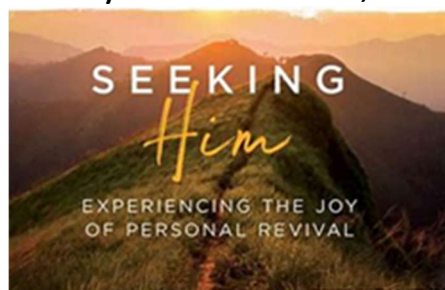


Sunday December 1st, 2024



Part 9: "The Spirit-Filled Life: God's Power in You" (Part 1)
Ephesians 5:15-21

We're getting close to the end of our fall Seeking Him Spiritual Revival Campaign. Last Sunday we tackled an issue that according to polls a high percentage of us struggle with and that's the area of sexual purity. The stats we looked at were both shocking and saddening at the same time.

As I mentioned last Sunday, it's so critical that we possess a biblical philosophy of sexual purity and that we set boundaries and become sexual purity champions for ourselves and for those in our sphere of influence – and this is especially imperative for parents.

So we're going to be coming back to the study of sexual purity in a month as we turn the corner into 2025 and spend some more time in the Word of God and build a biblical philosophy of sexual purity.

Now one of the primary points we considered last Sunday is actually the next one in our Seeking Him study that we've been studying this week in our Study Guides and it's one that we're going to take a couple weeks now to go deeper into, so here's what we noted last Sunday...

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Sexual purity is possible when you know God and live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"For God has not called us to impurity but to live in holiness. Consequently, anyone who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit."

1 Thess. 4:7-8

Is it possible to live a life that is sexually pure and pleasing to the Lord? Absolutely! For that matter, is it possible to live a life of humility and not allow pride to become a roadblock to spiritual revival in our walk with Christ? Absolutely!

Is it possible to walk in honesty with the Lord and enjoy a growing fellowship with Him every day? Absolutely! Is it possible to live a faithful life of obedience to God and His Word as a reflection of our love for Him? Absolutely!

Is it possible to have a completely clear conscience between ourselves and God and other people? Absolutely! Is it possible to extend forgiveness to others in the same measure that God has granted forgiveness to us? Absolutely!

Each of the spiritual elements necessary for personal spiritual revival that we've studied are not only possible for each and every one of us, they're the expectation of how God would have us live as His followers – because, He's given us the person with the power to enable us to do so – and that's the third member of the triune God – the Holy Spirit.

To live your Christian life with renewed joy and fervency with a revived heart for God and His Word was never meant by God to be a once-in-a-very-great-while reality for us.

He intended it to be our way of life – our way of living – our day-in and day-out pattern, not just something we enjoy whenever we have some kind of come-to-Jesus experience.

And that is why this topic today and again next Sunday is so important – because being filled with the Spirit of God is the only way to experience the Christian life the way God meant us to live it. Anything else is just a weak shadow of the life God intended us to experience as His children.

So here is our memory verse this week, let's say it together out loud...

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THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE:

"I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh."

Galatians 5:16

This verse reminds us that God wants each of us to live under the direction and control of the Holy Spirit. And when we live that way, we will have victory over our flesh and the desires of our fleshly nature that are sinful and keep us from a close, relationship with God that brings joy to our lives.

Have you ever been somewhere, and you needed to make a call only there was one problem: your cell phone was dead? (raise hands) It's kind of a helpless feeling, isn't it?

For those of us old enough to remember, that's the way is used to be for everyone before cell phones came on the scene. No one thought twice about going somewhere and not being able to contact someone if we felt we needed to.

When I was in high school I drove 35 minutes one way on Interstate 80 to get to school and my parents and I never thought twice about me not having a way to contact them if a problem every arose. Did I ever have a problem? You bet! But back then you just figured it out. That's how things were.

Today people freak out if they think they might be somewhere and not have their cell phone to use in case of emergency or just to have something to do while they're waiting.

And that's why if you're like me, every day you make it a habit to plug in your cell phone. I plug mine in and lay on the dresser beside the bed every night when I go to sleep. It's a habit that's no different than taking a shower and brushing my teeth.

Without that electricity powering up my phone, it's going to get weaker and weaker until before not too long, it just goes dark and it's what? Dead and useless, isn't it?!

