

Filled With the Spirit and With Mercy

by Zac Poonen

The fullness of the Holy Spirit is essential for living a life that blesses others, and it requires surrendering our lives to Christ and allowing Him to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:03:41

Scripture: Luke 6:38, John 3:3, John 7:38, Acts 2:4, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Philippians 2:25-27, James 3:17, 2 Peter 1:9

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, starting from the foundation of being born again through the Holy Spirit. It delves into the distinction between being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit, highlighting the need for continuous spiritual growth and capacity expansion. The sermon stresses the significance of mercy, kindness, and forgiveness as key aspects of a Spirit-filled life, leading to personal healing and spiritual blessings. It encourages believers to be merciful, kind, and generous, reflecting God's mercy and love to others.

Transcript

Since we were talking about the fullness of the Holy Spirit earlier, I thought I'd continue, start from that point. It says in Romans 8 and verse 9, Romans 8, verse 9, and the last part, Romans 8, verse 9, the last part it says, If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. The Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit.

And that verse teaches us that you don't belong to Jesus if you don't have the Holy Spirit. So, which teaches us one thing, that when we are born again, we are born of the Holy Spirit. You cannot be born without the Holy Spirit's operation in your life.

Jesus spoke about that in John chapter 3 to Nicodemus. I say this so that we don't confuse what it means to be born of the Spirit to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 3, verse 3, Unless a person is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

And He said that in other words, unless you are born of water and the Spirit, verse 5, John 3, 5, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God. It's really the same thing. Water is one picture of the Holy Spirit.

Fire is another picture of the Holy Spirit. And you see these expressions, born of water, even the Holy Spirit. And John the Baptist is saying, baptized or immersed in the Holy Spirit and fire.

In the Old Testament, we read of cleansing by water and cleansing by fire. Cleansing by fire is more of an inner thing, you know, when you pull out gold from the bottom of, I mean, not the bottom, but from deep down the earth. It first comes up with a lot of mud and all that, and you use water to clean it first, and then you put it into the fire to purify it completely.

So there are two operations of the Holy Spirit. And that's why water and fire are used. So when we receive Christ into our life, Jesus Christ himself is in heaven, at the right hand of the Father.

And he hasn't come back to earth yet. He's coming back a second time in the future. So when we ask Christ to come into our heart, it's the Spirit of Christ that comes in.

It's the Holy Spirit. And if a person is genuinely born again, unfortunately, a lot of people who say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, they haven't been genuinely born again. It's just a phrase that has become very common.

Many of them have not repented. And those are empty words. But if a person is really, sincerely, and the Lord alone knows whether that's taken place or not, and that's usually manifest later on in their life, you'll see by their fruit you shall know them.

But if a person is really born again, the Holy Spirit has come in. Now, when you look at the acts of the apostles, it's clear that the apostles were given a special authority by God, not only to lay hands on people that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Now, a lot of people try to duplicate it today.

Now, let me tell you my own testimony. I have never in my life seen anyone who can lay hands on 12 people and make sure they're all filled with the Holy Spirit. But the apostles could.

There was no trial and error with the apostles. If they laid hands on one person or 25 people, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. But it's not true today.

I've never seen it, and I don't believe anybody has that gift. People assume that they have that gift, and it's not true. When Ananias laid hands on Paul, he said, I want you to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

But all this trial and error, and trying to coax people, and make them speak in tongues, there's something fake about it all. And you see the result in the lives of those people, that there's not much difference between many people who claim to be Pentecostal, filled with the Holy Spirit, and some God-fearing Baptist who doesn't even claim that. Why is that? We should not live in a self-deception.

I'm not against these things. I believe in being filled with the Holy Spirit, and I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But we need to make sure that we are not deceiving ourselves in this area.

So, the apostles were not only given the authority to lay hands on people and be filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a special authority, which is never given to anybody else. They were also given the authority to tell a person, your sins are forgiven.

Jesus gave that authority personally to the apostles in John 20, 23. He said, if you, if you forgive somebody's sins, they're forgiven. Now, I don't have that authority.

I can't go to somebody and say, listen, I'm telling you, your sins are forgiven. But the apostles had that authority, and we need to understand why God gave this authority, especially to the apostles, to tell a

person, to they themselves, with their own authority, could forgive somebody's sins. Jesus did it, you know.

Jesus said to people, your sins are forgiven. I'm telling you that. And the apostles went around saying that too.

But we can't say that. Today, if somebody comes to me and says, I want my sins to be forgiven, I turn him to the scripture. But when the apostles, for 30 years, there were no scriptures.

You know, the first scriptures were written about 25 years after the day of Pentecost. And even after they were written, for the first century or for a couple of centuries, how many people had a Bible? There was no printed Bible till 1400, the 1400s. So, we must remember that in the first two centuries or number of centuries, people never had a Bible.

You couldn't turn them to 1 John 1.9 and say, if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us. How in the world could they have an assurance of forgiveness? If somebody went to John and said, I'm a sinner, I want to receive Christ, then John would say, I'm telling you, your sins are forgiven. He had that authority from John 20, 23.

