but well, all right, forget it. Then glove, go down there and shake hands with Steven. I am serious.

I mean it, go down there and shake hands. All right, we'll get spiritual about this. I'm gonna give you my pen.

I'm gonna put it under your thumb. Now take this piece of paper and write John 3 16. You sit there and you say, brother Tom, this is cute, but this is ridiculous.

Well, yeah, it is sort of ridiculous, except for the fact that already we're getting a picture of something. We are already getting a picture of young people who kneel at an altar, who shake hands with the youth leader, who give a testimony in a microphone, and really do have some definite intentions. But you know what? They can't do it.

But now watch something. Watch this. See if you begin to understand what I'm talking about.

Let's try this a little differently. All right, glove, wave at the audience. All right, glove, shake hands with Steven.

Don't you dare pull me off this platform, all right? All right, glove, write John 3 16. Suddenly, this glove that was laying there a moment ago, absolutely helpless. In spite of what was expected and required of it, it could do nothing.

Suddenly, now this glove is able to do everything that it's being asked to do, everything that it's supposed to do, everything that it ought to do, and it's doing a good job. Why? Young people, I realize this is a college campus, and I understand that this is an institution of higher learning, and I have no desire to insult a college theologian in any way. This is a simple truth, young people.

This glove is now doing the job because of what has come in and taken control of it. It is now functioning under the control of another influence. Young people, you got to get this this morning.

I don't doubt for a minute you were sincere, you were for real, and I loved every bit of it. But gang, when it comes to doing everything for God that you need to start doing in about another hour when you're on the way home and you get them, you're not going to be able to do it unless you allow some other controlling influence in your life to do it through you. We're looking at a passage of scripture this morning that says be filled with the Spirit.

You know, it's very interesting when you mention the Holy Spirit in this day and age, there are some people, and by the way, I'm talking about the type of churches, the type of Christian schools, the type of families, the type of Christian colleges represented here. There are some who react in a variety of ways. There are some who are like the who? Because they're just plain ignorant of the Holy Spirit.

Then there are others who get intimidated. The Holy Spirit? They think that the Holy Spirit is is some kind of a spooky thing. I mean after all the Bible does call him the Holy Ghost.

Then there are some who get irritated. All right, Brother Tom, don't you start on this Holy Spirit kick this morning. We're not interested in turning our youth group into a charismatic Pentecostal And you know what suddenly happens? We expose the fact that the Holy Spirit has become an untouchable to many of

us.

You know, when some folks think of the Holy Spirit, they think that it's the Holy Spirit. They get the picture of somebody standing up in front of a great big Coliseum with TV cameras and a fancy-dressed preacher walks over and puts his hand on their forehead and they sprawl on the floor. That's what they think of.

When some folks think of the Holy Spirit of God, they think of the fact of somebody standing up saying, I have been filled with the Holy Spirit. I That's what they think of You know the tragedy of all that young people is I fear that even in our fundamental churches for fear of wildfire We've ended up with no fire We've gotten worked up about terms. We've gotten worked up about technicalities.

We've totally missed the truth You know my Bible says first Corinthians 12 verse number 13 for by one Spirit were we all baptized into the body of Christ." Do you know what that means? That means, young people, that the day you and I got saved, the baptism of the Holy Spirit of God took place. And I became a part of the body of Christ. By the way, I got all of Him.

I don't need to run up and down the aisle laughing like a circus clown, barking like a dog, or howling like a hyena to get more. I got Him all, all of Him. He moved inside this body.

It's amazing to me to consider that in the wilderness, God dwelt in a tabernacle. In Jerusalem, God dwelt in a temple. But then the day came when God no longer said, or God said, I will no longer live in a dwelling of curtains.

I will no longer dwell in a dwelling of wood and gold. I am going to dwell in temples of flesh. You know, you start asking this question, where is God? An elementary student says, God's in heaven.

By the way, that's biblical. Okay, where else is God? Teenager raises their hand and says, oh, God's everywhere. By the way, that's biblical.

But you know what? You ask the question a third time, and even a lot of adults are going to scratch their head and say, well, if He's everywhere, where else could He be? And very few will consider the fact that the Holy Spirit of God lives in me. Ye are the temple of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.

That all came about the day I got saved. But here's what's crucial. And this is what we've got to pull out of this today, gang.

