

12. Believers Are To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit

a) Key Scriptures

Acts 2:38-39; John 7:37-39; Luke 11:9-13; Ephesians 5:18

b) Introduction

- If the Lord Jesus needed to be filled (Luke 4:1,14), the apostles needed to be filled (Acts 2:2-4), and Paul needed to be filled (Acts 9:17), we also need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- This is not simply becoming a Christian and receiving the Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing our salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14).
- Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18), and so had the Holy Spirit in Him all His life, but He still needed to be filled or baptised with the Holy Spirit in order to fulfil all that His Father had sent Him to do.
- This happened when He was baptised in water at the river Jordan (Luke 3:21-22).
- The disciples received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them (John 20:22), but they were told to wait until they had received the baptism with the Holy Spirit before they began their ministry (Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:2-4).
- The Bible uses many different ways to describe this filling.
- These include:-
 - ⇒ being filled (Acts 2:4);
 - ⇒ being baptised (Acts 1:5);
 - ⇒ the Holy Spirit coming upon (Acts 1:8);
 - ⇒ receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17);
 - ⇒ pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:45).
- It is not the label that matters but what actually happens, that is, we are enabled to do God's will and to be true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- It must be remembered that we are not just to be filled once and leave it at that.
- We need to be continually filled (Ephesians 5:18).
- The first disciples were filled at least twice (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31)

c) A Drinking Glass Analogy

- Our lives are like drinking glasses; they are made to be filled and used.
- We have been created to 'hold' God.
- We are to be channels for His Holy Spirit here on earth, not like a drain pipe but like a reservoir that holds enough to meet every need where the life and power of God is required.

(i) A dirty stained glass

- You would never give a glass like that to somebody that needed a drink!
- The glass needs to be washed thoroughly and rinsed clean before it is useable.
- Many people don't know the power of the Holy Spirit inside them because their lives are like dirty glasses.
- They need to be cleansed before they can be filled, as the Holy Spirit is clean, pure water.
- God has made it possible through Jesus for our lives to be cleansed from all the filth inside.
- Some of us look spotless on the outside, but all of us need cleansing deep inside our hearts (*1 Samuel 16:7 - "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'"*)

(ii) A cracked glass

- You would never dream of giving someone a drink from a cracked glass.
- You would probably throw the glass away, but God never does that: He heals the cracks.
- Many people feel unable to open themselves up to anything or anybody because they are acutely aware of their cracks.
- Life and circumstances have often dealt them severe blows, to such a point that they seem unable to recover.
- God in His power can touch them and make them whole (*Matthew 9:12 - "Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick'"*).
- Right through Jesus' ministry here on earth He healed those whose lives were cracked, that is, those who were suffering from sickness, pain, loneliness and hurt.
- Jesus was able to bring them the power of God and heal them, and when they were healed.

- He was able to send them away in the power of God with a new strength, so that they no longer needed to live in their problem or infirmity.
- God wants to do the same for us.
- He wants to bring healing and forgiveness in the power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus and then He wants to fill us with His life and power through the Holy Spirit so we can continue the ministry of Jesus in our day and age (*John 14:12 - I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father*”).

(iii) **An upside-down glass**

- Of course you can never fill a glass that is upside-down all of the time.
- It is up to us: we need to be open to God for Him to fill us.
- We need to be right side up.
- There needs to be a willingness of our spirits to receive the Holy Spirit of God.
- The Holy Spirit will not force His way into our lives.
- Glasses are made to be filled.
- A glass that has never held liquid has never fulfilled the purpose for which it was made.
- We also are made to be filled.
- People who have never known the fulness of God's power through the Holy Spirit in their lives, have likewise never fulfilled the purpose for which they were created.

d) **Ask And You Will Receive**

- The Holy Spirit's business is to make us open to God, to make us thirst for God in our hearts.
- It is a thirst that God satisfies when we cry to Him (John 7:37-39).
- Paul exhorts his readers to be 'filled with the Spirit' [Ephesians 5:18].
- The actual meaning of this statement in the original Greek is that we should 'go on being filled with the Spirit'.
- This filling is the source of daily power and strength for discipleship and witness.
- One experience is not enough.
- Invariably the Holy Spirit makes us aware of our need of His power in our lives before we ever ask for it.
- If you know you need Him in your life, why don't you ask the Father to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

- Don't be afraid of what God might do.
- *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).*
- Open yourself to God: let the wind of the Holy Spirit blow through you.
- If you are looking to God, He won't give you something that is bad or evil (Luke 11:9-13).
- Focus your attention on Jesus and on your heavenly Father, then be open to receive all that they give you.
- Let the Holy Spirit sanctify you through and through: spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- Let Him fill your life with God's power.
- Receive from Him the gifts He brings and learn how to praise, worship and witness in the power of God.
- If it helps, and it probably will, get someone who knows what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit to pray with you.
- They may or may not lay hands on you.
- If they do, don't be afraid because this is the way the early disciples prayed for many to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:6).
- You can also pray on your own.
- Use a simple prayer such as the following.
- Your heavenly Father will hear you and answer you and you will be filled with His Holy Spirit.

e) A Simple Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for the promise that whoever asks will receive, and whoever seeks will find. I know that I need more of your power in my life. I know that I need more of the fruit of your Holy Spirit in my life. Father, I confess my sin before you, I forgive all those who have wronged me, and I ask you for your cleansing in my life through the blood of Jesus. I open my life completely to you. Please send the Holy Spirit into my life in power right now. In Jesus' name, Amen."

f) Questions and Discussion Points

1. Some of the biblical hindrances to leading a life in the fulness of the Spirit are:

- disobedience (Acts 5:32);
- pride (1 Peter 5:5);
- lack of faith (Hebrews 11:6);
- an evil motivation (Acts 8:18-24).

Can you think of any others, especially in your own life?

2. Do you need to be filled for the first time or filled afresh with the Holy Spirit? Don't put it off. Ask and receive from your heavenly Father.
3. Why do so many Christians feel that they don't need to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Discuss.
4. How can we meet the needs of the world in the way God the Father wants us to (like Jesus did) without being filled with the Holy Spirit (like Jesus was)? Discuss this after reading John 14:12!

g) Summary and Application

1. To be filled with the Holy Spirit continually is essential if we are to be true disciples of Jesus and do whatever our heavenly Father asks us to do.
2. The essence of the Spirit-filled life is not how much of the Spirit do I have, because I have all of Him, but how much does He have of me!
3. People are made by God to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they can be channels for the fulness of God's power.
4. We need to be prepared, clean, ready vessels to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
5. God the Father has promised that whoever asks Him will receive the Holy Spirit.