E.G. EVERYONE HOLD UP YOUR PHONE - When it comes to your Christian life, you are just like your phone. So look at your phone and say, "This is me!".

By the power of the Holy Spirit living inside you, you have power you never thought you had and you can do things you never thought you would ever do.

You have strength and boldness and determination and faith that can move mountains. You have willpower and wisdom and knowledge and understanding that enable you to withstand the toughest storms, the strongest temptations and to accomplish the most impossible dreams. And I'm just scratching the surface.

But, without the Holy Spirit regularly infusing you with His power, you're like Clark Kent holding a piece of Kryptonite, there's nothing at all super about what you can do.

We're all weak, powerless, fearful, and incapable of taking down any spiritual strongholds and winning any battles against an enemy who can spot us a mile away when we've gotten too cocky and think we can live the Christian life without the Spirit's power.

Just like our cell phone, we have to plug into the Holy Spirit's power and keep that power infusing us for spiritual victory throughout each and every day. And that's what the filling of the Holy Spirit is and what it does.

For some of you this morning, this is going to be the first time you've ever heard about what it means to live a Spirit-filled life. I urge you to listen up and start living the Spirit-filled life today. Don't waste your life living any other way, it's not worth it. Life's too short to waste it on doing it our own way.

For others of you, this is going to be a wake-up call. You know what the Lord wants you to do, you've heard it before, but you've let other things get in the way of living a Spirit-filled life and you've settled for self-directed living.

Again, life's too short to live the life of a spiritual beggar when you could be living the life of the spiritual son or daughter of the King of Kings who saved you and intended for you to live.

Here in our text this morning we're picking up Paul's letter in the middle of chapter 5 where by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Paul tells us to live wisely and not live foolishly.

READ Ephesians 5:15-16.

Living wisely means living with great care. Paul says, "Pay careful attention to how you live". Life can be deceiving. One day we're bee-bopping through Jr. High and High School, and the next we're staring down retirement.

Look at David's prayer in Psalm 39...

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"Lord, reveal to me the end of my life and the number of my days. Let me know how short-lived I am. You, indeed, have made my day's short in length, and my life span as nothing in Your sight. Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor. Certainly, a man walks about like a mere shadow. Indeed, they frantically rush around in vain, gathering possessions without knowing who will get them."

Psalm 39:4-6

David asked God to give him insight into his own mortality. He asked God to give him clarity into his own frailty.

He asked God to give him understanding as to the brevity of his life. He asked God to give him the understanding of the futility that is inherent in living for temporal things instead of eternal things.

Over and over again the Bible encourages us to consider these truths about our lives.

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“Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.” Psalm 90:12

“Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.”

Psalm 144:4

“You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring – what your life will be! For you are like smoke that appears for a little while, then vanished.”

James 4:14

Living wisely means living intentionally, with the understanding that life is uncertain and if I waste it on selfish living, if I give it to people and things here and now with no thought for eternity, I will be wasting my life.

Living wisely means living with the brevity of life in view and the reality of eternity before us. Living wisely means living with the understanding that we live in a world under the influence of our enemy Satan...

Who is doing all he can to get us to buy into the here and now of this temporary world and forget the then and there and the permanency of heaven and hell. To live unwisely is to live foolishly. To live unwisely is to waste your life.

When Paul says in verse 16 to make the most of the time, it means “to seize the moment”. NOW is the time to live wisely in our evil times, spreading the gospel, pointing people to Jesus, leading people to put their faith in Christ and to become radical disciples of Jesus, building the kingdom of God here in Norwalk and beyond.

NOW is the time to wisely make the most of our time by evaluating all the options our society waves in front of us to give our time and lives to and to carefully weed out and choose wisely so that we don't waste our lives in light of eternity.

Here's a wisdom question for us all to consider this morning: A thousand years from now, will I be glad I lived my life the way I'm living it right now? If not, if you're still breathing you can change that starting today!

Paul continues in verse 17 and says we should live according to the will of God... READ Eph. 5:17

Again we see here something that's wise that we should do and something that's foolish that we shouldn't do.

We live foolishly when we refuse to discern the will of God and to live our lives by setting our own course and direction. Wise living seeks to understand Gods' will so that we live our lives according to His will and not our own.