Now, today, when we quote 1 John 1.9, we are actually quoting John again. The same John, who told people verbally, your sins are forgiven, has written in scripture that if you confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us. So, it's the same way that they were given an authority to lay hands on people that they'd receive the Holy Spirit.

For example, Philip preached in Samaria, we read, and they were, they believed in Jesus, but they hadn't received the Holy Spirit. Then Peter and John came and laid hands on them. Some of these things can confuse us.

And, uh, one of the principles of Bible study that I have discovered through 55 years of studying scripture is, never get a doctrine from Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles is a history book. It inspired scripture.

But it was not given to us for doctrine. It must be compared with other portions of scripture. Because it's through taking doctrines out of the Acts of the Apostles that the Pentecostals say in Acts 2.4, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, they all spoke in tongues, so they say all must speak in tongues.

The Hutterites take Acts 2.44 and say they all had all things in common, so we must have all things in common. Now if you stretch that, you can say Paul shaved his head, so we must all shave our heads. That's also written in scripture.

There's so many things written in the Acts of the Apostles, which are not doctrine, but they're history. It's true history. It's inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's just recording what actually happened. It's like Psalm 14.1. The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. It's in scripture.

There is no God, but it's the fool who said it. There are many things like that in Acts of the Apostles, but when you want to get a clear understanding of doctrine, we go to the teaching of Jesus and the teaching in the Epistles, which is the teaching of the Holy Spirit. We can't go to the actions of Jesus in the Gospels

and produce a doctrine out of that.

Jesus walked on water, so all must walk on water. Jesus multiplied five loaves and fed five thousand, so we can multiply loaves. That's a false teaching.

You can't take the history in the Gospels or in the Acts and make a doctrine out of it. This is the confusion that has come so much in Christendom. If you understand this simple principle, people say, Jesus healed them all, so we must have meetings and heal everybody.

It doesn't work. We're just deceiving ourselves and more so deceiving other people. Having made that clarification, let me just say a few words about the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The psalmist said, I will lift up my cup, the cup of salvation. That is the first step when we are born again. We come to Jesus and we are born of the Holy Spirit or born of water in the Holy Spirit.

Water is a picture of the Holy Spirit way back in the Old Testament and even in the New. In John's Gospel, there are three places where water is used as a picture of the Holy Spirit. Something we can learn from that.

John 3, verse 5. We are born of the water in the Holy Spirit. That's when we lift up the cup of salvation. Can we be filled the day we are born again? Yes.

Cornelius was filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 10. Ananias came to Paul in Acts chapter 9 and laid hands on him and said, God sent me to fill you with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19, we read about some disciples of John the Baptist getting baptized in water, believing in Jesus and Paul laying hands on them.

They were being filled with the Holy Spirit. It was all immediate. But it was a cup.

What happens when we walk with the Lord is that if you really take up the cross and walk with the Lord, our capacity, our inner capacity in our spirit increases. And the cup becomes like a bucket or a well. Now you pour a cup of water into a well, it's not full.

It needs to be filled again. And so in John chapter 4, you read of the Holy Spirit as a well of water. This is the second stage.

We begin with a cup of water where we are born again. Born of water in the Spirit, John 3.5. In John 4.14, the Lord says, the water that I give him will become a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. The great mistake that a lot of people make is if they had an experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit once, they think that's it.

No. As our capacity increases, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit again. And the cup, when it becomes a well, it's not full of the Holy Spirit.

It's only got that measure. A well means it's much more full than a cup of water. And this pictures a person whose life is not just got the bare minimum, you know, a cup of water can satisfy your thirst up to a certain point.

But a well is endless. If you have a well in your house, it's not like having a cup of water. You can draw and draw and draw.

It's picturing a life of springing up, a life springing up with joy and victory and peace. Now, most Christians don't live this life. They're just with a cup.

And the cup gets dry pretty quickly. Most born-again people are there. But we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be like a well of water where our inner life is springing up all the time that we never, never in our life are without joy.

Never in our life without peace. Never without love to others. It's a wonderful life.

It's what Jesus does to us by creating within us a spring. That's the real word, a spring that keeps springing up, never ending flowing. You can't do it.

This is the fullness of the Holy Spirit that affects our personal life. And then in John 7, there's a third picture of water in the Gospel of John and that is he who believes in me. Verse 38.

John 7, 38. From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. And that's more than a well.

So here's a cup and then a well and the river. There are three degrees of fullness. So the well can increase its capacity within us and finally become one river and many rivers flowing from us in many directions.

And if we walk with the Lord, that can happen to any one of us because it's he who believes in me. That's the condition in verse 38. But if you don't believe, if you're not surrendered completely, if you're not walking with the Lord, if you're not capacity is not increasing, you can be a cup for 50 years.

You may scrape it to heaven but you will never accomplish what God wanted you to accomplish on this earth. And a lot of Christians, you know, who are gloomy, depressed and frequently upset and bad moods, they don't have a well springing up in their life at all. They got a cup.

They drink a little water and most of the time they're thirsty. And that's why they're gloomy and depressed and discouraged and complaining and grumbling. What they need is Jesus to thirst and come to Jesus and say, Lord, put a well in me.