The day you got saved through the baptism of the Spirit, you got all of the Holy Spirit. But today, right now, through the filling of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God can get all of you. This passage, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

There are several things about the filling. Notice number one, it's commanded. Be filled.

That's an issue of obedience. You know, in this verse, there are two actual commands. One's a negative, one's a positive.

Be not drunk with wine. Let me ask you something. Would your local church discipline and maybe even dismiss a deacon or a pastoral staff member who tonight went out on the town and got drunk? You say, well, sure.

The Bible says, be not drunk with wine. He would be in violation of that command. All right.

Question number two, would your church this weekend dismiss or discipline a deacon or a Sunday school teacher or a pastoral staff member who was not filled with the Holy Spirit? I mean, they're both commands right in the same verse. You see, maybe we need to understand, first of all, that the filling of the Spirit is commanded. It's an imperative in your life.

To not be filled with the Spirit of God is disobedience. Secondly, it's a conscious filling. In other words, I become aware of God in my life.

I become aware of the reality that God lives inside of me. Thirdly, it's controlling. It's interesting that this verse, again, uses a parallel to help the picture.

Young people, I wouldn't for a minute laugh at a drunk man. I find nothing funny about drunkenness. I've been in the emergency room, the funeral home, and to enough car accident scenes that I don't laugh about drunkenness anymore.

But I do know this, a man who is drunk is not in control of himself because something else is controlling him. It's interesting that this verse creates somewhat of a parallel, a comparison to the one who is filled with the Holy Spirit as no longer in control. That's the brokenness we've talked about.

And now the Spirit of God is in complete and total control. Here's the way I like to think of it. The natural man has not the Spirit.

The carnal man has the Spirit, but the Spirit does not have him. The spiritual man has the Spirit and the Spirit has him. In other words, it's the process of allowing the Spirit of God to take total control of my life.

Now, here's the big question. You're sitting there this morning and saying, Brother Tom, it's all making sense. But how does it happen? Gang, that's what I want to share with you this morning because I think it's the key if you are going to do it.

It's interesting that the Word of God, particularly the Lord Jesus, used water as a picture of the Holy Spirit. You may remember back in John chapter 7, Jesus was speaking in the last day, the great day of the feast. Jesus stood crying saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

Some of us this week have a new thirst, don't we? But listen to what Jesus said, He that believeth on me as the scripture has said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Do you remember the woman at the well? Jesus said, You'll leave here with a well of water springing up into everlasting life. I had a teacher in college say, She came for a drink and left with the well.

But then Jesus explains, But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. Water was a picture. Now, let me see if I can illustrate something to you this morning.

Let's suppose you've gotten thirsty. You've done your five-mile jogging routine. Or you have just mowed the two-acre front lawn at your house with a push mower.

Or maybe you have just played pick-up basketball game that went into 13 overtimes. Or maybe the air conditioning in your house is broken and it's 105 degrees. You are hot, you are sweating, you are dehydrated, you are thirsty.

You grab the pitcher of water. And then you start looking for a cup. Here's the first cup we'll consider.

Why could I not put water in this cup so that I could get a drink of water? Obvious answer, it's already full. So at that point, it is impossible for this cup to be filled with water. Alright, we pick up another cup.

Why could this cup not be used for you to get a drink of water? Well, again, rather obvious answer. The cup is dirty. There's dirt, there is mud on and in the cup.

You cannot put this water in this cup to drink it. At that point, we have just disqualified two cups. One is full of something else, one is dirty.

Now, young people, we're talking today, how does the Spirit of God fill my life? I believe we begin to see a picture. The Spirit of God cannot fill your life, control your life when it's full of something else or when it's dirty. By the way, this is interesting.

Do you realize what the majority of the preaching has revolved about in the last 48 hours? Emptying us of self, cleansing us of sin. Do you see that? See, some of us haven't been able to walk in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, live in the Spirit, be led of the Spirit. There's no evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Why? Oh, well, we've got the Holy Spirit, but He doesn't have us. He's not able to control us because we're full of self. Some of you have stood and said, God broke me of self, emptied me of self.

Some of you have stood and said, God dealt with me about an area of sin and I've confessed it and I have come clean. God was cleansing you of sin. Do you know what God has done now? God has gotten you ready for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit of God.

