

Spc136 – Growing in The Holy Spirit Ephesians 5:18
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Open your Bibles. Title of the message this morning, “Growing in The Holy Spirit.” Our key verse is Ephesians 5:18.

Last week in our last message in the “One Year With Jesus” series, I promised to look more closely at something that is a critical need in our life with Jesus.

If you are trying to follow Jesus today, you absolutely must – it is spiritual life or death – have a growing relationship with the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the life flow of your relationship with Jesus Christ and thereby with God the Father, which the Bible makes really, really clear.

The Holy Spirit is not just the conduit; he is the source of the life of your relationship with Jesus Christ. Without experiencing relationally the Person of the Holy Spirit, you can’t get to a true spiritual connection or relationship with Jesus. You can’t get to the Father, because the Holy Spirit is the primary member of the Godhead put on earth to enable us to have this daily relationship and to walk in the peace and the power of God that comes only in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

The problem, I believe, is that our Spiritual enemy has been very successful at keeping Christians away from even seeking a powerful, growing relationship with the Holy Spirit. And by keeping us from growing in the Holy Spirit, the enemy has kept us from growing in the supernatural power that is required for us to truly live for God.

Let’s pray. Lord, please just re-teach that to us a few times in these moments. That we would understand more fully that we have got to sincerely, passionately desire the full gift of the Holy Spirit that you sent to be operational in our lives. Show us how crucial it is and show us how daily it is, we pray, that you would be glorified in our lives by your presence. In your name Jesus, amen.

We cannot grow in the peace and the power of God simply by “trying harder.” We can’t “try” to be a better Christian. We can’t “try.” There will never be enough “try” in you. Never.

But here is the good news. The peace and power of God is *not* our responsibility to create. The peace and power of God comes to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Lloyd Pulley, in his book “**Under His Influence**” (I highly recommend this book along with “**Forgotten God**” by Francis Chan and “**The Holy Spirit**” by Chuck Smith) says,

Lloyd Pulley – “Under His Influence”

Living the Christian life therefore, is not our responsibility, as much as it is our response to his ability.

The peace and power of God that you desire so much is not your responsibility to create. Having the peace and power of God in your life is based on *your growing response* to God’s ability that he has placed in your life in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

I promise you that revelation becomes so freeing and so empowering in our life with Christ because we can finally stop trying to live for God *in our own strength* which is impossible and instead we can begin living for God *under the influence* of his own power in the person of the Holy Spirit.

So, let’s take a look at the beginning of the growing relationship with the Holy Spirit that we see in scripture.

In John Chapter 14 – it was during the Last Super that Jesus made this direct promise to send us the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16–18 (NLT)

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate (Helper) (Allos Parakletos), who will never leave you.

17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

(And then notice a super cool verse about the Trinity.)

18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

(Jesus is talking about the coming of the Holy Spirit and he says, “I will come to you.”)

So before the cross and the resurrection Jesus told the disciples (John 14:17) the Holy Spirit was *with them* now and later the Holy Spirit would be *in them*.

The word “with” is the Greek word PARA = *By, Beside, Near*. This is what the Holy Spirit was *before* Jesus died and rose making it possible for us to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Until then, the Holy Spirit was *with us*.

Then, at the end of verse 17 Jesus says to his disciples, “the Holy Spirit will be *in you*.” The Greek word translated “in” (verse 17) is the Greek word EN, which means most often – “*in*.” The Holy Spirit will be *in you*.

If we turn over to John Chapter 20 we'll see that happen. This is the first appearance of the resurrected Christ to the disciples.

John 20:21-22 (NLT)

21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

22 Then he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit.

Here, the Holy Spirit went from being *with* the disciples to being *in* the disciples. They received the Holy Spirit here (verse 22.)

And we believe the Holy Spirit is "*in*" every true believer *at the moment of salvation*. At the moment of your salvation you receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ through your faith in him thereby enabling you to *be* the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19 (NLT)

19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? . . .

At this point the Holy Spirit is "*in*" the disciples.

However, it was these same disciples who the Holy Spirit was first "with" and was now "in" that Jesus commanded to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts Chapter 1. So let's turn there and see what word is used there.

Acts 1:8(a) (NLT)

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you . . .

