

Be Filled With the Spirit

by William MacDonald

The filling of the Spirit is the ideal state for the Christian, and it requires confessing and putting away all known sin, and yielding your life to God.

Duration: 37:29

Scripture: Acts 1:6, Acts 4:31, Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of meeting certain conditions in order to experience the power and filling of the Holy Spirit. The first condition is to have a complete dedication and devotion to Christ, surrendering one's life without reservations. The speaker emphasizes that this is not just talk, but a genuine commitment. The second condition is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, not conforming to the ways of the world. The speaker highlights the significance of the Holy Spirit's filling, which brings power, boldness, and a great witness to the resurrection of Jesus. The book of Acts serves as an example of how the Holy Spirit's presence and filling can transform ordinary people into powerful vessels for God's work.

Transcript

Chapter 1, please. First chapter of Acts. I mentioned that we were going to take up some studies in the book of Acts during these morning sessions.

Acts, chapter 1, verse 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked him to say, My Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Chapter 2. When the Lord's Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Then in Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 17. Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. I think that the central fact in the book of Acts is the coming and filling of the Holy Spirit of God. That really explains everything that happens after that.

Before Pentecost, the people were sort of a bland, insipid type of people. But then the Holy Spirit came, and these people were supercharged with power and with boldness for the Lord. Somebody said that they became radioactive with the Holy Spirit, and everywhere they went, people felt the sparks.

And that's thrillingly true. And as I read the book of Acts, and as I see these men and women going forth, little nobody as far as the world is concerned, but taken over by the Holy Spirit of God. As I see the souls that were being saved all the time, as I see the New Testament churches that were being planted, as I see the impact that was made on the community, as I see a church so powerful that people were afraid to join themselves lightly to it.

They realized that God was working, and working in a mighty power. As I read this in the book of Acts, I feel this is what it must be. We must have the filling of the Holy Spirit.

This is the grand imperative. How can we have it? To get the answer, we turn over to Ephesians 5, verses 17, 18, 19. Shall we turn back to that passage once again? Be filled with the Spirit.

The Scripture says, Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. The first thing I notice in this passage of Scripture is that there are certain similarities to being filled with the Spirit and being drunk with wine. And that's rather a shocking thing when you first come to it, and yet not so shocking when you begin to realize it.

Similarities to being drunk with wine. A. In both cases, the person is under an outside control. In both cases, the person is under a control outside of himself.

In the case of a man who's drunk with wine, he's under the control of alcoholic beverages, sometimes called spirits. Kind of interesting, isn't it? Interesting thing that the word spirits would ever be used of intoxicating liquor. And yet that's what it's called.

In the case of a man who's filled with the Spirit of God, he's under the control of the Spirit. And when you stop to think of that, you'll realize that this is the ideal, to be under the control of the Spirit. To turn our lives over to Him so that He can work through us, ungrieved, unclenched, and unhindered.

A second similarity is that in both cases, the person is fervent. There's that word again, Mr. Rowe. The people, the persons, are fervent in both cases.

When I think of fervent, I have to think of the word boiling. I have to think of the idea of fire. And when a person is drunk, well, he's fervent.

He's boiling, as it were. He's effervescent. He might have a personality like a Mr. Milk Toast, normally.

But he gets a few drinks in him, and his whole personality has been changed. But you know, it's true of the man who's filled with the Spirit of God, too. Something happens in the life of that man, and you can tell it.

And I think one of the greatest curses of the day in which we live is that we have a Christianity without the Holy Spirit. And oftentimes you'd like to ask the question that Paul asked in the 19th chapter of Acts when he came to some of John's disciples. And he met these people, and these people had a thin veneer of religion about them.

And yet he thought, well, there's something missing in these people's lives. What is it? And he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And you know, that's a very piercing and a very discerning question. And sometimes we like to ask that today, even in the circles in which we meet.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit? People who say what they're saying, people who have all the right answers, people who, as far as their orthodoxy is concerned, you can't question it. And yet, there's no fervency. There are no rivers of living water.

