

**04/21/24      “Be Filled with the Spirit – Part 2”  
Ephesians 5:19-21**

Welcome...

We have been studying the book of Ephesians.

**Let’s read Ephesians 5:19-21...**

Do you remember learning about magnetism in school? I remember being taught that the invisible force of magnetism is either attraction or repulsion. Opposite poles attract each other, same poles repel. Attraction and repulsion.

So, it is with Christian growth. The beginning of the Christian life—conversion—always involves a combination of attraction and repulsion: attracted to Christ, repelled from evil; attracted to heaven, repelled from hell; attracted to holiness, repelled from sin. God wants us to both flee the wrath to come (Matthew 3:7) and seek the things that are above (Colossians 3:1). Attraction and repulsion led to our conversion, and the Holy Spirit uses the same principle to drive us toward Christlikeness every day.

But there is another attraction that God uses in our transformed lives, the attraction of a Spirit-filled life. When we are born again by the grace of God and live Spirit-filled lives, God uses the display of our Spirit-filled life as a magnet to draw others to Himself.

**Main point: Ephesians 5:19-21 presents four manifestations of the Spirit-filled life.**

**Our Speech in verse 19a.**

**Our Worship in verse 19b.**

**Our Thankfulness in verse 20.**

**Our Submission in verse 21.**

My prayer is that we each are filled with the Spirit and will use our lives as a testimony of His grace and truth.

Before we see these four manifestations, let’s do a quick review of verse 18.... there are several points we need to understand about the call to “be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

- 1) It is a command, not simply a suggestion or recommendation. We are not free to ignore it.
- 2) It is a plural command to the whole Church. All of us are to be filled with the Spirit. It is not for the few or for some elite.
- 3) It is a passive command. It means, “Let the Holy Spirit fill you.” We must open ourselves to God’s Word so that it dwells richly in us (Colossians 3:16). God wants us to drink so deeply of the Scriptures that our heads and hearts and our hands are transformed by His Spirit so that we love what He loves and hate what He hates. We are dependent on the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures so that we understand and apply them.
- 4) Last, verse 18 is a present tense command. It is not once for all, but continuous. We are to go on being filled with the Spirit day by day.

We are never commanded to be baptized in the Spirit or to be sealed with the Spirit. Those are both theological realities from the moment God the Father through the agency of the Holy Spirit places you into the body of Christ. The baptism and sealing of the Spirit are facts to be believed. But the filling of the Spirit is a command that we must obey. But how do we know if we are filled with the Spirit? What does a Spirit-filled life look like?

Ephesians 5:19-21 presents four manifestations of the Spirit filled life. First, Paul says that those who are filled with the Spirit edify one another with their speech.

## **I. Our Speech**

Notice verses 19a, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

The participle “speaking” means “to communicate.” In this context Paul states that believers are to use their voices to communicate to one another. This communication is described in the parallel passage in Colossians 3:16, “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

So, the first evidence Paul records that identifies a person who is filled with the Spirit is the character of the words that come out of your mouth! In other words, our speech is a good "barometer" of whether we are filled with (or controlled by) the Spirit.

Notice the speaking of which Paul writes here is intentional: “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” The idea is that we will be speaking the truth of God to others, which will help them and give them hope.

Instead of speaking only about sports or the weather or technology or entertainment, we will speak words of comfort, conviction, and encouragement. If we are filled with the Spirit, we will speak God’s truth in such a way that others who hear our speech will also be encouraged to be filled with the Spirit.

James Montgomery Boice wrote, “The Spirit-filled life is not to be measured merely by one's private morality or even by one's private spiritual experience but by how one conducts himself or herself with other persons.”

Oswald Chambers wrote, “the Spirit of God cannot dwell in us without manifesting Himself through our words to others.”

Our speech should build others up by being helpful, constructive, encouraging, instructive, and uplifting. Sometimes, of course, it must be corrective; but that, too, is edifying when done in the right spirit.

Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” You should never have to say, “Now, take this with a grain of salt” if you learn to put the salt of God’s grace in everything you say.

We edify with our speech, but we also encourage with our worship. That is the second manifestation of being Spirit-filled.

## **II. Our Worship**

Notice again verse 19...

Verse 19 says this singing is done from the “heart.” The heart in the Bible speaks of thoughts, feelings and mind. It is the mission control center of your life – the heart is what drives you – your motivation, your ambitions, your greatest desires come from the heart.

As the Spirit of God reveals to you the unfathomable riches of Jesus Christ that have been poured out in your heart by God’s grace alone, you cannot help but be filled with praise and thankfulness to God, and that praise

overflows in singing. Truthful singing exalts the God of our faith, and when we exalt the God of our faith we exhort and encourage the community of faith.

A little boy sat in church; his eyes were drawn to a large flag mounted on the wall that had a number of gold stars attached to it. He whispered to his father, "Daddy, why does that flag have all those stars on it?" His dad whispered back, "Those stars remind us of all those who died in the service." The boy thought about that for a moment and then whispered again, "Did they die in the first worship service or the second service?"

