

## Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

May 19, 2024. "Who am I? How can I discover who I am? We were made to be filled"

### I Intro.

Welcome to our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. So, make sure you stay connected to keep informed. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

### II Recap.

We're in the third Sunday of this series discovering who we are. A complete discussion is in last Sunday's devotional, but here are a few foundational understandings that speak to this journey.

**1. Our identity is a combination of inherent traits and environment and experiences affecting those traits.** You are an aggregate of everything in your life.

**2. Sometimes we're the role we have to fill.** We're one way at school, work, in public, at church, and at home. And this can create some internal conflict filling these roles.

**3. There is one constant in our constantly evolving self.** There is a divine presence within us implanted by God, to guide us to participate in, and experience certain things. There's a divinely designed, God-breathed, dependable, trustworthy identity inside you.

**4. Integration vs Disintegration.** Experts are discovering the importance of being integrated. Having an internal sense of harmony, united in heart, mind, body and soul. Being integrated leads to a healthy state of being. Psychologists, and mental health experts have discovered the root of mental health issues, and even physical health issues, apart from biological causes is what's called 'disintegration' or being internally fragmented, divided, conflicted.

**5. Identity is found in relationship.** Identity is formed in relationship with something else. Answering who I am is in context to what is around you.

We've talked about our innermost divine design is for joy and for growth. Today we hit the odd topic that we were designed to be filled.

### III Sunday.

We realize that this has been kind of an odd series finding things that seem to be divinely planted inside of us and then using those to answer the question; "*Who am I?*" But we believe these truths can anchor us in a world that feels in turmoil. Leaning into these specific truths can grow us in a way to bring a strong sense of identity, security, and purpose when we can fully embrace them.

Today the topic is; "*We were made to be filled*". Which when you think about it would explain the feeling of 'empty' that hits us everyone once in a while. That feeling that there has to be more to life, we may not be where we're supposed to be, doing what we were made to do. So, let's go there first.

**When have you felt 'empty'? What did it feel like?**

**When have you felt 'filled'? What did feeling 'filled' feel like?**

The scripture used Sunday talks about people being filled, but takes a slightly different approach that we'll obviously dig into. So, read the passage **Acts 2:1-18**, and react to it a bit.

**What jumped out to you from this passage?**

**It did mention being filled, so describe how being filled felt to the early followers of Jesus.**

**What would this passage tell you about being filled?**

These people who had gathered had just been through the death and resurrection of Jesus. They were under Roman occupation. A brutal occupation. They were discouraged, disheartened, empty. The big question was; *"What now?"* The early followers were scattered, not unified, discouraged, lost, and ... empty. And this was supposed to be the celebration of first fruits. To remember the goodness of God. And honestly, in this moment, there was no feeling the goodness of God. God felt distant, uncaring, and they felt...empty. They knew that things weren't the way they were supposed to be. Something planted deep inside of them kept reminding them there was more. Pentecost is where people experienced the fullness of their divine design. It showed them who they were.

**C. What happened at Pentecost was that they were all filled.**

**How were they filled?**

**1. Sense of Connection:** At Pentecost they were connected deeply by the Holy Spirit to each other. These relationships mattered. They would now carry each other through the most difficult times. So many of our relationships can be shallow and often not fulfilling. We have people we can have fun with, hang out with, but when push comes to shove, we may not have many connections/relationships that are meaningful and make us better. This unifying connection at Pentecost provided a profound sense of belonging, unity, and oneness with God and others. The greatest 'filled' there is.

**2. Inner Peace and Contentment:** Being filled spiritually at Pentecost brought about a profound sense of inner peace, tranquility, and contentment. This inner peace, contentment helped them face a world that was not accepting of them or their new found faith. They would be perceived as such a threat that the Roman empire and Jewish leaders would fight against their work to spread the good news. This inner peace and contentment helped them let go of worries, fears, and attachments. No more need to strive to fill emptiness. This being filled helped them to find a deep sense of acceptance and surrender to this being filled.

**3. Alignment with Values and Purpose:** This powerful indwelling of the Holy Spirit, made them one. Overcoming their differences, what actually divided them, and helped them experience a strong alignment with their values, beliefs, and sense of purpose. This is the literal definition of discovering who we are. At one within ourselves, with God, and with each other. There was a deeper wisdom and truth that bound them together over their differences that led them to live authentically and in accordance with their deepest truths. Being filled helps us realign our values to something more important and bigger than our own personal wants.

**4. Gratitude and Joy:** We know we thrive when we cultivate a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the higher, loftier, more important things of life. Being spiritually filled helped them find joy and beauty in everyday experiences. No matter how difficult things became. And they couldn't believe this was possible without a little liquid help. Recognizing the sacredness of existence and interconnectedness of all things. Gratitude and joy are the fruit of being filled. Maybe...FIRST FRUITS.

**5. Compassion and Love:** Being spiritually filled leads to an outpouring of compassion, empathy, and love towards oneself and others. We live from a place of abundance because we are... filled. There is enough for everyone. They were filled with a sense of divine, holy love. These diverse people sought to alleviate suffering, foster healing, and cultivate positive relationships with others. When we are filled...we overflow.

**6. Sense of Wholeness and Integration:** Being filled spiritually will lead to a sense of wholeness, integration. It will address that emptiness, fruitless striving we feel. Every aspect of us – mind, body, spirit and soul (all of who we are)– are in harmony, balance. This wholeness, being fully integrated, allows for a deep sense of being loved, embracing our divine uniqueness, and seeking to do the work to remove the things that cause disintegration. And to commit ourselves to the daily work of being fully integrated...filled. And when we're filled there are no "us" and "them". We are one!

#### **IV Challenge.**

This particular divine design of who we really are on the inside may have felt a little difficult to pin down. Okay, we're designed to 'be filled' but that doesn't tell me a whole lot. The lesser known fact behind this truth is that when we look deep at the causes of our suffering (not struggles...those are inevitable) but our reaction to the difficult things in our life, we realize they're all caused by desire or striving. We want things to be a certain way. We have expectations about our life. And those strivings and expectations are rooted in a sense of emptiness. So, we're constantly looking at other things to fill us. Which all points to our inner need to be filled. That's how we were made. It's who we are. The more we embrace this truth about ourselves, and understand our constantly seeking to fill that emptiness, the more we can begin to do the work of being filled with things that matter and last. And like our past two "*Who am I?*" truths will lead to joy...and peace.

**So, what have you been chasing believing it would 'fill' you?**

**And what could you pursue that would actually satisfy that need to be filled?**