And Jesus said, he that believeth a knee out of his inward part shall flow rivers of living water. Jesus said when Christ comes in, the waters are going to flow. Where are the rivers of living water? In both cases, the person is firm.

And that's why it's rather interesting there in the day of Pentecost that when the great miracle had taken place, and when the Holy Spirit had been given, and when the people were all filled with the Holy Spirit, natural men standing by said, these men are drunk with new wine. Wasn't that an interesting thing? That Spirit filled people. There was something about them that gave other people the impression that they were drunk with new wine.

You know, if Spirit filled men come into your assembly sometimes, they're apt to make you feel uncomfortable. It's a strange thing to say, but it's absolutely true. They're apt to make you feel uncomfortable.

They'll be so fervent that you'll wish perhaps they'd quieten down. Well, that's the way it was at the day of Pentecost, certainly. Then a third similarity is that in both cases, both speech and song are affected.

Both speech and song are affected. Almost every time that you ever have the filling of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament, a person's speech is immediately affected by it. And usually when he opens his mouth, he starts talking about the Lord Jesus.

Do you have the Spirit of God? Are you filled with the Spirit of God? When you open your mouth, what comes out? It's an amazing thing that the filling of the Spirit of God is invariably connected with witness for the Christ of God. And it also affects a person's song. It's interesting that the man, when he gets drunk, you go by those houses and you hear, I don't know if you'd call it song, but you hear something coming out of the taverns and the bars and all the rest.

It's an interesting thing. The man gets loosened up, shall we say. He loses his inhibitions and he bursts forth into song.

Well, it's true of the man who's filled with the Spirit of God, too. Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, it says. And then finally, letter D, the man's walk is affected.

The man who's under the influence of intoxicating liquors, he staggers along the street. The sidewalk has been in the same place for 50 years, but all of a sudden it's rolling like waves of a sea. And he's trying to navigate along the sidewalk.

You can tell it by the way he walks. It's true of the child of God, too, who's filled with the Spirit of God. It affects his walk.

It affects where he goes. It affects the kind of a life he lives. It's absolutely vain to be talking about the filling of the Spirit of God if there's been no change in our lives, if we're undiscernable from the unsaved people about us.

But there are two contrasts between drunkenness and the filling of the Spirit, and we want to see these very clearly. And first is this, that with the filling of the Spirit, there is no riot or excess. It says, Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.

And you never get that with the Spirit of God's filling. He's there, things are done decently and in order. And closely related to that, with the filling of the Holy Spirit, there is no loss of self-control.

When a man is drunk, he does lose self-control. He does things that, in a sense, he's not even responsible for. But that isn't true when the Spirit of God comes in.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control. And that's a marvelous thing, isn't it? That a man can be filled with the Spirit of God and yet, in a real, more mysterious sense, he doesn't lose the power to control himself. It says in 1 Corinthians 14, The Spirit of the Prophet is subject to the Prophet.

Here was a man in the early days of the church and the Spirit of God had come upon him and he was filled with the Spirit of God and he began to speak. And what he spoke was actually the Word of God. He was a mouthpiece for God.

And yet, he never lost self-control in the process. He could never say, for instance, Well, I just couldn't help preaching three hours and a half. I was just boring along and I couldn't stop.

Well, that isn't true. When a man is filled with the Spirit of God, he still has self-control. And at the same time, he's under the control of the Spirit.

Now, the filling of the Spirit is the ideal state for the Christian. And if you'll just stop to think about it for a minute, you'll realize that this has to be true. Here's a person and he's filled with the Spirit.

What does that mean? Well, it means that today, at the beginning of the day, he opens his ear to get his instructions from the Lord. It means that his life is turned over to Christ day by day. And what it really means is that he's at that intersection when the Lord wants him to be there, to speak to that man there.

It means that his life is efficient. There isn't a lot of wasted energy. The Spirit of God doesn't waste a person's energy.

It means his life is effective. It means that every blow really counts. It's a life of power, and it's a life of release, too.

