

Be Filled With The Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:18

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, October 10, 2020

Well, good morning, everyone, and welcome to Grace Fellowship Chilliwack and Happy Thanksgiving to you. We know that several of our members are out of town this weekend on holiday for the Thanksgiving weekend. Also, some of you are watching online for that as well. Also a number of you are visitors and if you are visiting us or watching us online as a visitor just out of town right now, we want to say that it's a joy to have you. We love seeing new faces around here, amen? And we know that many of you are new to Chilliwack; you just moved here and you're looking for a new church home, and some have felt like they found one here. That is wonderful to hear. It's so encouraging. But I do want to say just a word to say this, this morning, if you're thinking along those lines. We don't want you to just stop there; we don't want you to stop at just visiting us. But we would encourage you to join. We would encourage you to become a member. We haven't said anything about this for awhile. We haven't mentioned it, but we don't want people to just attend our church, we want them to join. We don't want them to just come every once in a while, but we want them to commit because we feel that that's what God wants them to do. God wants you to commit to a local body of believers.

As I was thinking about that, this week, I came up with a list of reasons why membership is important, just a brief list of reasons why you should join the church. You know, for one thing, because God wants you to publicly identify with the Lord Jesus Christ. God wants you to publicly identify with him. He doesn't want you to do it privately. He wants you to do it publicly. He doesn't want you to do it in secret but out in the open. There's a lot of people following Christ in secret today. They're doing it in hiding for fear of what might happen if someone finds out. God doesn't want that. Jesus didn't die for you in secret. You don't want to follow him that way. You want to make a commitment and follow Him in public.

Another reason why you should join the church, you don't want to be alone in the Christian life. You don't want to go through the Christian life alone. You need to be with other people because you need their help. You need their encouragement, we all fall down from time to time, don't we? We all stumble and you need someone there to pick you up, otherwise, you're going to stumble all alone.

One more reason why you should join a church; this is just a quick little introduction here for you, but it's that you need to be serving other people. Church is a place where you serve others. A church is a place where you come and pour your life into them. It's not about your needs and wants. A church is not about your hopes and dreams. It's about the needs of others. I've told you guys before that one of the jobs of our church is to remind you each week, that you're not the center of the universe. I mean, every week, our people, we all come in here thinking we're the king of the castle, right? We're on top of the food chain, and it's the job of the church to knock you down a notch. It's the job of the church to remind

you that you're not. This is about others. But all this is to say that if you haven't joined our church yet, or if you haven't joined a local church, we would encourage you to do that. If you're visiting here or if you're online watching this, and you're a visitor, and you feel like this is a place for you, we would encourage you to join. Just come see me or one of the elders and we can tell you how to do that. Or you can go on our website at Grace Fellowship, Chilliwack, and all the information is found on there. But we would encourage you to take church membership seriously today.

With that said, while we're talking about that, while we're talking about commitment in the church this morning, I want to invite you to turn in your Bibles to a book that talks about that. It says a lot about committing yourself to the Lord, and that is the book of Ephesians. That's the book we're in this morning. If you would please turn to the book of Ephesians, and we're in chapter five, which I would like to read to you before we begin. In chapter five, verse one, Paul writes, and he says this, he says,

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting but rather giving thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says,

*“Awake sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”*

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing

and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

We'll stop the reading there. Just to say a few words about this passage, here in a few weeks, churches from all over the world are going to celebrate an event known as Reformation Sunday. It's called Reformation Sunday in honor of the Protestant Reformation or the time when certain men stood up to the Roman Catholic Church. They stood up to the Pope and his teachings, and they separated over several principles known as the Five Solas. Some of you have heard of these before, the Five Solas but they are as follows: Sola gratia, Sola fide, Sola Christus, Sola scriptura and Sola Deo gloria. Now, we're going to talk about those here in a few weeks. I'll say about that more in the weeks to come, but the first of these concerns us this morning, Sola gratia, because it means grace alone. Our salvation is by grace alone, which means we don't earn it, we don't work for it. It is given to us completely by the mercy of Christ. We're powerless, we're unable so God does it all.

That's what our passage is about this morning. That's what the text we're going to study is about, because it says that God does it all. If you're going to defeat your sin, He will have to do everything. Just to give you the background for our text, if you notice, verse eight, it's a key part of the passage. It's very important because it falls right in the middle of what I just read to you. The verse eight says,

for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

I've told you that this is the first time you see the word "light" in this book, and it's the Greek word *phos* from which we get the word photography, or photograph. It means something bright or radiant, but it also means something that awakens things because that's what the light does. If you're asleep, someone comes in, turns on the light, you wake up, right? And you see what's there. In the similar way, Paul says, the Lord does that, salvation does that with regards to sin. Before when you were lost you sinned, then afterwards when you were saved, you sinned, but what was the difference? Afterwards, you were awake to it. Afterwards, you saw what it really was, because you were in the light.