And a river is something that goes beyond a well. A well is just what satisfies me. My joy, my life, my peace and my victory.

But a river is something that blesses others. So that is God's ultimate will for us. God told Abraham, I will bless you and you will be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

That's a wonderful promise in Genesis 12. I will bless you and you'll be a blessing to all the families of the earth. And we are told, I don't know whether you've noticed this verse in Galatians chapter 3 which says, Galatians 3.14, that the blessing of Abraham comes to us through the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3.14. Galatians 3.13 says that Christ, when he died, took away the curse. That's the negative aspect of salvation. The curse is gone.

And some people stop there. My sins are forgiven. The curse is gone.

I'm not going to hell. But brother, sister, there's more than that. Verse 14 says, the curse is now replaced not with emptiness but with a blessing.

It's the opposite of a curse. So God takes away the curse and gives us a blessing and that blessing is called the blessing of Abraham. And what is the blessing of Abraham? I will bless you and every family on earth will be blessed through you.

Those are the rivers flowing out from you and me. If we walk with the Lord and allow the Lord to increase our capacity, first of all, our own life will be filled with joy and victory and freedom from bad moods and freedom from discouragement and gloom and anger and bitterness and telling lies and every other wretched thing that we got from Adam. But then it will overflow from us to blessing to others that every family on earth that I meet, we don't meet all the families on the earth, but every family on this earth that I meet will get some water from me, something of the Holy Spirit, some touch of the Holy Spirit.

Maybe just a little encouragement. I don't even have to speak words. I mean, just my presence with them can bless them.

Imagine if every one of us sought to live this life. And this is not for some special mature Christian. The condition is he who believes.

And if you have not experienced it, that means your belief has been at a very low level. Lord, don't let me go to hell. Okay, you got a cup of water and you won't go to hell.

And I tell you, a lot of those people, when they stand before the Lord, they're going to be tremendously disappointed that their life could have counted so much more for God and they were satisfied with a cup of water when it could have been reversed. Don't you think you'll have some regret when you stand before the Lord if God says, you know, I wanted to let rivers flow out through you in so many directions and all your life you had faith just for a cup of water. So, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a something that constantly we need because our capacity increases.

That's why Ephesians 5, 18 the literal translation of this verse is be being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's not just once be filled with the Holy Spirit. You know the 12 disciples in Ephesus, Paul laid hands on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

But to the same Ephesians 12 people and others, he says in Ephesians 5, 18, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now they could have turned around and said, well Paul, you laid hands on us some years ago and we were filled with the Holy Spirit. Yeah, but then you got a cup.

I want you to have rivers. That's why those Ephesian people who in Acts 19 were filled with the Spirit, he says again in Ephesians 5, 18, be filled with the Spirit. Are people who have been filled with the Spirit once to be filled with the Spirit again? Yes.

Like I said, you pour a cup into a bucket and there's not much in it. It's to be filled again. And the bucket can become a tub and got to be filled again.

The tub can become a lake, got to be filled again. Or a well and then it can become one river and many rivers. It's all a question of where does your faith stop? If your faith stops at a bucket, that's all you'll have.

But if you say, Lord, I want to have all that you want me to have. I want to accomplish all that you want me to accomplish. I don't want to leave this earth before you have accomplished through me all that you wanted to accomplish in saving my soul.

And it doesn't matter whether you're a brother or sister. Maybe it's only brothers who stand up and preach in the pulpit. But many sisters can be a tremendous blessing to others.

I mean, don't you meet with people? What does it mean to be a blessing to every family on the earth? Somebody comes to visit you and you can be a blessing to them. Rivers can flow from you to that person. That is something of Christ flowing out from you.

The Holy Spirit is lifting up that person's spirit, encouraging. This is the way God wants every single person in the church to be. And it does not depend on ability.

It does not depend on the knowledge of the word. You know, today knowledge of the word is very important. I agree.

But that's if you're called to a ministry of preaching and teaching. I don't believe that everyone in our church should have the knowledge of the word that I have. I'm called to preach and teach.

Therefore, I must have knowledge of the word. And I say that particularly because as I said, for 1400 years, people didn't have a Bible. How in the world could they have a knowledge of the word? Imagine if you never had a printed Bible in your ever had a printed Bible.

And all you did was heard messages in the church. I mean, that's all they did in the early days. How would you know the word? How would you be able to quote this verse, and that verse, and this verse in the Psalms, and that verse in Proverbs, and this verse in Ephesians, and that verse in Thessalonians? How would you be able to do it when you don't have a Bible? How did Christians live for 1400 years? How did God expect them to live? A lot of knowledge of the Bible can be intellectual.

And very often when people quote this verse, and that verse, and the other verse, it's just to impress you with their knowledge or give you an intellectual grasp of truth. It doesn't make you more spiritual. I know a lot of people who can quote verses and verses verbatim from memory and I don't consider them spiritual at all.

I've heard preachers like that who quote huge sections of Scripture and I don't get anything out of it. They try to impress me with their knowledge of Scripture, but I don't get any fullness of the Spirit from them. So remember, as much as it is important to know God's Word, and I'm not despising that, I spent years studying it and I encourage all of you to study it, don't let that be a replacement for the Holy Spirit flowing through you, blessing other people, and don't let your lack of understanding of God's Word make you feel inferior.