It's a life in which we're released from the inhibitions and the traditions and all the petty sins that bind us day by day. Now, sometimes in the Bible, the filling of the Spirit seems to be a sovereign gift of God. At least in one particular case, it's so.

In Luke 1.15, you read about John the Baptist. Luke 1.15, and it says that he was to be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. It says, verse 15, Luke 1, For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and

shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

Well, that's a mysterious thing, isn't it? I think that refers particularly to John's mission as the forerunner of Christ. I don't think it means that he didn't have to be born again. He was born in sin, shame, and iniquity.

He had to be saved. And yet, as far as his mission was concerned, as the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, he was indeed filled with the Holy Spirit. But, here in Ephesians 5.18, it's a command to be obeyed.

It says, Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. And this puts the responsibility right back on me. Do I want to be filled with the Spirit? Do I want a life that's effervescent with God? Do I want a life so that everywhere I go I'm going to be seeing things happening for God? God working in a marvelous, mysterious, supernatural way.

God says, Do you want that kind of a life? Well, it's your responsibility. Now, I think we want to mention, too, that the filling of the Spirit is not the same as the baptism of the Spirit. It's not the same as the indwelling of the Spirit.

It's not the same as the anointing. It's not the same as the earnest. And it's not the same as the seal.

Good to distinguish these things. There is some confusion today on it. Although, I'd like to say this.

I've met a lot of people, and they might not use the right phraseology. And yet, when you come in contact with them, you really believe that they are filled with the Spirit. And I'd rather have the filling, even if I called it by a wrong name, wouldn't you? I'd rather be filled with the Spirit, even if my phraseology wasn't right, than to be absolutely perfect, as far as the phraseology is concerned, and not be under the control of the Spirit of God.

Well, it's not the same as the baptism of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13, we read that the baptism of the Spirit is that ministry of the Holy Spirit which incorporates us into the body of Christ. By one Spirit, were we all baptized into one body.

And the baptism of the Spirit, of course, took place in the day of Pentecost. We come into the good of it the moment that we trust Christ as Savior. That's sovereign.

That takes place at the time of conversion. It's not the same as the indwelling of the Spirit of God. We read about that in John 14, verse 16.

And once again, this is the portion of every person who is genuinely born again through faith in Christ that very moment. The Spirit of God comes and indwells his life. And there should be a manifestation of it after that.

You don't feel the Holy Spirit come into your life, but you know he comes in because the Bible says it. And other people should know he comes in because of what they see in your life. The filling is not the same as the anointing.

The anointing is the use of the Holy Spirit in connection with his teaching ministry. The mysterious, marvelous thing that when a person is saved, the Spirit of God comes in And a teaching ministry begins there, and he enables this child of God, however young in the faith, to discern between truth and error, to hear the voice of the true shepherd and to discern the voice of strangers. And then it's not the same as the

earnest.

The earnest of the Spirit simply means that those of us who have the Spirit of God have the down payment that the full inheritance will follow. And it's not the same as the seal, either. The seal is a mark of ownership and a guarantee of the eternal security of the believer.

You'll read about that in Ephesians 1, verses 13 and 14. The filling. Is it a crisis, or is it a process? Well, I like to answer the question by saying that the filling of the Spirit can certainly be a crisis followed by a process.

It certainly must be a process. It must be a day-by-day, hour-by-hour, moment-by-moment experience. But I don't rule out the thought of crisis.

Are you afraid of a crisis experience of the Holy Spirit? Well, I'm not. Christians do have crisis experiences of His. There comes a time in the lives of some Christians when the truth of God is borne home to their soul.

Perhaps they've been saved, and now they see that they've been living for self and trying to save their lives, and the dam breaks, as it were. And they get down before the Lord, and they turn control over to the Lord, the Spirit, and a crisis takes place. I'm not afraid of that.

I have no doubt Moody had a crisis experience of the Holy Spirit to prepare him for the service that God was calling him to. I have no doubt Billy Graham and other of these men have had crisis experiences. But whether we have a crisis experience or not, the important thing, I think, to realize is that the filling of the Spirit of God is a continual process in the Christian life.