There are several sins Paul mentions in this book to show you this; we've gone through these in the weeks past, he talks about lying and stealing and anger. Those are some of the sins that he mentions in chapter four. Then in chapter five and verse three, he talks about morality, which is another way of saying lust. But Paul does all that, he mentions all this to say that now that you're a Christian, now that you're saved, you need to put your sin away because you're in the light. When you're in the darkness, you had an excuse to sin, but now you don't. You know, I've talked to people who said they were surprised when they became a Christian. They were shocked because they felt so bad. They felt so guilty. They say "What was that all about?" And I said, "Well, that's because you're in the light now. For the first time in your life, you see sin the way God does, and it makes you feel bad." It changes everything, doesn't it? I talk to other people who say that "I sin less than I used to. I don't sin as much

as I did before but I feel so bad about it now. It drives me crazy. It really bothers me.” I said “That’s good because it bothers God. You are experiencing sin on some small level the way he does, he hates it. And you’re starting to hate it too, because you’re in the light. You have woken up to the things of God, your soul is out of its slumber, and you need to be grateful for that.” As a result of this, verse 18 says something peculiar. If you look down in verse 18, this is our focus for today. But it says something strange. If you read it, it says,

and do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

Let me explain this passage in a moment, but just by reading that you can tell that it’s an odd passage, isn’t it? It’s a little bit strange. The word “filled” here, it’s a Greek word *plerousthe*, which means to fill up or fill to the top. In fact, one Bible dictionary says it means to fill up until it spills over, kind of comes over the sides. Paul says here, you need to do that with God, you need to do that with the spirit. Why? Because that’s how you defeat your sin. That’s the connection here. I’m gonna explain a lot of little details of this passage to you in a moment. But what he’s saying here is you fill yourself with the Spirit, because that’s the only way you’re going to get over your flesh. You’re too weak to do it on your own. You’re too helpless. It’s impossible. So this Spirit helps you by filling you.

Some of you have struggled with sin this week and you wonder why? Well, there’s a very simple answer to that question. It could be because you’re filling your lives with other things, right? Matter of fact, we talked about this in the sermon last week, but I think that’s one of the most common problems in British Columbia right now. We’re so distracted. That’s why we sin so much. You talk to the average person, you ask him, where does all his time go? Well, it goes to watching ballgames, goes to watching hockey, or football or basketball or something like that. Their whole life is spent following their team or their players or their favorite coaches. Sometimes you have to remind them that they’re not on the team. They just think that way. Or all the time goes into vacations, right? All the time goes, this is a big one in BC, but all the time goes into the next trip or the next holiday or the next getaway. You can never get a hold of them, because they’re never in a place that has cell phone reception. They’re always out in the woods somewhere. Some people spend all their time at work. Some people are tied to their desk, and on and on and on. But what that does in your Christian life, if you fill your time with all of that there’s not enough room for this. And you can’t fight your sin.

This is why some people lust and lust and lust and they can’t stop. Or they worry and they worry and they worry and it just goes on and on and on, and the reason they’re doing that is because they’re trying to fight sin by themselves. They need to be doing it with the Spirit. They need to be filling their lives with the things of Him. If you notice, when you read this passage, there’s a change that occurs here. In verse 18, well even above this in verse 14, Paul says “awake sleeper.” In other words, the passage starts off with you asleep, you’re spiritually dozing on the things of God, not paying attention, totally distracted. Then verse 18, you’re filled with the Spirit and what happens in verse 19? You speak to one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs. And what Paul is saying here is that the way to get

from verse 14 to verse 19, is with the Spirit's help. It's the only way you're going to defeat your sin. You're not going to do it by watching more hockey, you're not going to do it by going on more vacations, and you're not going to do it by spending more time at work. You're going to do it with the Holy Spirit's help. It's the only way you can get victory over your sin.

You know, to kind of illustrate this a little bit. Some of you remember the time I put an extension cord up here at the pulpit. You guys remember that or not? Some of you were here. It stretched across the stage and went out the door and I told you that it represents your life. The plug-in part represents your life here on earth. It represents your life on this planet because the Lord plugs you into existence and you begin to live for a short amount of time. 60, 70, 80 years and then that's it. Then you die, right? And the cord represents your life after that. It represents what happens to you in eternity because it starts here on the stage by the pulpit, goes out the door, around the corner, and just goes on and on and on and on and on, never ends. It represents your soul and your spirit after death.

