

# Being Filled with the Spirit

*Revival Meetings 2005*

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**Bible Text:** Ephesians 5:18

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Please turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter five verse 18. I am going to preach tonight on “Being Filled with the Spirit.”

As we have been working our way toward these revival days, do you notice there has been a lot of preaching on prayer, preaching on fighting the devil, preaching on God and allowing him to take full sway in our lives? I am going to take the next four or five Sunday nights and preach on being filled with the Spirit. Just as prayer is so important to revival and a right life and these other areas, I think the idea of being filled with the Spirit is very confusing to people. And so I wanted, as I said, to take the next four nights, four Sunday nights at least, and talk about this so at least we understand it and God can deal with our hearts concerning it.

Ephesians 5:18, we know this verse. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

Let’s pray.

*Our heavenly Father, I do ask that you would meet with us, Holy Spirit, that you would guide this message, empower this message, convict through these simple terms and simple ideas, Lord, that people might be enlightened that are somewhat confused about this matter, that we would be convicted, that you would empower the message, that you would do a good work not only tonight, but for the next three Sunday nights that when this month is over we truly would understand the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. We thank you for the message of this morning, for the good results and I pray for these next three weeks that you will take the messages and just intertwine them and use them so that many, many of us would be able to honestly say that we are a better Christian a month from now than we are right now. In your name we pray. Amen.*

The Bible very clearly says right here, “Be filled with the Spirit.” I don’t want you just to listen. I want for God to speak to you. I want you to speak to yourself. Are you filled with the Spirit? It is evident if you are. You know it if you are. You won’t be perfect, but you will see it in your marriage. You will see it in your family, in your ministering.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 5:18.

Have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit and are you living a Spirit filled life right now today as you sit in the pew?

This is a command, not a suggestion. Be filled with the Spirit. In fact, I am not exaggerating; I am not stretching anything when I say it is the most important command that you will find in all the Bible. The command to be baptized is important. But this one is more important.

The commandments of Moses are important, but not nearly as important as this command. The commandment of Jesus to go out into all the world and preach the gospel is one of the most important commands in all the New Testament, but this command is even more important. And I will tell you why, because when you obey this commandment to be filled with the Spirit, you will automatically obey all the rest. All the rest will be taken care of.

Now this commandment was given to one of the most spiritual churches in the New Testament, the Church of Ephesus. If it were given to the Church of Corinth we might say, "Well, yes, I understand that. They are a carnal church. They need the fullness of the Spirit." But it wasn't given to the Church of Corinth.

And the point that I am making is that if it was necessary for Ephesus to have that command given to that church, it is necessary for Fairhaven Baptist Church.

You see, the apostle Paul could stand right here in this pulpit in my place and make the statement, give the command, "Be filled with the Spirit." And I believe there are many people that would have to come forward at the invitation and say, "No, I am not filled. I have got to obey."

We all need to be filled with the Spirit. God wants us not only to be filled, but to live Spirit filled lives. Otherwise we will be failures.

Some in here, I am sure, wonder about your Christian life. You struggle along. You make some decisions. But it seems like most decisions you make are mistakes. Here is the answer.

Or you say, "But preacher, I have the Holy Spirit. I received the Holy Spirit when I was saved."

Yes, praise God, when we received Christ the Bible teaches clearly that God the Holy Spirit takes up residence and lives in us. But that was also true with the Ephesians. They had the Spirit. However, it is one thing to have the Spirit and another thing to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Think, for instance. You take a glass and you fill it half way up with water. Can you say that glass is full of water? No. In order for it to be full of water you have got to force all

the air out and, of course, the way you force that air out is to fill it to the brim. Only when that glass is filled to the brim would I be correct in saying it is filled with water.

And so it is with us. We have the Spirit. If you are saved you have the Spirit. But does the Spirit have you? Is he in complete... come on. We are talking one on one. Is he in complete control of you? Does he fill you? Or are you partially filled with the Spirit and partially filled with self and the world and even sin?

The question is: Does he dominate you? Does he rule your life?

When you are filled with the Spirit he will control you just like a puppeteer. He will control you.

Turn a couple of pages back to Galatians 5:16. We have got to ask the question. Why must we be filled with the Spirit? First of all because you have to have power over sin.

You see, you are not going to overcome sin just fighting it.

You say, "I am saved. I have begged God to take that sin away."

You have got to be filled with the Spirit or you will never overcome sin.

And the Bible says in Galatians five verse 16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."<sup>2</sup>

You say, "I just stumbled into that sin. I hate it, but I stumbled into that sin."

Walk in the Spirit.

You say, "I try to."