Literally, as has many times been pointed out, the wording is, Be ye being filled with the Spirit. Wouldn't it be nice if at the end of this meeting we could have an altar call, and you could come down and just by some simple act could receive the filling of the Spirit of God so that for the rest of your life you'd be filled with the Spirit? Well, it wouldn't really be nice. If it would be nice, God would have arranged it that way.

But if that had been His method, then we would cease to be dependent creatures on Him. The greatest glory of the creature is dependence. That's the way the Lord wants us, moving ahead on our knees.

And by arranging the filling of the Spirit of God in this way, He keeps us on our knees, as we'll see as we go on. And so this is a life that we live. No pep pill that you can take.

No capsule form. No single experience that will project you onto a plateau of Christian experience high above everybody else. It's a life to be lived, a process day by day.

Now, there are certain conditions to be met, and these are very obvious on the face of them. Certain conditions to be met if a person is going to be filled with the Spirit of God. The first is, he must confess and put away all known sin.

1 John 1, verses 5-9. Shall we turn to that? 1 John 1, verses 5-9. This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in

us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, John here is describing a way of life in which we walk with everything dragged out into the open as far as God is concerned. I wonder, do I know that life today? Is this the way I'm living? As I'm walking along the street and an evil thought enters my mind, do I know what it is right then and there to rush into the presence of God and say, Lord, that was sin! And I confess it, and I forsake it this moment before you.

There's nothing hidden with God. There's nothing under the counter with God. God isn't that kind of a God.

And if I'm going to walk in fellowship with Him, I have to drag it out in the open and keep it dragged out in the open, and that's what keeps me clean. And the Spirit of God can only fill clean vessels. Sin breaks fellowship with God.

Sin grieves the Spirit of God, and He cannot walk along happily with the life where sin is unconfessed. Second condition to be met. Yield.

Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. If I am to know the filling of the Spirit of God, my life must be turned over to Him without reservation.

So easy to talk about. But another thing to do. We don't realize, oftentimes, the things that are holding us back from a complete dedication, a complete devotion to the Christ of God.

And yet it's the only reasonable thing to do. If I want my life to be effective, if I want to be in the place of God's choosing, I have to do it. I just have to come and say, Lord Jesus, here I am.

Take over. Take control. Anywhere you want me to go.

Anything you want me to do. Anything you want me to say. You be the leader.

I'll do the following. Yield your life to God. Then see, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16. Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16. It says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.

Now, it's impossible to think of a life filled with the Spirit of God if that life at the same time is not filled with the word of God. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Impossible to be living day by day without cracking the Bible, without spending time in the word, without hearing God's voice speak to me in the Bible.

It's impossible to think of being filled with the Spirit. Isn't this crowding out the scripture for my life? Is schooling crowding it out? Well, we can do that, but we can't have the filling of the Spirit. It has often been pointed out that in Ephesians passage it says, be filled with the Spirit and these things will follow.

In Colossians it says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and the same things will follow. Conclusion, to be filled with the Spirit is to have the word of Christ dwelling in you richly. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.

And then, of course, condition to be met, number four, to be emptied of self. And I think you have that suggested at least in Galatians chapter 220. I have been crucified with Christ.

A great thing for us to know and to remember, all that we were sons of Adam, all that we were as men in the flesh, crucified with Christ. In us dwells no good thing. Our job, to be an emptied vessel, to be that glove into which the hand of Christ can come and move us as he will.

And so those are some conditions to be met in connection with the filling of the Spirit. Now, what are the results of being filled with the Spirit? Well, here again we go back to the book of Acts, first of all. Acts chapter 1 and verse 8. It says, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

That ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Result number one of being filled with the Spirit, power. Power for what? Power for witness.

Not necessarily power to do the spectacular, not necessarily power to do the sensational, although that was included here in the book of Acts. The power to open your mouth and testify for the Lord Jesus Christ. Result number two of being filled with the Spirit, boldness.

Acts chapter 4 and verse 31. If you have your Bibles open, turn to that. Acts chapter 4 and verse 31.