And I showed you that and asked you this question, which one are you living for, the plug-in or the chord? Which one is important? Which one are you prioritizing, this life or eternity? I mentioned that because I need to ask that again. I need to ask you the same question this morning. Which one are you living for? Because this word "fill" means fill up. Which one is filling up your time? The 60, 70, 80 years or the vast amount of time in heaven? Your answer to that determines how you look at sin, because if this life is all you have your sin will be very appealing to you. You'll want it. But if Eternity is more appealing, you won't. And that's what this text is about this morning. That's what we're going to be talking about.

So if you're taking notes in Ephesians 5, we're going to look at what might be the most interesting verse in the book, simply because it is such an odd verse, the way it reads. So I've got three questions for this unusual passage. That's our outline for today. That's what I want to talk to you about. If you're taking notes in Ephesians 5:18, we're going to look at three questions for this unusual passage, because this is unusual; this is a little strange. Like the meaning of being filled with the Spirit, if you think about that phrase that, you know, I thought when I was saved, I already did that. I thought when I was saved, I already was filled with the Spirit, right? So what does this mean? What is this talking about? Or the statement about getting drunk with wine? That's really odd. What does that have to do with anything in this text? Or he mentions music in verse 19, "songs, hymns, and spiritual songs"? Where does that come into play? There's just a lot to be explained in this text.

So this morning, we're going to look at that by talking about three questions for this unusual passage. The first one is this, what does being filled with the Spirit not refer to? We start with the negative side of the verse? But what does being filled with the Spirit not refer to? What's Paul not saying in this passage? What is he not telling us? And we're going to start with this one first because this is a very misunderstood verse in the Bible. It's been taken to mean all sorts of kinds of things. Some people use it to talk about all the wild stuff you see on television, it's connected to being slain in the spirit in some

circles and those kinds of things. So we need to address some of that by looking at what it does not refer to and there are three answers to that question. Three things this verse does not refer to, the first one is it does not refer to an option. Being filled with the Spirit does not refer to an option, which means it doesn't refer to a choice or a decision you can make whenever you feel like it. That's not what Paul is saying here. Or something that just sort of happens to you whenever you get struck by lightning or struck by some random movement of the Spirit. That's not what this is. If you look in verse 14, or read some of the passage again to get the context. He says, For this reason, in verse 14, it says,

*“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”*

Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

As you read that you can tell there's several commands in this passage. It's just how it reads. There's several calls to action because that's what Paul is doing here; he's calling you to do something and in verse 14 he says, awake and arise, which means wake up and get up and be alert to the things of God. Then verse 15 tells you to “be careful how you walk”. That means be cautious. You know, you're in the light now, so make sure you don't step in the wrong place. It'd be kind of foolish, in the light. Don't step on the wrong things. Don't walk down the wrong road. Verse 17 says, “understand what the will of the Lord is”. That means understand His word, understand your Bible, because that's where you learn how to do this. And after saying that, verse 18 says, “Do not get drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit”.

If you notice as you read that, it just reads like everything else in the passage because it's a command. All the verbs in this passage are in the command tense and the imperative tense. Paul says, “Don't do this, but do this. Don't act this way, don't get drunk, but act this way, instead, be filled.” It's a positive and negative there, two ways to look at this. But they're both rather direct, because this is not a recommendation. That's the point here. This is not a suggestion. Paul's not suggesting anything. He's not recommending anything. He's commanding you to be filled with the Spirit. This is not an option for you, as a Christian. You have to do this. All the verbs in this passage are like this. You have to awake, you have to arise, you have to be careful how you walk, and you have to be filled with the Spirit. It's not up for debate. It's not whether you're in the right place at the right time and something falls on you. It's not like that. It's a command.

You can also tell by reading this, there's no exceptions to this. There's no qualifications. That means that this is not just for the super spiritual people to do. This is not just for those who are extra holy; this is for everybody. When you read texts like this, there's often a “haves and have nots” mentality. That means well, some of you have this and some of you don't. That's not what this says. Maybe some of you can

get this if you just try hard enough. That's not what this is about. There's no exceptions to this. You don't have to sit and watch from the sidelines. This is for every single Believer on the planet, which should be encouraging to you because it means that you can fight your sin. This is for everyone.