Now here's the thing about God's will: it's not some deep, dark secret that He is trying to keep from us and somehow it's up to us to solve the riddle and decipher God's intentions.

The wording of this verse indicates that the will of God is crystal clear if we'll just take the time to see it and live by it. So many believers go about it however by asking the wrong question.

They ask, "What is God's will for my life?" That question is close to the truth, but its close enough that it clouds the real issue. The right question is... "What is God's will?"

We tend to think the universe revolves around us. HELLO! The universe doesn't revolve around you or me, it belongs to someone else!

(Slide)

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Psalm 24:1

The universe was made by God and so was everything and everyone in it and if you think He created everything and now is just sitting on His throne trimming his holy fingernails waiting for it to wind down into chaos, you're sadly mistaken.

(On Slide)

"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Proverbs 19:21

Wise living means seeking out the revealed plans, purposes, and will of God as revealed in the Holy Word of God – the Bible. And then set the course of our life accordingly.

Any plans we have for our lives are subordinate to His already revealed plans. In the vast majority of instances, when a Christian is seeking to determine what God wants for them or has for them, the will of God has already been dictated by His eternal plan in His revealed Word.

So open it up, and start following it. If and when we are in need of some specific guidance from the Lord, God will direct us through the godly wisdom and counsel of fellow believers, or through circumstances that are directed by the Holy Spirit.

Now Paul gets even more direct and under the Spirit's direction gives us the command we are to follow that will enable us to have the power we need. He says we are to live under the control of the Holy Spirit. READ Eph. 5:18. Again, Paul starts with the foolish way to live. He says it's foolish to live under the influence of alcohol. When we're under the influence of alcohol we live recklessly, verse 18 says.

Instead, we're told to live under the influence of the Holy Spirit. You see both alcohol and the Holy Spirit have a common denominator: they both exercise control over us when we let them.

This control alters our thinking, what we say, what we see, and what we do. But this is where the commonality of the two ends. Alcohol's control is detrimental to your life, destructive to your life.

A drunk makes a fool of himself. A drunk misuses his money, his time and his body. A drunk wastes his life and the time that God has called us to make the most of.

On the other hand, the Spirit's control produces clear thinking, godly conduct and wisdom that is from above. The Holy Spirit gives us His direction in regard to our money and our time and our body so that these are NOT wasted.

So let me clarify what the filling of the Holy Spirit is... (Notes also)

(Slide)

THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The influence or control the Holy Spirit exercises over us when we yield ourselves to Him, resulting in moral, godly, character qualities produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit.

In our Seeking Him study this week you'll receive a tutorial on who the Holy Spirit is and what He does on our behalf. Each of us receive the Holy Spirit when we accept Christ as Savior. He comes and lives inside us. For what purpose? Exactly as it says there in verse 18, to control us – that's what the word "Filled" means.

Let's be clear, if the Holy Spirit is not in control of our faculties, our mind, our heart, everything that we are a person, then by default WE are in control of our lives.

But God didn't save us so that we could keep control. That's the way it was BEFORE we turned to Christ for salvation, and how well did that work out for any of us? It's a road to disaster!

When God saves us, His Holy Spirit moves in so that as we surrender to His control, we are empowered to live our Christian lives in a way that pleases him. Without the Holy Spirit and His power, it's impossible to align our lives with God's will.

When we live in surrender to His control, He builds and grows in us the spiritual and moral characteristics of Jesus, those qualities take shape over time as we live in surrender to His control. We'll look at those spiritual qualities next Sunday.

Now before we go any further, let me bring some biblical clarification on what being filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit is not.

(Slide) What Holy Spirit Filling Is Not

- 1. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a command to seek something we don't already have – Romans 8:9-10**

If you're saved, the Holy Spirit already lives inside you. You don't need to seek some kind of ecstatic experience in order to possess something in addition to what you already have. You have the Holy Spirit. He's all you need!!!

“You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. Now if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.”

Romans 8:9-10

(Slide) What Holy Spirit Filling Is Not

2. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:13

Some people are confused and believe that once you're saved you have to seek another, post-salvation experience called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit", and some additionally teach that the sign that you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues.

But Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 makes it clear that when you are saved the Holy Spirit takes care of spiritually baptizing you into the body of Christ. If you know Christ as your Savior, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is already a done deal.

There's nothing more to seek and there's no external evidence like speaking in tongues that needs to take place to prove your salvation or the presence of the Holy Spirit inside you. He's there. He came in the moment you put your faith in Christ.

***"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and we were all given one Spirit to drink."
1 Corinthians 12:13***

But what about water baptism like we saw here earlier? Being baptized in water is a step of obedience Christ wants us to take that externally reflects our commitment to Him.

This step of obedience has nothing to do with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's a separate issue and one we take as a first-step in being a disciple of Jesus. Have you been baptized?

Look on your notes at the comparisons between the Baptism of the Spirit and the Filling of the Spirit...

(NOTES)

<u>Baptism of the Holy Spirit</u>	<u>Filling of the Holy Spirit</u>
Occurs only once in each believer's life – at salvation	A repeated experience
True of all believers	Not necessarily experienced by all
Cannot be undone	Can be lost (by sin)
Results in a Position (a member of the body of Christ)	Results in Power
No Prerequisite other than faith	Depends on one's Yieldedness

So these are some things that aren't what it means to be filled with the Spirit, let's look at what Holy Spirit filling is...

(Slide) What Holy Spirit Filling Is

- 1. Holy Spirit filling is to be a constant, consistent, and ongoing way of life in surrender to the control and leading of the Spirit**

The original Greek word for our English word "filled" means literally to 'keep on being kept filled'. Being controlled by the Spirit is something God wants us to monitor and surrender to on a moment-by-moment basis.

It's meant by God to be the way we live our daily Christian life – in constant, consistent, surrender to the Spirit's control. But let's take this even deeper and delve further into what the word "filled" means.

The word “Filled carries 3 facts of meaning in regard to Holy Spirit filling...

(Slide) 1). Pressure – The Holy Spirit provides thrust to carry us down the road of obedience.

The word “filled” carries the idea of pressure. It’s like when a sailboat is out in the ocean and its sails are full of wind and it’s slicing through the water. The wind is providing the power for the boat to move forward.

In the spiritual realm, this concept depicts the Holy Spirit providing the thrust, the power to move us down the road of obedience to Christ. And when we live in surrender to Him, that’s exactly what the Holy Spirit will do, He’ll take us in the right direction we need to go and not let us get off course.

The second facet of the meaning of the word “filled” is...

(Slide) 2.) Permeation – The Holy Spirit provides the enhancement or flavor to our lives so that others are influenced by Him through us.

e.g. Alka Seltzer Illustration

Just like Alka Selzer completely takes over the water in the glass so that the water is permeated with its flavor, so God wants the Holy Spirit to permeate and enhance and flavor our lives so that others around us are influenced by Him through our lives and our commitment to Him.

And finally, the word “filled” also means...

(Slide) 3.) Domination – The Holy Spirit wants to totally control and direct our every emotion, thought and will, to bring us into God’s complete will for our life.

The concept of domination or dominion stresses sovereign power or supreme authority. It’s reminiscent of the Supreme Court being the seat of authority in the United States.

And in each of our lives, the Holy Spirit deserves to be and wants to be the seat of authority in your life. He wants to totally control and direct our every emotion, thought and will, to bring us into God’s complete will for our life.

And if we’ll let Him fill us, control us, that is exactly what He will do and that is God’s will for each of us, that we be under His authority and live our lives for Him and for His glory.

Let’s wrap this up with an important key to being Spirit-filled followers of Christ...

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**IMPORTANT KEY to Spirit-Filled Living:
Spirit-controlled living isn’t us getting more of God,
it’s God getting more of us.**

Fellowship, if you know Christ as your Savior, you have at this moment ALL of God that you can possibly have and will ever need right now, in the person of the Holy Spirit. If you’re thankful for that, can I get an amen?!

The real question is this: How much of you does He have? How much of your heart and life is surrendered to Him, and does He have authority over? Are there areas you're reserving and still controlling and refusing to surrender to Him?

If so, you'll never live the Spirit-filled life God intends you to live, until you relinquish control and let the Holy Spirit have full control. And the best time to do that would be, right, now.