You can be a blessing to others if every area of your life is surrendered to Christ. You've probably heard me use the picture in the Old Testament. How is the fullness of the Spirit? Some time ago I used that illustration here.

Here's a cup and you put a lid on it and you pour water on it. You know, pour a river on it. It flows and blesses millions, but the inside of the cup is still dirty because there's this lid on it and that's a picture of the veil that blocked off the most holy place, the inner spirit of man.

So the Holy Spirit could only be upon people in the Old Testament because there was a veil that blocked off man's spirit and Moses blessed many people, even when he disobeyed God. God told him to speak to the rock in Numbers chapter 20 and Moses hit the rock. Can God bless a disobedient servant of God?

Yes.

Two million people got water that day when Moses disobeyed. God uses disobedient servants to bless two million people. That's the example.

Jesus said that also. Many will come to me in the last day and say, Lord, we healed many in your name. Were those people blessed who got healed? Yes.

But the man himself who healed them, the Lord says, get away from my presence. I don't want you. Goes to hell.

God uses disobedient servants. So if you admire a man for his ministry, he'll be led astray. Whatever ministry it is, it's character, it's the inside of the cup that Jesus always emphasized.

And on the day of Pentecost, the veil had been rent. The lid was removed. Now the Holy Spirit could come within.

Like, you know, Jesus told his disciples, the first time he spoke to the disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit was in John 14. And this is how he put it. He said, now, John 14 and verse 17, the Holy Spirit is with you, but the veil has not been rent.

But once the veil is rent, John 14, 17, the Holy Spirit will be in you. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost. And that's what it says in John 7, 39, that the Holy Spirit was not yet given in this way.

Because Jesus was not yet glorified. So the Spirit could not flow from the innermost being. The significant thing that Jesus spoke about rivers is that it would flow from the innermost being, John 7, 38.

Many people emphasize the rivers. For many years I used to think about the rivers, the rivers, the rivers, till I saw what Jesus was emphasizing was from the innermost being. Which is unique for the New Covenant.

In the Old Testament it was not from the innermost being. And then we understand John 7, 39 which says the Holy Spirit was not given in this way because Jesus was not yet glorified. There were people filled with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament that is from upon them but from within.

And that's why in the New Testament, Jesus is the first example. In him the Holy Spirit flowed from within. That's why for 30 years he never did anything which we call ministry, never preached a sermon, never healed the sick, never cast out demons, but he was full of the Holy Spirit for 30 years.

His life was perfect. And then after that he had this ministry. It's not that he was not a blessing to others for 30 years, but he wasn't a blessing with supernatural gifts of ministry.

I'm sure anybody Jesus spoke to in those 30 years in Nazareth was blessed. Even if he didn't have supernatural gifts. But then he was anointed with supernatural gifts to be able to deliver people who were in bondage.

See for example, a person who is demon possessed, any amount of counseling won't help that person. You can counsel that person for 100 years. You've got to deliver the person from the demon.

Unless you deliver the person from a demon which can be done in a moment, counseling won't help that person. I've come across numerous cases like that. So there you need an anointing and God gives that anointing if he's called you for that ministry.

But even if he's not called you to ministry of delivering people from demons or prophesying or leadership, you still can have rivers of living water flowing from you as a sister, as a young person in a church, if every area of your life is yielded to Christ. To use an illustration, if you think of your heart as a house with many rooms in it and you receive Jesus into one area of your heart which is the guilt room. Let's call it the guilt room.

You feel guilty because of all the sins you've committed from your childhood and you ask Christ to come in. The Holy Spirit comes in. The blood of Jesus cleanses you from all sin and light has come in.

The spirit of Christ is there, but he's not filled you. So you look at a house with ten rooms and there's light in one room. And if you ask somebody, is there light in that house? Sure.

Is it filled with light? No. Because nine rooms are dark. That's how it is with many people.

They've received the spirit, but they're not filled with the Holy Spirit because there are areas of their life which they have not yielded. The Lord asks you, can I come into your library and look at all the books you read? Some believers say, no, there are certain books I like to read. You know, certain love stories and all which you may not want me to read.

The Lord says, okay, I won't come in. He stands at the door and knocks. If any man opens the door, I'll come in.

You want to preserve certain books you want to read that you don't want Jesus to determine what you read. Okay, keep them. So that room remains dark.

Or maybe you have television in your home. The Lord says, can I come in there and decide what programs you watch? And you say, no, there are certain things you may not like, Lord. Okay.

Your television room remains dark. You may be watching what you call clean programs, but some things which Jesus may not like to sit and watch with you. To me, the test is always, can I do this in fellowship with Jesus? Anything.

If I can't do something in fellowship with Jesus, I don't want to do it. When he said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me, it's like the yoke upon two bullocks and we're going together. Jesus and I are in it together.