Here is the answer. It is tonight and it is going to be next Sunday night and the next Sunday night and the next Sunday night. Be filled with the Spirit. It is only as you are filled with the Holy Spirit that you are able to overcome that besetting sin, that thing you say, "I hate it, but I keep on going back to it." I know it is going to ruin my life, but I keep on going back to it."

Praise God the Holy Spirit makes us a victorious Christian. Without his fullness you will be defeated. You will be a slave to sin. In order to have power over sin you have got to be filled with the Spirit.

Second, turn to Acts 1:8, all familiar passages, no obscure verses. Second, you must be filled for power in service. You will never truly be used of God until you are filled with the Spirit.

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<sup>2</sup> Galatians 5:16.

Again, the Bible says in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

If you are going to be an effective witness you have got to be filled with the Spirit otherwise you will be witnessing in the energy of the flesh and you will hate it. You will be teaching that Sunday school class in the energy of the flesh. And it will get awful old.

You see, whatever you are doing you will just be kind of going over the outline. You will just be busy and that gets old. The purpose of his fullness is to overcome sin and to have power in service.

Now I ask you again, do you have that power? Are you victorious? Would you call yourself a victorious Christian? Are you living a Spirit filled life? Or are you a defeated Christian? Are you that Christian that just says, “Oh, I guess all men have a problem with that. I guess I will have that problem all my life.”

Are you discouraged? Do you feel like giving up? Does that besetting sin conquer you? Or has he set you free? Is God using you for his glory or are you just plodding along? Are you really surrendered? Ask yourself, are you his slave? Is he your Lord and master? Is your testimony effective? Are you ministering in the energy of the flesh or are you ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Turn to 1 John 1:9. Now here is a question. How may I be filled with the Spirit? What are the conditions?

I want to say before we start that this is a little different approach than you have heard me preach, nothing new. I am not saying it is new, but it is a little different approach. But just remember when I am through tonight I am not through, ok? I am going to move down.

Well, what are the conditions to be filled with the Spirit? There’s terms. You hear me talk about the enduement of power of the Holy Spirit that I believe in. Tonight I am preaching on the fullness of the power of God. What are the conditions?

I want to give you what I think are five easy steps. This sermon excites me. I get preaching on the enduement of power of the Holy Spirit and some people disagree. That’s fine. You can be wrong if you want. But the point is this sermon excites me because as much as in the other area I would say it is hard, hard, hard. I will say in this area it is easy. Five easy steps if you want it.

First step is confess. 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 1:9.

Wow. We read if we confess our sins God forgives them and cleanses us. That is a promise, very clear. We all know these verses because they are so wonderful. They are so clear. They are so plain. You confess, he forgives.

1 John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”<sup>5</sup>

Now we notice it is the Christian and not the unsaved who is told to confess his sins. God never tells the sinner to confess his sin. Do you know why? First of all, because it would be impossible. He could never think of them all. He may confess a few sins, but he would literally have thousands that he couldn't think of. It is impossible.

Second, if we were to tell the unsaved to confess his sins we would be misleading him into thinking that there is such a thing as works salvation, that you are saved by your works.

When a sinner wants to be saved we don't tell him to start confessing all of his sins. All he must do is confess that he is a sinner and that he needs a Savior. The publican cried out, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.”<sup>6</sup> He didn't have to confess his sins. He simply admitted that he was a sinner and that he needed mercy.

However, when it comes to the Christian it is an entirely different thing. The Christian who is backslidden, you have gone off the road, haven't you? You are going down the road and you get off the road. And you have got to confess your sin before you are right. Specifically confess that sin.

Again, 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>7</sup>

Jesus or the Bible here is talking to Christians.

Anything that is wrong in our life has to be confessed. Sin and spirituality cannot coexist. The Holy Spirit will not fill a dirty person. It is as simple as that.

Now ask yourself. Have you confessed every sin? Have you made everything right between you and those you have wronged? That has been the thing that the Holy Spirit has laid upon us preacher's hearts. If you have wrong with a brother you will never see revival. You will never be filled with the Spirit.

If you owe money, what a sin today. If you owe money, have you paid it back? Or are you refusing to meet your obligation?

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<sup>5</sup> 1 John 1:7.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 18:13.

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 1:9.

The point is: Are you bitter? We can go down the line. The Holy Spirit will speak to you right now about your need. But are you clean in the eyes of God and man? Clean.

But, secondly, turn to Psalm 66:18. Not only must you confess your sin, but we have got to renounce it and put it away.

Now, listen. It is no use to confess your sin if you are just going to go back to it. I am convinced in counseling people, dealing with people. People will confess their sin and they know they are going back to it. They haven't renounced it. They haven't turned from it.