When the Holy Spirit comes *upon you*. The Greek word for "upon" = EPI. The picture of the word "EPI" is of something *flowing upon* or *over something*. And that, Jesus says, is *when* you receive power.

So – we have the first three ways that we relate to the Holy Spirit.

He is WITH us – **PARA**

He is IN us – **EN**

He is UPON us – **EPI**

The best way to illustrate this is with a pitcher of water and a glass.

Pitcher NEXT to the glass = **PARA** (with)

Pitcher pours water INTO the glass = **EN** (in)

Pitcher CONTINUES to pour water until overflowing = **EPI** (upon)

And for the power to be his witnesses Jesus did not tell his disciples to wait until the Holy Spirit was *with* them. He did not tell his disciples to wait until the Holy Spirit was *in* them. Jesus told his disciples to wait until the Holy Spirit was *upon* them – until they were immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit.

But wait – there’s more.

There’s more to our ever-growing relationship with the Holy Spirit than *just* us being baptized in the Holy Spirit or having the Holy Spirit come *upon us*.

The problem is – we are leaky vessels.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (NLT)

7 We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

Notice the reinforcement here. This is the great power of the Christian life is from God and not from ourselves. The problem is (and please don’t take this personally) – the problem is you are cracked and leaky and the great power of God that comes upon you in the Person of the Holy Spirit leaks out.

And so, going back to our illustration, filling the glass to overflowing is not really correct. *This* is the correct illustration, (when I use this cup with holes in it.)

As we begin to grasp this critical need for an ever-growing relationship with the Holy Spirit, we begin to understand that we must be continually filled with the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is exactly what Ephesians 5:18 says, let’s turn there.

In Ephesians Chapter 5, Paul is using extreme contrasts to drive home the critical need for us to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. And so he contrasts extreme negatives with extreme positives and so Ephesians 5:18 is the third of these extreme contrasts.

Ephesians 5:18 (NLT)

18 Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Why would Paul use being drunk with wine as the *ultimate contrast* to being filled with the Spirit? Because he’s painting a perfect picture of *extreme contrasts*.

When a person is drunk with alcohol, how much of their “being” is effected? Every single area of their “being” is affected negatively by the alcohol and when a person is

truly filled with the *Holy Spirit*, how much of their “being” will be effected? Every single area, right?

Just like being filled with alcohol affects every area of our being for *destruction*, being filled with the Holy Spirit affects every area of our being for *life and blessing*.

But let’s continue that comparison. How long do the effects of alcohol last? Only while it’s still in your system, right? How long do the effects of being filled with the Holy Spirit last? Only while he is still in your system (so to speak.)

And remember the illustration of the cracked and leaky vessel?

But wait – there’s more! There is still more to this verse. Let’s talk about the Greek verb translated “be filled” with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18.) This Greek word translated “be filled” means “*to be filled*” and it is used both *physically* and *metaphorically*.

However – one of the deepest things about the Greek language is that the verbs often paint a picture that goes beyond what the English language can translate. To see the depth of a Greek verb we do what is called “parsing” the verb and it often causes the word to explode in meaning.

So what happens when we “parse” the Greek verb translated “*be filled with the Holy Spirit?*”

1) It’s a VERB

That means it is an *action* word. This is NOT theory – this is ACTION.

2) The Greek TENSE is “PRESENT”

This means it is an action *occurring* in the present (as opposed to the past or future.)

This is what allows us to translate this verse:

“Always Be Being Filled with the Holy Spirit” Or – ***“Keep on Being Filled with the Spirit - (as the ISV does)***

If an alcoholic wants to continue to be drunk they must *be constantly being filled* with alcohol and if a Christian wants to continue to walk in the peace and the power of God they must *be constantly being filled* with the Holy Spirit.

3) The Greek VOICE is “PASSIVE”

It means you are the *recipient*. You are *receiving* what someone else is *doing to you*. You can’t *create* this power – you can only *receive it*.

4) The Greek MOOD is “IMPERATIVE”

It means – this is a command. We must be *being filled* with the Holy Spirit.

“Being filled with the Holy Spirit”

Is an ACTION word

It is to be occurring in THE PRESENT (always)

It is something that is DONE TO US – that we “receive”

and it is A COMMAND (an imperative.)

And now I want to really blow your mind. Let me give you the definition of the *imperative mood*.