And if there's anything in my life that I can't do with Jesus, I've decided long ago, I don't want to do it, however right it may be. There are many things in our life, my brothers and sisters, which are lawful. But a spirit-filled Christian still will not do it, even though it's lawful.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians, in chapter 6, verse 12. All things are lawful for me. Now you need to understand, Paul was a man who was free from sin.

So he's talking about lawful things which are not sinful. He wasn't saying adultery is lawful or telling lies is lawful. Here's a man who's free from sin.

He says, I've come to a life where I've discovered lots of things I can do which are perfectly right, lawful, righteous. But among all those hundred things that are lawful, there may be only ten things that are profitable. So I'm only going to do those ten things which are profitable.

Other Christians may live at a lower level and say, well, I'm not doing anything wrong. Fine. But Paul says, I'm not going to live at that level.

I've got only one life and I want it to count for God. I'm not going to spend my life doing all the lawful things that we can do. Only the profitable things.

And I believe that's what makes the difference between a Christian who's immature and mature, a Christian who's carnal and spiritual. That the baby Christian always asks this question, what's wrong in this? What's wrong in that? Can I do this? Can I do that? But as a spiritual Christian asks himself, is it profitable? Not is it lawful? It's like children who say, how close can I go to the edge of the cliff without falling over? It's only children who ask such questions. How close can I stand at the edge of the platform when the train's coming by? Babies ask such questions.

Grown-ups say, I'd like to stay as far away from it as possible. Can I watch this type of movie or that type of movie? Who asks these questions? You can ask a question, is it lawful to watch this or is it profitable to watch this? For children, it's okay. It's lawful.

But for a grown-up adult whose life he wants to come for God, he's going to live at a much higher level. Is it lawful? All things are profitable. All things are lawful but all things are not profitable.

If you just take that one verse and examine your life, you'll find why you've not grown so much in your life. Because you're not disciplined. Discipline is the one thing that most Christians need and which they don't like and they don't do.

And they wonder why somebody else who was born again long after them has gone way ahead of them spiritually. Why is it some people who join this church much later are far more effective in this church than some of you who have been here for ages? Why is it some who come later show a greater spirit of service to this church than others who have been here for years, who just drift along, who come and sit and warm the pews, warm the chairs and listen and receive and receive and receive and give very little in terms of service. It's because there are serious Christians who say, I want to do what's profitable.

I want my life to come for God. And I wish all of us were like that. It's true that Jesus said among the laborers who started at 6 o'clock in the morning and worked 12 hours and yet the Lord rewarded those who came at the 11th hour.

And they got the greater reward. And what was the Lord teaching us through that? That you can consider yourself a senior Christian because you've been born again for so many years. Or a senior member of RLCF because you've been here from the beginning.

And the Lord says that counts for nothing with me. You could be a senior person and a useless person. Because you're just full of yourself.

You're just spending your time doing what is lawful. And someone who's come at the 11th hour can be far more effective. That's what the Lord's trying to teach.

So you need to ask yourself, are you a Christian who's really effective for the Lord and someone who that means someone if you died today, RLCF would be a loser. Or are you a person if you died, people won't make any won't see any change. Church is going on well without that person also.

Then you need to ask yourself whether you're really a committed member of the body of Christ. Because, you know, if I lose my little finger one day, little finger is not the most important part of my body. But if I lose it one day boy, I'm going to really feel its absence.

I really am. Even if it's a very small member, it's not like I have to lose my leg or my liver or something like that. Even a little finger.

So even if a person's not a very gifted member I believe we must be such committed members of a local church that our absence will be felt, hey something's missing. Because there was a person there who was such a blessing to the church in some way, maybe a sister who was just an encouragement to others. Or who served in such ways that when she's not there, you feel it.

Every brother and sister in the church must be like that. And I don't mean just practical service, that's also very important. Because I think there are a whole lot of gifts that come under this one gift mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.

I want to read to you the list of gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. There are some spectacular ones. You know, when people are filled with the Holy Spirit and anointed to serve, there are some spectacular gifts.

1 Corinthians 12, 28. God has appointed in the church first apostles. I mean, that's God's choice.

It's God who decided that the first, the number one gift in the church is apostles. Those who plant churches, who guide the elders, etc. And second, prophets.

God's decided, second in the church are prophets, those who can prophetically minister God's word. Now, you may not be an apostle, you may not be a prophet. Fine.

Third are teachers. Those who can take God's word and explain it simply. A good teacher makes complicated things simple.

A bad teacher makes simple things complicated. And that's often the result of going to a Bible school. You take simple things and make it complicated.

That's why I never encourage you to listen to any preacher who's going to a Bible school. Teachers are anointed by the Holy Spirit. Miracles.

That's another gift. Now, the first three are marked off. First, second, third.

And there's no fourth, fifth, sixth. Notice that. The rest is all fourth.

So there are only four categories of gifts. First, apostles. Second, prophets.

Third, teachers. And then, then means fourth. Miracles, healings, helps, administration, maybe fourth and fifth if you like, if you put the next then.

But, miracles, then healings. So there's no then after that. Healings, helps, administration, speaking in tongues.

Do you know that helps? How many people have sought for the gift of helps? Lord, I'm fasting and praying that you make me help in the church. I've never in my life heard of anybody praying for that. They're praying for some of the other things.