That leads to another point to talk about. I'm going to go through these rather quickly because we have several to get to and I'll kind of explain them as we go. But a second thing being filled with the Spirit does not refer to is a percentage. First, it doesn't refer to an option. It's not something you can just choose to do whether you feel like it. Second, it doesn't refer to a percentage, which means this is not something you can do halfway. This is not something you can do partially. You're either in or you're out of this. You're either filled or you're not. I don't know if you've ever thought about this but this is kind of a hard thing for us to understand because so many things in our lives are based on a percentage. So many things are based on statistics, for instance, sports teams. I originally preached this sermon at a sports camp; I'll tell you about that in a moment, so sports was on my brain when I did this. But sports teams are based on stats. Hockey players can win a game and only make 40% of their shots. It's pretty crazy, isn't it? It's pretty wild. You can fail and fail and fail and still win. Football is the same way. American football, I don't know about other footballs, but in American football you can drop six out of eight passes and still score a touchdown. You can still be the hero. Business is this way. You see this in business. Salesmen can have a good day and get turned down on most of their presentations. They can get the door slammed in their face over and over and over again and still have a successful afternoon. Builders can have a good day and not finish their jobs. You see it all around town, right? Unfinished jobs, all around town. All that's all percentage. We got 20% done today, good day.

By way of contrast, that's not what Paul's talking about here. He's not talking about a percentage. This is not something you can do halfway. It's not something you can do with 40% effort. He says you have to be filled by the Spirit. The word is "filled". It's not dipped. It's not touched. Not moved or stirred or worked up. The word is "filled", *plerousthe* in Greek. To fill until it runs over. To fill until it spills out over the sides. Some of you have dropped a rag in a bucket of water and when you get the rag out, you don't say that it's about 20% wet. No, it's full of water. This is the idea here. I mean, every square inch of that rag is covered. This is what you're supposed to do with the Holy Spirit. And this doesn't mean that there's not a place in your life for other things. It doesn't mean you have to pray and read your Bible 24 hours a day. But it means you have to have that kind of attitude. You have to have that kind of mindset toward this. The Bible needs to be kind of always going through your head somewhere. Prayer should always be on your lips.

We do this pretty well in a trial, you know, somebody comes up to you, you know, it's gonna be a tough conversation, what do you do? You start praying, right? That's not necessarily a bad thing. We should always be praying. The idea here really, is that you need to live as if this is the most important thing in the world to you? It's kind of like your relationship with your spouse, with your wife. If your wife asked you if you love her, you don't say "Yes, honey, I love you. You're the first woman in my life. But second is Jane. And third is Susan. And fourth is Dana. You're first but there's this long line of women

behind you.” You’d get in a lot of trouble if you say that. Don't ever say that. No, you see, you love your wife and because you love her, she's the only woman in your life. You love her and because you love her, your heart is full of her, it's complete with her. You don't need anything else. There's no room for anything else. There's no space.

It's the same way with God. So the idea here is the same way with the Spirit. If you want to prepare for eternity, if you want to live for the cord and not the plug-in, you have to fill your life with God, saturate yourself with Him, until there's no room for anything else. This is not about a percentage. It's not about putting Him first and work second, and then something else after that. Some people kind of think that way. That's not the idea here. It's not about putting Him on top and your family down below and then your job down below that. He's everything. And because He's everything, He tells you where everything else goes.

Which leads to another point here, that Paul is talking about. What we're trying to do with this verse is we're trying to turn it from every angle so we can understand it. So here's another thing that being filled with the Spirit does not refer to; it does not refer to an experience. Being filled with the Spirit does not refer to an experience, which means it doesn't refer to an emotional experience. Now, you can have an emotional experience when you're filled with the Spirit. Absolutely. But that's not what this is talking about. It doesn't refer to a high that you get at summer camp, when the lights are down low and the band is playing a moving song. In fact, that's the opposite of what this is saying. It's actually the opposite of what this means. This is really important because a lot of the misconceptions come at this on this issue. They come on this point. But when Paul says in verse 18, if you look in your Bibles, when he says, “Do not get drunk with wine for that as dissipation”, there's a reason he says this. He's referring to the ancient practice of putting alcohol into your body to help you in worship. We don't think like this today, We're so far from paganism. We don't even know that people did this. But he's referring to the ancient practice of taking an intoxicant in order to escape reality and have an experience, have a religious experience.

In the first century, the pagans would worship God by doing this, they would worship gods like Dionysius and Aphrodite, by taking drugs or alcohol in order to help them feel closer to God. And the idea was that the high or the buzz was the gods speaking to you. They would also commit lewd acts of sex, and other things like this. Because they thought by doing this, it would lift you closer to the Divine, it would take you to a higher place spiritually. Sometimes they would take it to vulgar extremes and they would castrate themselves and become eunuchs for the experience of it, because the idea was the crazier it was, the better. The wilder it was, the closer you got to God.