It says, and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Notice, and they spake. It's the tongue every time, the mouth every time.

They spake the word of God with boldness. Kind of thrilling, isn't it, to think of that same mouth that not very long before was saying, I don't even know the man. And now that same man gets up on the day of Pentecost, filled with the Spirit of God, and he preaches and 3,000 people are saved.

I tell you, it took boldness, too, to stand up. It took boldness for Peter to stand up that day, on the day of Pentecost, and point to the Jewish nation and say, you took him and you killed him, but God raised him from the dead and there's a day of reckoning coming again. That's what the filling of the Spirit of God did with Peter.

It gave him boldness. And not only that, a third result of being filled with the Spirit is generosity. In the very next verse, verse 32, it says, A multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.

Neither said any of them but of the things which he possessed with his own, and they had all things common. Now, here we go. With our 60 theological reasons why this verse doesn't mean what it says, or why we should shunt it into a dispensational pigeonhole and relegate it to the first days of the church.

But I want to tell you this morning that wherever the Spirit of God is filling lives, these results follow. Generosity. Too many Christians today, I fear, are suffering from paralysis of the nerve that leads from the brain to the wallet.

And when the Spirit of God comes in, that paralysis is gone, and people say, material things are what? If I can use them for the spread of the gospel, if I can use them for the salvation of souls, that's the thing that really counts. What a wonderful deliverance it is when the Spirit of God comes in and fills a life and people say, my greatest desire is to use the material things I have for the honor of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another result of the filling of the Spirit, witness verse 33.

Verse 33, we've already suggested it, but here it is again. You can't get away from it. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all.

Isn't that tremendous? This great power, there was a great witness there, a great subject to be witnessed about, and great grace was upon them all. That is, great enablement was given to them all. And then over in Ephesians chapter 5, we find that there are some other results of the filling of the Spirit of God, and one of them is joy.

Ephesians chapter 5, verse 19. It says in the King James Version, speaking to yourselves, but it really should be speaking to one another. It isn't that you go around talking to yourself, although that isn't so bad either.

But here the thought is, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. What does that mean? Well, look, it means when you're filled with the Spirit of God, your vocabulary is filled with the Bible. Really.

That's really what it means. And when you're talking to people, you're ministering to them, and you're feeding them. It's almost on the subconscious level.

It's so much a part of you. The Spirit has such control over you that you go around and you're talking to people and you're helping them on in the things of God. And then it says, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

That's the inward part of it. You yourself have the joy of the Lord as your strength day by day. Alright, then another.

F. Thanksgiving. You say, oh, that's not very sensational. That's not very spectacular.

I thought the filling of the Spirit would do something else for me. Well, this is one of the results of the filling of the Spirit. Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And then the final result. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Can a wife be filled with the Spirit? Yes.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your husband. Can a husband be filled with the Spirit of God? Yes. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church.

Can children be filled with the Spirit of God? Christian children? Yes. Honor your father and your mother. Submit yourselves unto your parents in the Lord.

This is the result of being filled with the Spirit. Can employees be filled with the Spirit of God? Yes. They should respect their masters and serve them not with eye service but as unto the Lord.

Can masters be filled with the Spirit of God? Employers? Yes. They should treat their employees kindly, too. Final question.

Does a Spirit-filled Christian know it? Well, the answer is this. If you mean, does he know it in the sense that he's proud that he thinks himself above other Christians the answer is no. If he's that way, he's filled with vitamin I. He's filled with a perpendicular pronoun and not with the Spirit of God.

But, does he know it? If you mean, does he know it in the sense that he realizes that God is at work and that where he goes things are happening for God the answer is yes, he knows it. These people in the book of Acts knew. They saw the marvelous converging of circumstances.

They saw that their lives were chained to the chariot wheels of God. And they realized that things were happening that the Spirit of God was working that he was using weak clay vessels to work. That was the thrill of life in the book of Acts.

And it can be yours, and it can be mine, too. If we meet the conditions, the results. Yes, sir.

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