

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT!

By: Phillip Hayes

You may have never heard this preached or considered it, but God has commanded His people to be filled with the Spirit!

The following verses in Ephesians gives us this understanding. *"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" [Ephesians 5:14-18].*

Apostle Paul warns the church not to be unwise but understand what the will of God is. He then gives two commandments that are God's will for us to obey.

The first commandment is, don't be drunk with wine. For most Christians this would not be hard to obey. We understand by the scriptures that being a drunkard and a glutton will lead us to poverty (see Proverbs 23:21). Families are the ones that suffer the most when a parent becomes a drunkard. According to First Corinthians, chapter five a brother who becomes a drunkard should be put away from among other Christians and is called a wicked person. I am sure you would agree that Alcoholism and drug addiction is America's biggest problem today!

Now, let's look at the next commandment Apostle Paul gives. "Be filled with the Spirit"! Are you obeying this commandment?

When I look at both of these commandments I know I can easily obey the first one but how do I obey the second? For sure, I cannot fill myself with God's Spirit!

From the first time I realized that Paul was saying it was the will of God for me to be filled with the Spirit and since it was His Will, it was His commandment I have struggled over this. How do I obey this? I want to be filled with His Spirit, and I am sure many of you reading this desire the same.

Recently as I was preaching about being filled with God's Spirit, the answers came to me. Answers? Yes, answers, for there are more than one.

I thought back to the first time I was filled with God's Spirit. It was in 1972. In the very early spring of that year I gave my heart to the Lord on the shoulder of I-285 in Atlanta, Georgia. God saved me that very hour and began changing my life. God dealt with my "want to" and they changed drastically. I no longer "wanted to" sin! My want to changed and now I was wanting to serve the Lord. As I began my journey, I realized there was more to being a Christian than going to church. As I went from prayer meeting to house meetings, to churches and tent meetings I found many of the brothers and sisters speaking in tongues and claiming to be baptized in the Holy Ghost. As I read the scriptures, it was plain that this promise of being filled with God's Spirit was for me (See Acts 2:38-39).

The more I read God's Word, and the more I witnessed others manifesting God's Power, the more I wanted to be filled with the Spirit! I became obsessed with this promise of God! I fasted! I prayed! I cried! I wept openly! I had hands

laid upon me! I became desperate! While others around me received the baptism of the Spirit, I didn't!

In some of the Pentecostal meetings I attended, they would offer prayer for those that wanted the Holy Ghost. Well, I would be one of the first to go because I sure wanted it! The fast loud music would start, praying would begin. Louder and louder, as it seemed everyone was speaking in tongues all the while holding a microphone in my face. Sometimes, with all the noise and shaking me, it may have sounded like I said something, but I wasn't speaking in tongues, I was just praising God. Someone would start shouting, "He's got it, he's got it!" When this would happen, I would think, "if I got it, I sure don't know it!"

Now, I am not condemning these folks, but sometimes I do wonder how many have been told they received something, that in fact they didn't. I believe these people loved the Lord and were doing what they thought they should. I am not saying you cannot receive the Holy Ghost in this way. I am saying, as much as I wanted to be filled with the Spirit, I could not in these kind of religious settings.

Months passed and I had not received what I knew the Bible said I could have. Then one night I attended a large Tent Meeting. I don't remember what was preached. After the minister preached, he gave a call to come forward if you need something from God. It seemed like the whole crowd came forward and I was one of them. There was so many wanting prayer they had everyone line up in a line. As I stood there with the others, I was literally exhausted physically and spiritually; I just felt drained of energy, and it was difficult to stand in the line. I prayed a simple prayer, "Lord, I have been from meeting to meeting. I have sought your Spirit with all my heart through fasting and prayer. I just don't know what else to do. I want to be filled with your Spirit but now, just give me a closer walk with you."

There was a large ramp that went up to a platform and each one would go up across the platform and then down the other side. As I went up tears filled my eyes as I felt the presence of God. All I remember was the preacher's hand coming toward me and then he touched my forehead. At that instant, it seemed I was in a whirlwind! Around and around I went as I came across the platform and down the ramp. All the while this was happening, I was hearing someone speaking in a different language very loud and boldly. Then I realized, it was me!

That was over fifty years ago and God has blessed me with many other spiritual experiences; dreams, visions, manifestations, angels, miracles, signs and wonders. God has been good to me!

I know there is more! I want to obey His commandment and be filled again! I know it is His perfect will. How can I obey His commandment to be filled? The first answer is, **"You have got to want it more than anything in your life!"** The enemy will fight you over this more than anything else! Your "want to" has got to exceed Satan's desire to stop the move of God in your life!

I believe you can be filled over and over and over with the Holy Ghost! This is proved by the scripture. Let's go back to Acts and see what caused the Holy Ghost to come the first time.

First of all, "Jesus said it was a promise of the Father"! *"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" [Acts 1:4-5].* We see they had to wait or tarry for it. We can see a pattern here.

The church began at Pentecost where the entire church was filled with the Holy Ghost. They believed the Promise and they had waited! *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord (ONE MIND) in one place" [Acts 2:1].* Notice, they were in one accord, (or one mind). I believe their mind was focused on the Promise that God said was coming. We must be focused! Our minds tend to wander with all that's going on in the world. You cannot be filled with the Spirit with your mind continually on the world! Come out for the world! Get your mind on God! Then it will come just like it did on the Day of Pentecost. *"And they were **all filled with the Holy Ghost**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" [Acts 2:4].* God wants you filled with the Spirit! I believe The Church will leave this earth FILLED WITH THE SAME SPIRIT the early church was filled with!