You remember the story of Elijah and the prophets of Bael, and they're trying to call on the god, Bael. What do they do? They don't sit down and have a quiet prayer meeting. They start cutting themselves, hooping and hollering like like maniacs. That's how they worshiped. They worked themselves into a frenzy. There are churches that are kind of getting back to that with how they do their music. It might

interest you to know that some rock bands in the 1960's did similar things with their drugs. They took LSD and cocaine in order to get closer to the gods, they thought, which is why a lot of them overdosed. They died over this, Jimi Hendrix, bands like The Doors.

With this in mind, Paul tells the Ephesians in this verse, don't do that. Don't worship God like that. Do not get drunk with wine, you could put 'like the pagans do' for that is dissipation. Ephesians came out of this world, they came out of paganism. So they knew exactly what he's talking about. Their neighbors were doing this, their friends were doing this. Some of them were probably still tempted to do this. If you lived in a certain street, church was over here, you might have to walk by the temple every Sunday morning. The word dissipation here, it's rendered debauchery in some of your translations or wastefulness. It's what it was, it was wasteful, a complete waste of time. What does getting drunk have to do with worshipping God? So Paul says don't be filled with that. Be filled with the Spirit instead. You know, if you think about it, it feels good to be drunk, for the moment anyway, for the temporary moment. That's why people do it. If it didn't feel good they wouldn't do it. It feels good to be high. They don't call it getting low, they call it getting high. Problem is, it only lasts for a few minutes or seconds or however long and then you come back down, and that's terrible. Sin does that.

That's the problem with sin. Feels good. I had one guy come tell me one time he was struggling with sin. He said, "I don't want to do this. I don't want to do this. I don't want to do this." I said, "Then don't do it! What are we talking about here? The problem is you want to do it. The problem is it feels right." What this verse is saying is you can't live your Christian life like that. You can't go chasing after every experience that comes along, every feeling, every emotion, be up and down like a roller coaster. Some people live their Christian lives like that. It's got to be something more significant than that.

In his book, *Preaching and Preachers*, Martin Lloyd Jones tells a story that illustrates this well. It's kind of long, but I want to read this to you. He says,

"In the church where I ministered in South Wales, I used to stand at the main door of the church at the close of the service on Sunday evenings and shake hands with people as they went out. The incident to which I'm referring concerns a man who used to come to our service every Sunday night. He was a tradesman, but a heavy drinker. And he got drunk every Saturday night, but he was seated in the top row of our church every Sunday night. On the particular night to which I'm referring, I happened to notice while preaching that this man was being affected. I could see he was weeping copiously, and I was anxious to know what was happening to him. At the end of the service, I went and stood at the door. After a while I saw this man coming and immediately I was in a real conflict, 'Should I, in view of what I saw, say a word to him and ask him to make a decision for Christ that night, or should I not?' Quickly, I decided not to. So I just greeted him as usual and he went out. The following evening, I was walking to the prayer meeting of the church and going over a bridge. I saw this man coming to meet me. He came across the road to me and he said, 'You know, doctor, if you had asked me to stay behind last night, I would have done so.' 'Well', he said, 'I'm asking you now. Come with me now. Make a decision for

Christ tonight.” And the man said, “Oh, no. But if you would have asked me last night, I would have done so.” Then Martin Lloyd Jones said this, he said, “My dear friend, if what happened to you last night does not last for 24 hours, I’m not interested in it. If you’re not as ready to come with me now and come to Christ now as you were last night, you don’t have the real thing. Whatever affected you last night was only temporary, in passing, you still do not see your need for Christ.” Friends, I’m here to tell you this morning, he’s right. If it doesn’t last for 24 hours, God’s not interested in it. If it doesn’t last for 24 hours, whatever you’re filled with, it’s not the Spirit because this lasts, the real thing lasts longer than one brief night at church.

It brings us to the next part of the sermon. The next question for this unusual passage and the first one is what does being filled with the Spirit not refer to? What’s Paul not talking about here? We looked at a couple things. It does not refer to an option, something that you choose to do whenever you feel like it, whenever the Spirit moves. You hear that expression a lot. Second, it does not refer to a percentage. It’s not something you do halfway. It’s not the way this is worded here. Third, it doesn’t refer to an experience, an emotional experience. It’s something deeper than that, and it leads to the next part of this, the second question for this unusual passage. And that is, well, what does being filled with the Spirit refer to then? Okay, if that’s what it doesn’t refer to, if that’s what it’s not talking about? Then what is this passage talking about? What does it refer to? I have three answers to this question as well. Three things the verse refers to.