While humorous, that story hits painfully close to home. Rather than being the church of zombies, we are those who been brought from death to spiritual life and we should sing with enthusiasm and evident joy in the Lord. 1 Peter 2:9 says we are a people for "God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

In Ephesians 5:19 this spiritual singing has two aspects. First, it must be individual.

Paul says at the end of verse 19, "singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." It must begin in your heart.

Do you know that the most frequent command in the Bible is, "Sing!" And so I ask, "Do you sing to the Lord?"

You may say, "I can't carry a tune in a bucket!" I can relate to that remark! I can't hit the notes of many songs. I get frustrated when I try to sing, because it sounds so bad. But, I can't dodge the repeated command, "Sing to the Lord!" Let's look at a few of these commands:

Psalm 5:11: "But let all who take refuge in You, O Lord, be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You."

Psalm 33:1, 3: "Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones; praise is becoming to the upright. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy."

Psalm 95:1: "O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation."

Psalm 96:1-2: "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day."

Psalm 98:1: "O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him."

Psalm 100:1-2: "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing."

Psalm 147:1: "Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant and praise is becoming."

Psalm 149:1: "Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of the godly ones."

You may think, "But I don't feel like singing. Wouldn't I be a hypocrite if I sang when I didn't feel like it?"

Actually friend, that is when you need to sing the most. I've found that often when I'm feeling down, and begin singing praises to the Lord, my heart is lifted from focusing on self to looking up to our wonderful Savior.

That's often what the psalmists did. At the beginning of the psalm, like Psalm 13, the psalmist is overwhelmed by trials and difficulty. But by the end of the psalm, just from rehearsing God's faithfulness and His attributes, the whole mood of the psalmist has shifted to joyful praise, even though his circumstances are exactly as they were at the beginning. So, we need to sing to the Lord individually.

But spiritual singing is also corporate. Ephesians 5:19, "speaking to one another in spiritual songs." The parallel passage Colossians 3:16 commands us to teach and admonish one another through singing.

Down through history, God's people have been characterized by spiritual singing. Whenever the Spirit of God is manifested and God is working in an obvious way, His people express themselves in joyful singing. Here are some examples:

There are songs celebrating God's deliverance and salvation. The earliest recorded song in the Bible is the Song of Moses in Exodus 15:1-18. It says, Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, "I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him. The Lord is a warrior; The Lord is His name. Verse 13 "In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation."

Not only are there songs of God's deliverance and salvation, but there are songs celebrating God's blessings— Many of the psalms reflect on God's blessings, but especially Psalm 103, which is pure praise. Earlier we sang 10,000 Reasons. Where did those words come from?

Listen to Psalm 103:1-2, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits." Then Psalm 103 proceeds to enumerate many of those benefits.

Then there are songs celebrating anticipated victories by faith. In 2 Chronicles 20, Israel was facing an imminent invasion by some powerful enemies. King Jehoshaphat called for national prayer and fasting. When the Lord promised victory through one of the prophets in the assembly, the king did a daring thing. Rather than sending out his warriors at the front, he sent out singers before the army, who sang, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." 2 Chronicles 20:22 says, "When they began singing and praising the Lord, God defeated all who had come against Judah."

We also find in the Bible there are Songs celebrating God's sufficiency in our suffering. In Acts 16:25, when Paul and Silas were falsely accused and then wrongly beaten and thrown into prison and locked in the stocks, what was their response? They began to sing praises to God. The Lord sent an earthquake. The singing and earthquake rocked the world of the Philippian jailer who cried out to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they responded, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." It tells us the household and his household believed and were born again.

Yesterday, I shared at Sue Starr's memorial service that when Fanny Crosby was six weeks old, she had inflammation in her eyes. The physician, who tried to help her, mistakenly destroyed Crosby's eyes. Consequently, she became blind for the rest of her life.

Fanny Crosby began composing hymns at the age of six. In her lifetime Fanny Crosby wrote more than 8,000 gospel hymns. We sang one of the songs yesterday, Blessed Assurance.

When Fanny Crosby was asked what she would say to that physician who blinded her, she responded, “I would say, “Thank you, thank you—over and over again—for making me blind, it was through your agency that my spiritual eyes were opened to see the majesty of Christ, who He is and what He has done for us.”

Crosby went on to say, “although it may have been a blunder on the physician’s part, it was no mistake of God’s. I verily believe it was God’s intention that I should live my days in physical darkness, so as to be better prepared to sing His praises and invite others to walk in spiritual light.”

Many of the great hymns of the faith have come down to us out of someone’s experience of God’s sufficiency during their time of suffering.

If you don’t like to sing, then you’re not going to like heaven, because it will be full of singing. Revelation 5:9 records, “And they sang a new song, saying ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and with Your blood you purchased for God men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’”.