You're clean, you're empty. Now, let me show you something. Let's suppose I take the jug of water, the pitcher of water.

I now have a cup that is clean and empty. When you baptize something, you put it in the water. Right? Baptistry, you're thinking with me.

All right? So watch this. Let's baptize this cup. All right? I take the cup.

It's clean, it's empty. I begin to put it into the water. I am baptizing the cup.

But now notice what happens. No longer is the cup in the water, the waters in the cup. What did we just do to this cup? We baptized it, we filled it.

Why? Because it was clean and it was empty. Young people, please pardon the homespun illustration but may I say to you today, right there is exactly what God wants to do in your life. You don't have to come to a prayer advance and run 23 laps around the auditorium hooting and hollering like a Comanche Indian.

You don't have to start somersaulting down the aisle while everybody else sings How Great Thou Art. You don't have to work yourself into some kind of a frenzy until finally you have a tongues experience. You don't have to do that.

As a matter of fact, the issue here is not the experience. The issue is making myself available and usable so the Spirit of God can take control of me. You know, I was thinking of this just yesterday.

Do you remember Matthew chapter 3, I believe it is, the baptism of Jesus? The Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove. Folks, we have bird feeders at home. We live in a bird haven at our house when we're

home.

And the doves come all the time. I have learned a lot about doves. When they show up, it's no big stir.

They don't make a lot of noise. You know, blue jays squawk their lousy heads off and at our house, get shot. You know, there are other birds.

Some of these house finches and these gold finches, when they show up, they take over the bird feeder. I mean, they spend more time chasing cardinals and nuthatches off the feeder than they do eating. They make a big stir.

And we bang on the window, get, get, get, get, you selfish little bird. But you know something? When the doves show up, usually everything's quiet, everything's calm, and it's no big scene. A dove, the spirit in the form of a dove descended upon Jesus.

Why? Because the Holy God, the God the Father, could say, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Young people, you will never be more pleasing to God than when your life has been emptied and cleansed. And at that point, the Holy Spirit of God can now begin to take control.

You say, Brother Tom, how in the world am I going to go home from this prayer advance? And how am I going to memorize that scripture? And how am I going to keep my life pure? And how am I going to stay yielded to the will of God? Gang, empty, cleansed. Spirit of God will descend. The Spirit of God will fill.

And through your life, you'll begin to accomplish His purpose. You know, in Acts chapter 1, it's an amazing thing. It's about verse 5. Jesus said to the disciples, you're going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

This was a new experience. These guys thought that the greatest thing in the world was being with Jesus. They'd heard Him preach.

They'd seen Him do miracles. They'd been in prayer meetings with Him. I mean, what could be better than being with Jesus? Jesus said, fellas, I'm going to leave because you're going to get baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Verse number 80 said this, the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. Then you go to chapter 2 and verse 4. They have just completed a week-long prayer meeting. Isn't that amazing? You know, if Jesus showed up and handed the Great Commission to a modern-day preacher's convention, they'd spend the next six months on advertising, fundraising, printing materials, organizing committees, training volunteers.

Not the disciples. They just left the Mount of Olives and went back to Jerusalem, found the Upper Room, and had a prayer meeting for a week. You know what the result was? A week later, chapter 2 and verse number 4, they were filled with the Spirit.

I mean, these disciples had been the most carnal, fleshly guys imaginable with Jesus. But they suddenly experienced a new reality. Not God with them.

That was Emmanuel, Jesus. But rather God within them. That was the Holy Spirit.

And they left that Upper Room. They hit the streets of Jerusalem. And you couldn't shut them down.

You couldn't shut them out. You couldn't shut them up. You know what they were accused of? Go through the Book of Acts and look at the indictments.

They have filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. Name me one town in America where a church has been accused of doing that. Those who have turned the world upside down are come here.

That's a pretty good indictment for a church. They're turning the place upside down, inside out, right side up, whatever you want to call it. Why? Holy Spirit.

Young people, do you know what then the result will be in your life? It's called the fruit of the Spirit. You know, I think sometimes we've mispreached the fruit of the Spirit. Folks, you've got to learn to love.

You've got to always be joyful. You've got to always be peaceful. You need to have... Wait a minute.