In Psalm 66 verse 18 it says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."<sup>8</sup>

Now, that idea of regard means I am accepting it by making excuse for it.

But you say, "I can't give up my sin." You say, "I am a slave to it. I love it."

Well, thanks for being honest. There are a lot of Christians who will not give up their sin. They turn it over as a sweet morsel and they don't want to give it up and it will destroy everything they care for. It will destroy them.

But you may be willing and yet not determined. The prodigal Son became willing. He got sick of the life he was living. He wanted to get away from the swine, but he was not determined. But then finally there came a time when determination took the place of willingness and this is what we need, determination. And jumping to his feet he said, "I will arise and go." And he turned his back on those swine and made his way home and he didn't look back until he was in the arms of his father.

You see, as soon as he was determined he was set free. You also must be determined. We must mean business. Stop playing games. Stop trying to look good. Stop talking to people in as sad a shape or worse than we are getting advice.

If you are both willing and determined, God will set you free. If that doesn't excite you nothing will.

But next surrender. Up to this point we have been dealing with the negative. Now we are going to look at the positive. It is one thing to confess and renounce and another to surrender. The Bible says, "Yield yourselves to God."<sup>9</sup> God wants us to serve him. And in order to serve him we have got to be surrendered to him. Not only does he want to be our Savior, but he demands to be our Lord and our master.

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<sup>8</sup> Psalm 66:18.

<sup>9</sup> See 2 Chronicles 30:8.

The reason so many Christians have trouble in their lives is they are at odds with God almighty. They are playing games. They are playing religion. His will must come before ours so that we can say with the Lord, "I delight to do thy will, O my God."<sup>10</sup>

So that we can say with him, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."<sup>11</sup>

Once God's will has become your will the conflict is over. We don't have to live a battle. Only when we hang on to that sin, after that you will have no desire to do anything against his will.

The trouble with most of us is we have never been broken, especially our generation. Nowadays parents don't break their children's wills.

I don't know if I broke all of my own. I sure tried. You know whether your will is broken or not. And if it is not, we have got to allow God with our help to break our wills.

Sam Jones held a campaign down in Texas for some cowboys. They wanted to take an offering, but they didn't have any money. So he went home back to Philadelphia, but some weeks later he received a telegram from the cowboys saying that they were sending an honorarium in a railroad cattle car, a bunch of wild broncos. And he decided to hold an auction and sell them. However, he kept the best looking one for his son.

And he found a cowboy nearby and asked if he could break this bronco. The cowboy said, "Yeah, for 15 dollars I'll break him."

And he gave the cowboy the bronco and he took him away and a couple of weeks later he led him back and Sam said, "Is he broken?"

The cowboy said, "Yes, sir. He is broken."

He paid him his 15 dollars and the evangelist got thinking. I had better try this horse out before my son gets hurt. And so he went to the horse and he evidently knew about as much about horses as I do and he went to get on the wrong side and the guy that broke the horse came running to him and said, "Stop, stop. Don't get on him on the wrong side."

And Sam says, "What do you mean by that?"

He said, "No, he is only broke on one side. That is the way horses are normally broken."

And the evangelist said, "Well, that won't do. What if my son gets on the wrong side?" He said, "How much will it cost to break him on the other side?"

He said, "Well, another 15 dollars."

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<sup>10</sup> Psalm 40:8.

<sup>11</sup> John 4:34.

And so he gave him the 15 dollars and he totally broke him.

Now when I read this illustration I thought, that is like most of us. We are not totally broken. We are mostly broken, maybe half, maybe three quarters, we are basically broke only on one side. We are like Ephraim's cake, half baked. We will do this, but not that. We will tithe, but not work on the building. We will take a ministry, but not have family devotions. We will participate in soul winning, but we won't witness to the guys at work or our neighbors. We must be broken. We can't say, "But..." We must be yielded. We must be surrendered if we are going to be filled with the Spirit.

I hesitate to use this well used illustration, but I only can use my own life. And the reason I hesitate is we preachers use illustrations and then people say it should only be applied to preachers. No, you should apply it to yourself. Every person in here ought to apply what I am going to say. I, though, had to be broken to become a preacher. That is where God broke me.

Some people want to be preachers and some people hear guys like me say this and they think it is blasphemous, but I did not want to be a preacher. But in order to be broken I had to yield myself and become a preacher.

Now I am not going to go all into it. You have heard these stories. But the first thing I had to do is make myself go to Bible college and make myself not only take speech, but take eighteen hour of speech.

You say, "Why?"