Later as the church grew and the Apostles began preaching Jesus, they were persecuted. After being commanded to not preach in the name of Jesus they returned to where the church was gathered. After preaching and praising God for what had happened to them, they were all filled again! *"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" [Acts 4:31].* This is why I say you can be filled again and again with God's Spirit! Another answer to how we can obey God and be filled with the Spirit is found in this verse. And when they had prayed! It will fall on praying people!

Being filled with the Spirit is so important. No wonder, God commands it! Look at these powerful verses in Ephesians. *"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to **be strengthened** with might **by his Spirit in the inner man**; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by*

*faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might **be filled with all the fulness of God.** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" [Ephesians 3:16-20].* There are five things I want to point out to you about being filled with the Spirit in this passage. First, His Spirit will strengthen you. Can you imagine how much more strength you will have when you are filled?! Secondly, the Spirit is in your INNER MAN not your outward man! Thirdly, the Spirit to comprehend and know the Love of Christ will be illuminated. Fourthly, it is possible to be filled with ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD. Lastly, being filled will unleash the Power within us that can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think!

Jesus promised that rivers of Living Water would flow out of our bellies! Rivers! Not streams, Not just a river, but Rivers! I want the Rivers of Living Water to flow through my being that others will be saved, healed and delivered by the Power of the Holy Ghost! I know and believe that I must fight for this. I know the devils want to stop the flow of God's Spirit in all God's people. It's time to fight for it my friends! This is another answer how to obey His commandment to be filled. We have got to fight for it!

Another answer is we have to hunger and thirst for it! *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" [Matthew 5:6].* Are you hungry yet? Do you thirst for that Water Jesus spoke of?

No, you cannot fill yourself. Thus far, I have listed a few things we must do to obey God's commandment to be filled. There are more.

If you are sincerely desiring to be filled with God's Spirit, you must consider the following verses. They are necessary keys to unlock the power of God in your life.

- *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and **the sin** which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" [Hebrews 12:1].*
- *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and **take up his cross daily**, and follow me" [Luke 9:23].*
- *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And **be not conformed to this world**: but **be ye transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and **perfect, will of God**" [Romans 12:1-2].*
- *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) **Casting down** imaginations, **(REASONINGS)** and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**" [2Corinthians 10:3-5].*

I believe we are living within the Laodicean age found in the Book of Revelation. Jesus described the last day church as wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They thought they were rich because they were increased with material things and didn't have need of anything. In the natural, they appeared to be blessed but inwardly, they were a disgrace to the true Gospel. They were lukewarm. They were not on fire for the Lord, neither were they totally backslid. They had all the appearances of being religious, but they were far from God. This is how it is today!

I must ask you. Are you rich or poor? Are you rich in the things of God, being filled with His Spirit? Are you poor in the true things of God, yet rich in the things of the world?

I believe we are one or the other. Look what James said about the rich and poor. *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him" [James 2:5].* I would rather be poor in this world and rich in faith than to be deceived into thinking I can have it all. I hope you feel the same.

I am so thankful that our Lord is merciful. Jesus is reaching out to this lukewarm church today that makes Him sick to His stomach. He is reaching out to you and I. After His rebuke to Laodicea He reached out to them. Revelation chapter three, verses eighteen through twenty-two: *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as*

I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”.

These verses contain wonderful, powerful promises if we will open the door of our hearts and let Jesus back into our lives. But there is a cost. Jesus said we must buy it from Him! IT IS NOT FREE – THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY!

This puts me in mind of another passage of scripture where the Lord is speaking about the condition of the church just before His return. It is remarkably close to what we have just read and discussed in the Book of Revelation.

Look at this! *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves” [Matthew 25:1-9].*

Jesus prophesied the condition of the church before it ever began! In Matthew twenty-four Jesus described what would happen from 70AD until His Second Coming. And then He said the church or kingdom would be like sleeping, slumbering virgins as they waited on the Lord’s return. Obviously they were not preparing for the Lord’s coming.

A remarkable thing is all the virgins had oil (Holy Spirit) in their vessels but when they were awakened only half of them had enough oil to be the Light they were supposed to

be. They asked their brethren to give them some of their oil, but they said, *"Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."*

Remember, Jesus told the last day church to, "Buy of me"! There is a price to pay to be filled with the Spirit! I want my lamp to burn brightly in these last days, don't you!? I know there are some that will pay the price to obey God's Commandment to be Filled with the Spirit! Yes they will! Lord, help me to be among them that have oil, and not among those that have lost their Light, their zeal for God, their love for lost souls! Let's get back to what we know is right! Those Old Paths are the good ways of God!

The last thing Jesus said about those virgins that went to buy is a warning we should all take to heart. He said, *"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut"* [Matthew 25:10]. DON'T WAIT UNTIL ITS TO LATE! PAY THE PRICE! BUY IT NOW! BE FILLED NOW!

Be filled with His Power. Be filled with His Love. Be filled with His Forgiveness. Be filled with His Compassion. Be filled with all the Fulness of Our God!

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