Healings and tongues and... But it's in the same category. And I tell you that many, many people like this who have this gift of helps. And I've seen some wonderful people in different churches.

You know, when they sense that... See, there's a sister who's sick in that home. Let me go and take some food for them. That's helps.

You don't believe that's a gift of the Holy Spirit? It is. But there are a lot of other people who are just thoughtless. They only think of themselves.

The whole world revolves around themselves. And themselves, I'm in need and why didn't anybody think of me when I'm in need? These are a cancer in the body of Christ. We shouldn't be a cancer in the body of Christ.

A cancer is a group of cells. It always wants to receive all the nourishment to itself. And that's why it grows and grows and grows and grows way out of proportion to the size it was supposed to be.

And there are people like that in the body who are an absolute cancer. They only think of receiving, receiving. Everybody must serve me and everyone must care for me and sympathize with me and think of all the troubles I have and come and comfort me.

You know, you'll never grow that way. God so loved that he received? No. God so loved that he gave.

True love is always something that gives and is not waiting to receive and receive and receive. We can be blessed through receiving. For example, you're hearing God's word now.

You're being blessed. There is a blessing in receiving. But Jesus said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Many people haven't understood that. I find in every church I've seen this. Most people have not understood that there is a far greater blessing in giving than receiving.

It's Acts 20 verse 35. Jesus said that. And the reason perhaps why some of you may not be getting more blessing is because you haven't thought in terms of giving, serving.

You come to the church and say, Lord, do you know that every member of this body and Jesus used the picture of body in local church, serves. Can you think of one member in your body that doesn't do something for the body? There's no member like that. There is no member in your body that only receives, receives, receives and does nothing.

I mean, that would be a dead member which just receives and doesn't do anything in return. It's like a paralyzed hand. A paralyzed hand gets all the nourishment the body gives.

The blood is flowing through it. The glories of the blood of Jesus cleanses me. Do you know that blood flows through a paralyzed hand? Sure.

It's part of the body. But it's such a useless part of the body. It becomes a burden.

Other parts of the body have to do something. You want to scratch this hand or wash it. All the others have to cooperate.

But this hand itself is useless. It doesn't do a single thing for the body. There must be no such member in the body of Christ.

I want you to ask yourself, not asking you to judge anybody else. Do you come to a church only in order to receive? Then I want to say to you in Jesus' name, you are a paralyzed member. I want to ask you another question.

Would you like to have some member in your body paralyzed? Would you like your little finger to be paralyzed? Oh, a small little thing, let it be paralyzed. No. You are so passionate that no part of your body should be paralyzed and yet you yourself are going to be a paralyzed member in the local church? How can that be? Don't you think that's utterly selfish? Jesus came to deliver us from this selfish self-centered way of life.

And I believe true conversion is being delivered from self-centeredness to God-centeredness, Christ-centeredness, where Christ really becomes my head. And this is where the Holy Spirit seeks to lead us, where he fills us within, blesses us and it doesn't stop there. It doesn't stop with a well that's blessing me.

You got a well in your house and you can drink as much as you want, again and again and again and again. It becomes a river. So don't stop with a cup and don't stop with a well.

God's will is that every single one of us, remember John 7.38, He who believes in me. Let me show you that. Let me show you, turn you back to John chapter 6 first of all.

And then go to John 7. How many of you would like to be a part of this verse? I'm asking all of you a question. How many of you would like to be a part of this verse? John chapter 6, chapter 6, verse 47. He who believes in me has eternal life.

Would you like to be a part of that? What is the condition? Believe. The same Lord in the next chapter says in John 7.38, He who believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from him, blessing others. Why do you want John 6.47 and not John 7.38? The condition is the same.

He who believes in me. Why is it so many people stop in John 6.47? He who believes in me has eternal life. And don't go on to John 7.38. He who believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from him.

I'll tell you why. Because they are utterly selfish. They think I want it.

I want eternal life. I want to get everything I can from the church. What do I give for it? I'm not interested.

I come here to receive, receive, receive. In the land of Israel there are two seas. If you look at a map of Israel, you'll find the river Jordan flows.

There are two seas. The sea in the north is called the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was always moving around that sea.

There's another sea at the bottom called the Dead Sea. Do you know the difference between the two? The Sea of Galilee, the water flows in and it flows out as the river Jordan. The Dead Sea, water flows in and

doesn't flow out.

It's dead. Jesus never went to the Dead Sea. He was always in the Sea of Galilee.

It's a parable in geography. And I see a lot of Christians like that. Most Christians are like the Dead Sea, I'll tell you that, unfortunately.

They receive and receive and receive and receive and they think they're being blessed. No. It's more blessed to give.

Not just to have a cup or a well, but to be a river. Well, you say, I don't have much to give. I'll tell you one of the things that we can all give.

The Bible says that we talked about Stephen earlier in the study. Stephen was full of the spirit and wisdom. It's mentioned in Acts chapter 6. Stephen, full of the spirit and wisdom.