The song of Moses in Exodus 15 is not only the first song in the Bible and it’s also the last song in the Bible in Revelation 15:3-4: “And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed.’”

So, the second manifestation of being filled with the Spirit is joyful singing. Closely related to that, the third manifestation of being filled with the Spirit is a heart that is thankful to the Father in all things.

### **III. Our Thankfulness**

Verse 20...

If Paul had just said, “Often giving thanks for most things,” it would have been more realistic and doable. I can give thanks often and I can give thanks for most things. But verse 20 doesn’t allow us any exceptions!

The Greek word for the very first word in verse 20, “always” means constantly, in every situation, including our trials. And the Greek word for all things means all things!

What’s more convicting is the fact that Paul really practiced this! He exulted in his trials, as Paul says in Romans 5:3 knowing that God was using them to produce perseverance, proven character, and hope. In Acts 16:25 when he was illegally beaten, imprisoned, and put in the stocks, he sang praises to God. When he was imprisoned in Rome with the local believers slandering him, he wrote to the Philippians, repeatedly mentioning his own thankfulness and joy and exhorting them to joy (Philippians 1:3-4, 18, 25; 3:1; 4:4, 10). It was from that same prison that he wrote our text, “always giving thanks for all things.”

It would seem that Paul deserved better treatment than this. After all, he was God’s chief apostle to the Gentiles. There were still many places where he wanted to preach the gospel. And, he had served God faithfully through many trials already. He had been imprisoned other times, beaten times without number, and had often been in danger of death. He had been stoned and shipwrecked. He had faced dangers of all sorts. He had often been impoverished and deprived of the normal comforts of life. Critics relentlessly attacked him. And, he had the continual pressure of the problems that plagued the various churches (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

Didn’t Paul deserve a retirement condo overlooking the Mediterranean Sea? But here, chained in a cold, stinking, stark Roman prison, he writes the letter to the Ephesians and tells us always to give thanks in all things!

The “all things” of Ephesians 5:20 is the same “all things” of Ephesians 1:11, which says that God has predestined us “according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.” It’s the same “all things” of Ephesians 1:22, which tells us that God “put all things in subjection under Christ’s feet.” As we’ve seen, it’s the same “all things” of Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Romans 1:21 says a mark of the unsaved person is ungratefulness, thanklessness to God, but here in verse 20, a mark of the Spirit-filled believer is always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Joni Eareckson Tada became a quadriplegic at the age of 16 in a swimming accident. Joni Eareckson makes the point that the Bible never actually tells us to feel thankful but it does tell us to be thankful. Thankfulness is a matter of obedience, not feeling.

Happy, joyful, grateful children reflect the goodness and love of their parents. When you see a grumbling, sour-faced child, ungrateful child you don’t immediately think, “He must come from a loving home!” Maybe his parents are in fact the most loving, caring people in the world, but the child’s unhappy countenance doesn’t reflect it.

We are the children of the God who, as Ephesians 1:3 tells us, have been blessed with every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Our thankfulness in every situation we should reflect His goodness and love to a world that does not know Him.

Philippians 2:14-15 says, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.”

The manifestation of the spirit-filled Christ is seen in your speech, in your worship, in your thankfulness, and fourth:

#### **IV. Our Submission**

By nature, we want to promote ourselves, but the Holy Spirit enables us to submit ourselves. So, every Spirit-filled Christian is a submissive Christian.

Notice the motivation in verse 21...

The supreme model for our submission is Jesus Christ. He, the Incarnate Son of God, in an electrifying moment, donned an apron and washed the feet of his prideful, arrogant disciples. He then said in John 13:14-16, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.”

Jesus used the ancient logic: If it is true for the greater (Jesus), then it must be true for the lesser (you). This is always a powerful argument. But coming from the majesty of His greatness, it is infinitely compelling.

The Scriptures are clear. Philippians 2:3 says, “In humility we are to ‘consider others better than ourselves.’” Or as we heard read at the beginning of our service in 2 Corinthians 4:5, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Sometimes we meet Christians who claim to be Spirit-filled but are brash, arrogant, assertive, and self-promoting - and thus their claim that they are Spirit-filled is actually a lie, for neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit is like this.

Verse 21 gives us the key to submission, “be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

This is not a dread or terror type of fear, a reverential fear or reverential respect. Because we love, respect, and honor Christ, we are to love, respect, and honor others. It’s that simple. In the final analysis, if our Christian walk doesn’t lead us into deeper and more meaningful relationships with fellow believers, we’ve missed the mark.

How do you know if you are filled with the Spirit? It will be clearly seen and known through your speech, your singing, your thankfulness, and your submission. What a beautiful grace this is! What a magnet for Christ! Your edifying speech, your encouraging worship, your evident thankfulness, your humble submission – each Spirit-filled manifestation is beautiful in itself. But when they are put together, it is like this beautiful bouquet of flowers. The fullness of the Holy Spirit produces a life of profound beauty to the glory of God and is a magnetic testimony to others of God’s transforming power!

Let’s pray...