The imperative mood is NOT an expression of reality but of possibility and volition.

Wait a minute!

Are you telling me that me being filled with the Holy Spirit is *not necessarily* a reality but it *is only* a possibility?

No – *I am not* telling you that. *God’s Word is telling you that.*

Don’t get me wrong – if you are truly saved today you have the Holy Spirit living *inside* you. Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19 and other verses confirm that at salvation you became the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Then what is the problem?

The problem is you need to be “being filled” with the Holy Spirit in order to live in the peace and power of God.

But remember, this phrase “be filled”... is **not an expression of reality but of possibility and volition.**

“Volition” means “*it is your choice.*” You make the choice to be “being filled” with the Holy Spirit or not to be “being filled” with the Holy Spirit.

We are the ones who choose whether we will be continually filled with the Holy Spirit or not.

It IS a command – but it is not automatic. We must choose it daily in order to be daily filled with the Holy Spirit.

So what is the end goal for all this? What is the reason for this ever growing relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Well – so far – we’ve seen

The Holy Spirit WITH US

The Holy Spirit IN US

The Holy Spirit UPON US

The Holy Spirit CONSTANTLY FILLING US

And then finally we see the WHY over in Galatians Chapter 5. Let’s turn there.

If you are reading the New Living Translation (NLT) the section heading about Galatians 5:16 says “*Living by the Spirit’s Power*” and that is what this section is about – being filled with the Holy Spirit so you can LIVE by the Spirit’s power.

Here is the end goal of being constantly filled with the Holy Spirit. I’m just going to read a few key verses here. But you should go home and read it all very carefully.

This section starts with Galatians 5:16.

Galatians 5:16 (NLT)

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.

If you have been following Jesus for any time at all you know that our sin nature is the problem. And God says letting the Holy Spirit guide your life is the answer.

Galatians 5 continues by explaining that this is war. It’s a war between your sin nature and the Holy Spirit.

And then Galatians 5:19 begins a list of the natural results of following your sin nature. And then in Galatians 5:22-23 is a list of the supernatural results of continually being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT)

22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives (notice this is not your fruit – it is The Holy Spirit IN YOU):

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, and self-control . . .

Who wants some of *that*?

Could you use some

LOVE – JOY – PEACE

PATIENCE – KINDNESS – GOODNESS

FAITHFULNESS – GENTLENESS - and SELF-CONTROL

If you understand your need for the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life and if you desire to walk in the peace and the power of the Holy Spirit... then come back next week and we'll do one more message and I promise it will be all practical. We'll call it "Practical Steps to Being Filled With The Holy Spirit." I'll name it now so later people will know what to search for.

Guys – please...

If you are trying to follow Jesus today *without* relying on the power of the Holy Spirit PLEASE acknowledge how impossible that is. And please begin today praying that God would *continually* fill you with his Holy Spirit.

In fact, let's pray now. *Lord Jesus, we need to grow in our relationship with your Holy Spirit. You promised, Lord, to give us your Spirit. You sent "One of the Same Kind and Quality," one of Yourself, you sent the Holy Spirit to us to be your life in us, to be your power in us, to be the peace we can't get in this world, to bring the fruit into our lives that is transforming. Lord, it's not just about going to heaven. We're not sitting here because we want out ticket punched to get to heaven. We've gone past that. If we've already acknowledged you as Savior in our lives, we need your power to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Lord, today we pray for just this radical, passionate need for you. We pray that you would inspire us to leave today saying "I've got to have more Holy Spirit in my life. I've got to learn how to have that Holy Spirit poured into me every day."*

If you would agree today, would you just make that prayer, right where you are, right now? *"Lord, I need that."* Maybe it's the first time you heard about it. But would you just take a minute and say, *"Yeah, that's what I need."* Just pray, not gently – but passionately. *"God, pour out your Holy Spirit on me and in me. Fill me to overflowing, Lord. Baptize me and continue to fill me and Lord reveal to me how to be filled with your Spirit every day. I desire your Spirit every day. Transform me, to fill me, to lead me, to guide me."*

"Lord Jesus, you gave us your Spirit to be witnesses, to follow you, to live the abundant life. Help us, Lord, to grow in our experience and our relationship with your Spirit, for your glory in our lives and in your name, Jesus, amen."