Because that was one of my weaknesses. It was my big weakness as far as practical things.

Second was English. I took 18 hours of English for the same reason.

You say, "I wouldn't know it."

Well, I tried.

But the point I am trying to make is I didn't want to be in that speech class. You have heard me talk about how I didn't think I could read the Bible in my 20s with two people around me. I didn't think I could pray with one person around me. But I made myself go into that speech class and be made a fool of and be broken.

You see, the point I am trying to make is that a lot of people are never what they should be for God. I am convinced God wants to bless all of us a lot more than we think. But we don't allow God to break us.

See and the next thing about two and a half years later God showed me I should take this little church.

Now, it is always harder than I think. I had plans of being like a youth pastor to two youth and I end up being the pastor. But you hear me talk about it. You can't understand it. You can't get inside of me. But that was one of the hardest things I ever had to do in my life, to drive to that little church out on the sand dune and get up behind a pulpit. When I say my knees smote one against the other it was true.

But I was allowing God to break me. I couldn't preach. And those old hillbillies they would say nice things like, "Man, you must not have studied," and I had studied like crazy. They didn't mean to hurt me.

Then I went to Pennsylvania and I was thrown into the biggest mess I have ever heard of as far as a church is concerned. And I wept. I prayed and I wept over and over again.

You say, "What was happening?"

I was being broke. This strong willed, bull headed choleric was being broke.

And then I came here, knocked on doors, knocked on doors, nothing, nothing. Oh, some souls made professions. Sometimes they would come out for a while. Nothing. Nothing. And I wept. And oh how I prayed, how I gave my life to God. I was being broke.

And then we had a spurt of tremendous growth. The church was double the size of I would have hoped to die with and you know how we ended up getting in trouble with the law and going to jail and everything was pulled out from under us including the great possibility of us losing this auditorium. And I was on my face again saying, "I know I don't deserve anything, but, God, have mercy." I was being broke.

And I use this personal illustration. I am convinced whether it be preacher, Christian school teacher, Sunday school teacher, bus captain, soul winner, brand new Christian, most of us are never what we should be because we run from being broke. We care more about looking good. We care more about a nice good life. We care more about what people think of us than allowing God to break us.

You get the terminology? Break us. Picture a stick just being broke.

All this time I was begging God for the enduement of power. But I had to be broken.

Fourth, we must obey. In Acts 5:32 God says he gives the Holy Spirit "to them that obey him."<sup>12</sup>

Obedience follows surrender. Simple. If you are truly surrendered you will obey. I am not going to spend much time on this point. You will endeavor to do God's will at all

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<sup>12</sup> Acts 5:32.

times just as a soldier must obey the commands of their officers, so we must obey our Lord and master.

If you are an obedient Christian do you know what the next step is? It is where I say it is easy. You will be filled. You will be filled.

Five, believe.

If you take these four steps, if you confess, you renounce your sin, you surrender and you obey, then all you have got to do is believe. God will enable you to trust him for the fullness of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is more anxious to fill us than we are to be filled. As nature is against a vacuum the Holy Spirit is ready to take over as soon as your heart is ready.

But what will be the evidence of the Holy Spirit's fullness? Well, let me just put a parentheses in here. I think one of the number one things that scare me, the thing I keep on telling God is, "We don't want to brag about whatever happens at this meeting." Whatever happens through this meeting we don't want to brag about because that is just like throwing cold water on fire, ok? And we don't want to brag about being filled with the Spirit. You are not going to be filled. You are full of sin.

But what will the evidence of this fullness be? God never says that there will be a great emotional experience. No two are filled in the same way.

Now if there is a lot of sin, if there is a huge amount of sin there may be a tremendous experience. When there is a huge damn with a big lake behind it and the damn is suddenly taken away, then there is going to be a mighty rush and a roar as the water pours over. But if there is no large damn, if there is not too much sin backed up behind, you just quietly yield and he will flow in. And in his fullness he will fill you without any tremendous upheaval. But it will be real to you.

The result will be seen in your ministries. You will be used of God. The people you teach or witness to will be convicted. God will work through you for his glory. You will know both power over sin and power in service. That is how you know you are filled.

Will you take these five steps? Will you get alone with God and pour your heart out in confession, honestly tell God, "You show me, it is gone. It is taken care of"? Renounce every sin, not hold back. Do you know what holding back does? It has really messed you up, hasn't it? It will destroy you.

Will you surrender to him and become a slave to do whatever he wants you to do? After that it will be easy to trust him. After that it will be easy to believe him for the fullness of the Spirit.

Please obey this most important command in all the Bible. Be filled with the Spirit.