The first one is being filled with the Spirit refers to a lifestyle. It refers to a way of life, which means that this is something you’re supposed to do every day. This is something you’re supposed to do on a regular basis. You don’t do it one time and that’s it. You don’t do it one time when you’re moved and weeping and that sort of thing. This is something you do every day of your lives. This doesn’t come across well in English, but the Greek in verse 18, could be translated, and do not get drunk with wine but keep being filled with the Spirit. Keep doing it over and over again. Keep doing it every day. This verb is in a tense in Greek, which gives the idea of continuing activity. It’s an ongoing thing because that’s how you do this, you make it a regular habit of your life. You know, you need to pray every day. Spirit is God, you pray to God, you need to pray every day. Read your Bible every day. We’ll talk about that in a moment. That’s how this helps you. That’s how it makes an impact. Be part of a church every day. Be with other believers. All these kinds of things you’re to do all the time, in the good times and in the bad. You do it when life is easy and when life is hard. You do it when you feel like it. You do it when you don’t. I’m not going to take a survey over this but I’m sure some of you didn’t feel like coming to church today. You came anyway. The Spirit honors that. He blesses that. He works through the effort.

You know, when I was studying this passage this week, I was reminded, I preached this at a camp in the states for Christian athletes, 10 years ago, back in 2010. They asked me to preach on living a full life or living a complete life and so this is the passage that kind of sort of fit with that and what I talked about. And it reminded me of this, you know, if you’re familiar with camp ministry, it always happens every

year at camp, that people feel really close to God. You know, they go out in the woods, get with their friends, get sleep deprived, eat camp food, and they have a real, real close spiritual experience. And then they go home and they forget all about it. It happens every year. It's tragic. It's like a cycle: Come, get excited, go back to the way they were before. They come, get excited, go back to the way they were before. Come, get excited, go back to the way they were before. They go right back to their sin because they don't look at this the right way. They don't look at the Christian life the right way. Nothing wrong with going to camp. Obviously, I think it's fine. I spoke at one. I'm all for that. The problem is that this thing needs to last longer than the woods. This thing needs to last when you go home. Nothing wrong with having feelings for God. You need to have feelings for God. You can't worship a God like this and not feel something for Him. Your emotions are involved in this.

But Paul is saying you're not filled simply because of that. If the Spirit fills you, He fills you every day, all the time, which is the beauty of this and it leads to another answer to the question, what does this refer to? And we're going to move right along here for the sake of time. But a second thing that being filled with the Spirit refers to is obedience. First, it refers to a lifestyle, a way of life, something you do every day. You wake up tomorrow, you're filled with the Spirit. Wake up next day, filled with the Spirit. Wake up next day, filled with the Spirit. It's a lifestyle. It also refers to obedience, which means it refers to living a godly life. It refers to living a holy life where you put your sins away.

If you look in the text here, you can just read this and see this, you can't be full of God and full of sin, can you? It's not possible. You can't be full of the Spirit, full of the Holy Spirit and full of your flesh, one or the other has to go. Otherwise, Paul would have used another word for this. And as you think about this, and try to wrap your minds around it, there is a bit of mystery here in this point. There's a little bit of unknown, because on the one hand, this is all of God. On the one hand, He does it all, which is why this verb is written this way, Paul tells you to be filled, not fill yourself, be filled. God's doing it. But on the other hand, you have to do something too. You have to respond. And we don't know how all that works but you can't just sit back and let it fall on you from the sky.

We don't know exactly how all this happens. It's a mystery. The Spirit is a mystery. But we know that being filled with the Spirit is not the same as being sealed with the Spirit. We know that because this is commanded and that's not. You're never commanded in the Bible to be sealed with the Spirit, you'll never read that. And we're never commanded to be baptized by the Spirit. That's interesting as well. Believers are baptized in the Spirit, they are indwelt with the Spirit, but they're never commanded to do that, because that's connected to our salvation, not our sanctification. That happens the moment we are saved. When you're saved, you're baptized in the Spirit. When you're saved, you're sealed with the Spirit. But this is about what happens next. This is what happens after we're saved. It's connected to our growth in Christ, because the idea here is as you grow in Christ, and put your sins away, the Spirit helps you in that. As you grow in Christ, and you identify these sins, in chapter four, lying and stealing and anger, as you identify your lust in chapter five, the Holy Spirit steps in and He gives you the power to change. You don't get any credit for that. You don't get the glory. It all goes to Him. But that's what this

means. Some people are so discouraged in the fight with sin because they feel like they're all alone, right? You fight sin, fight your lust, fight your anger and you feel like you're just doing it all by yourself. Paul says you're not doing it by yourself. You have the Holy Spirit of God living inside of you. I told you guys before, I wouldn't want to live inside of you. No offense, but you have dark hearts. You wouldn't want to live inside of me, and see stuff that goes on in my heart. But the Spirit does that. And he helps you to fight it, which brings us to one more point Paul's making here.