Let me show you one of the characteristics of wisdom in James chapter 3. In James chapter 3, it speaks about wisdom. In verse 17, it says here, the wisdom from above is first pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable and full of something. You know, we think of full of the Holy Spirit.

Full of mercy. So here's something that we can all give to one another. Mercy.

Doesn't cost you money. You don't have to be a Bible scholar. Do you know what it means to be merciful to other people? It means to quickly forgive them when they do something wrong in practical terms.

Your wife messes up something in the house without even thinking. Let the river of mercy flow. Forgive.

Because, don't forget, you've also messed up some things in the past, right? Or your husband messes up something. Or they forget to tell you something, which is very important. They should have told you.

A message came and they didn't forget to tell you. Has the world collapsed because of that? Be merciful. Full of mercy.

So never say, there's nothing I cannot give. I can give mercy. You don't need one dollar in your pocket to give mercy to others.

But you need to recognize how merciful God has been with you. That's the person who gives mercy. God's only asking us to give out what he's given us.

I look at myself very often like a mailman. What if a mailman had a lot of envelopes with many checks in it, which are all written, you know, envelopes with other people's names on it. What if he kept it all himself? I've heard of stories of people who steal the mail and steal other people's money that way.

Wouldn't you call him a thief? Has God been merciful to you? The Bible says, Be merciful to others as God has been merciful to you. You're a mailman to whom God has given so much mercy. I want you to go and distribute this to these people whom you meet.

Have you done it? Or have you kept it to yourself? You remember that story of the man who was forgiven 10,000 talents and he couldn't forgive one denary to somebody or a few denary to someone. That is the condition of a lot of Christians who say, I have nothing to give. We have a lot to give.

Mercy. And so, even if you start with something small, God will lead us to greater things. You may not have the ability to give God's anointed word to people, but I'll tell you something, God will do that.

God will even use some of your sisters to speak God's anointed word over a phone, over a mobile phone or in an email. You don't have to sit in this pulpit always to give God's word. How many people you communicate with during a week? You can bless all of them with God's word if you want to.

It can be a lust for honor that says, I want to sit in the pulpit and preach. But, God will give that word to you if He first sees that you've already given what He gave you. Mercy.

If He sees you hard on others, He says, you're not giving out what I gave you. I gave you so much mercy. Every time you ask me to forgive you, I forgive you immediately.

I didn't even take one second. Do you keep anybody waiting for forgiveness? Maybe somebody wronged you, came to you and said, I'm sorry. Do you act big and say, let that person suffer a little for all he did to me.

I'm not going to give him forgiveness immediately. There are husbands and wives like that who don't talk to each other for one or two days. And they call themselves Christians.

They have nothing to give. Give, and it shall be given to you. That's what Jesus said in Luke chapter 6. And it's a wonderful thing when we learn to give like that.

Luke chapter 6. And He's talking about this type of mercy. Verse 32. If you love those who love you, what credit is that? If you lend to those whom you expect to receive, verse 34, what's that? Great to you.

Because sinners also do exactly the same thing. But I'm telling you to love your enemies. Those folks who are not merciful to you, be merciful to them.

Why? Because God's been so merciful to you. Do good and lend expecting nothing in return. Be merciful.

Verse 36. Just as your father is merciful. And the opposite of that, don't judge.

Be merciful. Instead of judging, be merciful. Don't just say, I know why that person did it.

You don't. You don't know his heart. You don't know his motive.

Maybe he had a good motive. Maybe he tried his best and he slipped up. Be merciful.

Be merciful. Don't go to people and say, you're always like that. You can talk about certain communities and say, ah, those communities, we know they're always like that.

A Christian will never talk like that. A Christian will never go to somebody, I told you not to do that. He'll be merciful.

And I believe that even to our children, it's by mercy and kindness that we can bring them to a life of repentance. I've seen legalistic strict fathers and mothers whose children grow up wayward. With all their strict standards.

You must dress like this. You must do like this. You must do like this.

When the children grow up, they say, I don't want any of your religion. I don't blame them. Because that's not the religion of Jesus Christ.

It's a legalistic rule-driven Christianity. Which is not the religion of the Bible. Be merciful.

The Bible says in Romans 2 verse 4, the kindness of God leads us to repentance. Have you ever tried to lead people to repentance through kindness? The kindness of God leads us to repentance. The mercy of God.

Do you want your wife to change? Be kind. Do you want your husband to change? Be kind. Be merciful.

That's God's method. Or you can try the devil's method, being hard. So, let's none of us ever say, there's nothing I have to give.

We have become, God has been rich in mercy, has shown us so much mercy. And we can easily pass mercy on to others. Turn with me to 2nd Peter and chapter 1. There's one thing the Bible says we should never forget.

And that is how much we've been forgiven. We must know that the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin. But we must never forget how much we've been forgiven.

It says here in 2nd Peter 1.9 of people have forgotten, the last part of that verse, 2nd Peter 1.9. Those have forgotten that purification from their former sins. It's very easy to forget how much you've been forgiven. It's very easy to forget how much mercy God showed to you when you messed up.

When you did something wrong. Especially when you're dealing with somebody else who's done something wrong. And you completely forget all that God did for you in the past.