No, no, no, no, no, no. You can't go out and manufacture the fruit of the Spirit. Fruit is a by-product.

What is your part? Emptied, cleansed. The Spirit of God fills and He produces the love, the joy, the peace. You say, well, I'm going to get victory over temptation.

You need temperance, but you know where you get that? Fruit of the Spirit. You say, well, I'm going through some tough times, but I'm going to keep a smile on your face, on my face. You know what you need? Joy, fruit of the Spirit.

You say, well, I'm not going to get angry and beat up little brothers anymore the rest of my life. You know what you need? Meekness, fruit of the Spirit. You say, well, I'm going to go to that public high school and I'm going to love people to Jesus.

You know what you need? Love, fruit of the Spirit. See, young people, everything you need to fulfill every one of those commitments and decisions is found in the fruit of the Spirit. But it's fruit.

And it's all going to come about day by day by day. When you, as a young person, go to your God and say, God, today I want to be emptied of self. Today I want to be cleansed of sin.

Holy Spirit of God, fill me anew and afresh. You know, getting saved was once and done. Thank the Lord.

But the fourth thing that I hadn't mentioned about the filling of the Spirit is it's continuous. In fact, the structure of the wording, and I'm not a good original Bible language scholar, but I understand the structure of the wording to mean this. Be being filled.

It's ongoing. It's continual. It's got to happen over and over and over again.

Young people, bless your hearts. I loved your testimonies. I've been moved to tears by your decisions.

But you can't do it. That's why God sent his Holy Spirit. My boys and I were on a bike ride several years back on one of these rails-to-trails things, they call it in Pennsylvania, where they take the old railway beds and they take the railroad tracks and railroad ties out and they put in gravel and they make these beautiful trails that wind through the mountains.

We were riding on one of those and the trail we went on was 11 miles. We went up, you come back, 22 miles. Well, I was on a very high-quality Raleigh M80 mountain bike, 24-speed.

Andrew's on an old 10-speed from Sears that was actually my wife's old bike, 10-speed. Timothy was on a little 16-inch one-speed. And you know, we started out that morning, we had food, we had binoculars to do bird-watching, we had plenty to drink, and we took our time.

We'd stop occasionally, park the bikes, run down the bank, jump into the Juniata River and swim for a while, and then we'd get on the bikes and we'd go. We had spent hours going all the way up. We were on our way back in the afternoon and we got to about three, four miles to go and bless his heart, Tim, who at that point was probably seven or eight years of age, on that little one-speed started to lose it.

And I'd be riding along and I'd stop and I'd look back and he'd be 50 yards back. And I'd stop and I'd say, keep coming, keep coming, till he caught up. He'd catch up and I'd say, come on, hang in there.

We'd start to ride and it wouldn't be long till he'd be standing back there, leaning up against a tree or with his bike laid over. And I'm thinking, oh, and by the way, there are no exits on Rails to Treasure. You got to get off at the end.

And this went on and my dad's heart was getting kind of guilty feeling because I felt like I'd, I mean, I've got the bike that's made to ride across America. And so finally a little thought came to my mind and I went back to him. I said, Tim, we've got a few more miles.

I said, I got an idea. Get on your bike and start to ride. And he got on his bike and he started to ride and I let him get out of ways ahead of me and then I started to ride.

And it's real smooth, it's straight, so it wasn't tough riding. But as he's riding along, I came pedaling up beside him. Get one hand on my handlebar and with the other hand, I reached out and took him by the arm.

I said, let's go. And for the next several miles, we rode side by side. Oh, he was still pedaling.

He was still steering. But I had him by the arm and I dropped it into a stronger gear on my bike and I started to pedal. And the next thing you know, he and I were rolling down that trail and we got to the last marker a mile to go and he moved away from me and he took off and he headed for the finish line.

You know what? I love to learn spiritual lessons on a bike trail. Do you know what Jesus said to the disciples, the guys who never could do it? He said, the comforter is going to come. Do you know who the comforter is? I believe, again, a little word study indicates he's the one called alongside.

Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. Gang, you can't do it, but I've got news for you. When you hit the trail later today, when you hit the trail next week, when you hit the trail next semester, somebody's going to come alongside.

If you're in the right condition, he's going to give you the power to do it. Let's bow our heads. Let's close our eyes.

Young people, there's one song that comes...

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