One more thing being filled with the Spirit refers to and that's a changed heart. He refers to a changed heart. If you look in verses 19 through 20 you can see Paul mentioned several changes that occur. As a result of this. I won't read this verse but if you want to just follow along in verse 19, he says if you're filled with the Spirit, you will speak to one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs. That's another way of saying you'll be joyful. You will have joy in your heart. It'll make you happy in that sense. Verse 20, it says you'll be thankful as well. You will always give thanks for all things. That means you'll be thankful through every season of life. Verse 21 says you'll be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. That means you'll be humbled too. You'll be low in your own eyes. He'll go on to say in chapter five, you're going to be low enough to submit to your husbands, low enough to submit to your parents, low enough to submit to your employers at work. The Spirit does all that. You know, I'm blown away sometimes, I have the wife that I have. Why does she want to follow me? The Holy Spirit does that, changes our hearts in that way. That's what He works on. He lives inside of us. That's what He changes. He dwells inside of us so that's where He works.

This is important because some people don't understand this. They think being filled with the Spirit, it refers to all this crazy stuff you see on television. The thing it refers to all the stuff about prophesying, speaking in tongues and falling down on the stage and some people equate it to being rich. You know, "look at that guy, he's got a BMW, he's filled with the Spirit" or "he's got a really fancy car". It has nothing to do with that. This refers to a change of heart. That's what the Spirit does. He changes your heart. You know you're being filled with the Spirit if you look like this, if you're joyful, and thankful. You know you're filled with the Spirit if you're growing in humility. The tragic thing about some of the stuff on television and it breaks your heart, is some of those guys have don't have an ounce of humility in them. This is about humility. You're submitting to your employer. You're submitting to your parents, all that kind of stuff goes on in chapter five and six. That's what it looks like.

Which brings us to one more point in all of this just to kind of round this off. I appreciate you guys walking through this passage with me. It's a deep passage, and there's a lot to talk about. But just to review, these other ones, you know, what does being filled with the Spirit not refer to? Well, it does not refer to an option, or a percentage, or an experience. I think you'll have an experience, if you're filled with the Spirit of God, and you'll have feelings that'll come out. But that's not what it's about. It's something deeper than that. What does it refer to? It refers to a lifestyle. This is something you do every day. You do it on an ongoing basis. And it refers to obedience, which means it refers to putting your sin

away. That's the context here. It also refers to a change of heart. If the spirit fills you, He changes you. If the Spirit is inside of you, He will make you different. He will get the sin out of your heart.

It brings us to one more thing to talk about, one more question for this passage, and we save this one to the end because this is maybe the most important one. And that's this, well, how can I be filled with the Spirit? One more question for this passage is how can I be filled with the Spirit? How can I have what Paul is talking about here? Okay, we've seen what it is, and what it's not. We've seen the theology behind it. We've got the doctrine, that's important. We need that. You have to have that. But how do I get this? How do I make this my own? I mean, it's one thing to see this, it's another thing to have it. It's one thing to understand what Paul is talking about here but it's another thing to say that this is me. This is going on in my life. How do you do that? Where does that come into play? And the answer is simple. This is something we keep saying here at Grace Fellowship, but we make no apologies for that. You need to read your Bible.

How can I be filled with the Spirit? You need to read your Bible and understand what it says so you can apply it. You need to fill your life with that and you'll be filled with the Spirit. Saturate yourself with the Word of God and you'll saturate yourself with Him. And the reason is this, because He wrote the Bible. It's His book. He inspired it. And so if you want Him to speak to you, read the book. I've been told if you want to hear God speaking to you out loud, read the Bible out loud. That's why we do it here on Sundays. That's where He fills you. He does it in His Word. You know, it's interesting, all the wonderful things in verse 19, we're going to talk about these next week, but singing hymns and making melody in your heart and, giving thanks, they're all mentioned in another passage of the Bible. They're all mentioned in another place, and that's Colossians 3:16. If you want to turn over there with me, we read this earlier, because it's connected to this passage. But Colossians 3:16, and it's a parallel passage to this, and it says this, it says,