When you did 101 things wrong. And when we forget our purification from our former sins, in verse 9 it says you'll become blind. This is the reason why many Christians are blind.

Spiritually. This is the reason why many people read the Bible and they don't seem to see things which other people see. I've had people tell me, Brother Zach, I never saw that in the Bible till you pointed it out to me.

I said it was there in your Bible all the time. How come you didn't see it? You were blind. And you know why you were blind? Because you forgot how merciful God was to you.

And you were not merciful to others. That's why you're blind. I never in my life, I remember the first time I saw that verse.

And I said, Lord, I never want to be blind. And the Lord said, never forget how much you've been forgiven. And whenever you deal with others who hurt you, harm you, call you names, treat you badly, remember how I forgave you when you treated me badly.

I said, Lord, I'll remember that. It becomes very easy to forgive others. If you always remember how much you've been forgiven.

Be very easy to be merciful to others. If you remember how much mercy God has shown you. There's a lot that we can do to bless the church.

Start with mercy. Then God will lead you to higher things. And there'll be many, many other forms of service that you can do for this church.

And this church can become a very powerful church as a result. One last verse. You know, when God sees us being merciful to others, He gives us more mercy.

That's a wonderful thing. And some of us may be losing out on some mercy that God wants to give us. Because we haven't already distributed to others the mercy He gave us.

We're storing it ourselves, like a mailman who's kept all these checks for himself, which were meant to be given to others. Such a mailman is a thief. The Bible says, Owe no man anything except to love one another, except to be merciful to another.

So here's the verse I want to show you. If a man was very sick, and ask yourself whether your sickness is because you've not been merciful to others. Some chronic sickness that you're never able to get out of.

Because you're not merciful to others. Philippians chapter 2 Here was a believer, a fine believer, a fellow soldier of Christ who became sick. Can God's fellow workers become sick? Here is an example.

Philippians 2 25 I wanted to send you a Phaphroditus. Paul says, my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, who is your messenger. And he was longing for you all.

He was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. He was sick. Now many Christians are distressed when other people did not hear that they were sick.

Why didn't they come to visit me? This guy was the opposite. He was distressed that other people, those who heard I was sick, I'm sorry they'd be so disturbed. I wish they never knew I was sick.

Have you ever heard of believers like that? He was a unique man. He was distressed that people heard he was sick. And then it says, how sick was he? It wasn't just a cough or a cold.

Verse 27 He was sick to the point of death. And he was so free from thinking about himself that he was distressed that other people heard about it. And he says, God had mercy on him and healed him.

You know, healing is one aspect of God's mercy. Learn, I mean, even if you're selfish, if you're sick, be merciful to others. You may get some healing.

I never forget something that happened to me in 1967 or early 68 before I got married. I had to go in for a little stitch and somewhere I had an injury and the doctor put me under anesthesia. And a few days later I found a severe pain, nerve pain, down my hand.

I don't know whether you've faced nerve pain. It's the worst possible pain you can ever have. I didn't know why.

I said, how did it hurt my hand? I went to a neurosurgeon and he said to another neurosurgeon somewhere else, and he said did anybody give you anesthesia? I said, yeah. A few days ago I had to get something stitched and they put me under anesthesia. He said, yeah, well, what happened was when they lifted you up, you were unconscious and they don't realize if they're not careful about holding your head up and this is sort of a primitive hospital your head must have fallen back into such an angle which if you were conscious you would have cried out in pain, but because you were unconscious it affected a nerve up

there.

You've got to live with this for the rest of your life. And I was going to get married in a couple of months. I said, boy, what a wonderful wedding gift I got just a couple of months before my marriage.

I didn't have any victory over sin. I was born again, but I was defeated. I was so upset with this doctor.

He didn't do it deliberately. It was carelessness. I wrote him a very stiff letter and as soon as I had mailed it, the Lord said you shouldn't write like that.

You're a Christian. I think it was a couple of days later that I realized it. I wrote another letter.

Brother, I'm really sorry for what I wrote. Please forgive me for writing it. It was very bad of me to blame you for something you didn't do.

Please forgive me. And I released him, forgave him. Believe it or not, I was healed.

I never had a problem from that day in all these 47 years. Learn to be merciful to others. There's healing.

God had mercy on him and healed him. I know there are people who are sick because they haven't forgiven somebody. Because they have not been merciful to somebody.

And they live with that sickness, even though they are believers. When they could have lived in health. I want to be healthy because I want to serve God.

Not for any other reason. God wants you to be healthy, brother, sister. Be merciful to others.

Be kind to others. Be good to others. Treat others exactly the way you want to be treated.

Do you want others to serve you? Do you get some benefit when others serve you? Serve others. Don't think of your own convenience. Bless them.

That's how it should be in the body of Christ. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, please help us to honor you and really seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit rather than know the definition of it.

To manifest the Spirit-filled life more than understand the theology of it. Give us grace, we pray, that rivers of living water you said, he who believes can have eternal life. And he who believes can have rivers of living water flowing out to him.

I pray that will be true of all of us. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/5ipFoAW7FOI.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/filled-with-the-spirit-and-with-mercy/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net