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

As you read that, you can see that being filled with the Spirit is the same as this. They refer to the same thing because the results are the same. The conclusion is the same in both passages. You do one and you sing. You do the other, and you sing. It's the same thing. Which means that if you want to be filled with the Spirit, this is what you need to do. You fill your mind with the word of Christ, let it dwell in you. And the word "dwell", it's a great word, it means don't let it visit you, let it dwell in you. Don't let it pop in for the weekend or for the Thanksgiving holiday and then go away and you never see it again. Let it live there, make a home in your heart. I mean, this is convicting. It's a humbling passage because as we've talked about before, we're not very good at this. We just don't read our Bibles enough. And it's not just people here in Canada that do this. This is a problem everywhere. I looked it up and not too long ago, Christianity Today published some statistics about Americans and their lack of Bible knowledge.

The results are staggering. According to one poll that was taken, just a little more than half of the adults there can name all four gospels, and five of the 10 Commandments, which means that Americans don't follow the 10 Commandments because they don't even know what they are. They can't even name them. And 82% thought that the phrase "God helps those who help themselves" is a Bible verse. It's not. It's not in the Bible. Some believe Joan of Arc was Noah's wife and Sodom and Gomorrah were married. It's crazy. And to sum it all up, George Gallup, who conducted the poll said that Americans revere the Bible, but by and large, they don't read it, and because they don't read it, they've become a nation of Bible illiterates. They don't even know what it says.

And my friends, I mentioned that because I think that's a problem everywhere. I think that's a problem here too. We're a nation of Bible illiterates in Canada. In fact, some of you have owned a Bible your entire life, and you've never read it, never gone through it one time. That's one reason we're doing what we're doing in the men's study, because I want our men to say they've read the Bible at least one time. Some of you have gone through it once but you've never memorized anything other than John 3:16. You can't quote anything from your heart. You couldn't find the book of Esther or the book of Titus, if you tried. You don't know your Bible. And can I just say, as your pastor and as your friend, "Shame on you." I don't say that out of any kind of hard heart, but shame on us. There are countries where it's illegal to own a Bible. There are whole nations where you could go to prison just for having one in your home and some of you have three or four in your pocket on your iPhone, and you've never read one. Shame on us, because that's where the Spirit speaks to you. That's where you have His word. That's where it's found. There's no Riddle to this. There's no major mystery. And if you don't know the Book, you don't know Him. If you're not full of this, you're not full of Him. And you won't have any help with your battle with sin. You're going to fight it all alone and you don't want to do that. You need to read your Bibles today.

You know, the story is told of the time that D.L. Moody was speaking at a crusade in London. He was getting ready to preach there and someone in the crowd, some heckler, said "D. L. Moody, who is he? He's uneducated. He's illiterate. Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?" And someone else in the crowd spoke up and they said, "No, but the Spirit has a monopoly on him." And friends, can I ask you this? Can that be said about you this morning? Does the Holy Spirit have a monopoly on you? That's what this is about. Does He have control of everything? He will if you read your Bible. He will if you familiarize yourself with God's word. Will you do that today? Will you open up His Word and read it? Let me pray for us, for God's help in this.

Heavenly Father, we do come to you, Lord this morning and ask for Your help. These things are so simple, and yet they're so deep and we're so inadequate. None of us know our Bibles like we should. None of us love them like we should. And yet it's right here in front of us. We have it right here in our hands. God help us to grow in this. Lord, I pray for those who are here this morning and those who are watching online, I know some of our people are away. God, as they read this passage and study it and they think about their own battle with sin, some of them are discouraged. Lord, I pray they would not

leave this morning discouraged. I pray that they would be encouraged, that they have a Helper. They have a comforter. They have a Spirit to guide them, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Lord, would you remind the Believers in this room that they don't have to be afraid of their sin? They can be bold and defeated. Thank you for Christ. Thank you for His death on the cross and for Him sending the Spirit that we could have all of this. Lord, I also pray for the unbelievers who are here today or may be watching. Lord, I pray they would be convicted because they would be reminded that they have no help in the fight with sin. They're all alone. Would you draw them to the Savior this morning? Would you send the Spirit into their hearts? Lord, we thank you that as Christians, we have so many resources to help us. You're a God who's not forgotten anything. We have a Bible outside of us. We have a Spirit inside of us. And we have a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, advocating for us. There's nothing we don't have. May we go out and live that way today, and be full of joy and thankfulness and humility. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.