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Series: People In Step With The Spirit
Message: How to Stay Filled With the Spirit

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1 John 1:9

There was a little boy who was kneeling by his bed and he was getting ready to say his bedtime prayers. The look on his face suggested that something was probably troubling him. His opening sentence confirmed that that was the case because he said, "God, I'm here to turn myself in." I suppose that's not a bad beginning for any of us. We can probably all relate to that sentiment maybe every day, maybe sometimes more than we want to admit. But it is also pretty good theology. It is pretty good theology because it brings us to the heart of what fellowship with God looks like, what it means to confess our sin and what it means to be in a right relationship with Him. All of those things point us to where we're looking this morning – at this matter of how it is that we can stay filled with the Spirit.

This morning we want to answer that question by noting that being filled with the Spirit is absolutely essential and vital to spiritual growth. We cannot grow in our walk with God if we're not filled with the Spirit, and we can't be filled with the Spirit apart from confession of sin. Those all just go together so that's what we want to look at this morning.

Let's step back for a minute and review and ask and answer some questions on this subject of being filled with the Spirit. We begin again by asking what it means to be filled with the Spirit. If you remember a couple weeks ago, if we had to give one word to that answer I think we would say it's about obedience. It's about walking in obedience to God. It is about being under the Spirit's control. To be filled with the Spirit is in fact to be controlled by the Spirit. Paul uses lots of different language in his letters to say some of the same things. So to be filled with the Spirit is the same as to walk by the Spirit. When Paul says walk by the Spirit and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh, he was just saying be filled with the Spirit. Walk under the Spirit's domination. Let the Word of Christ rule within you. that is a similar phrase. Bring every thought into captivity to Christ. All kinds

of ways that Paul expresses this truth of having a Spirit-dominated life, one in which we are mindful of our desire to live in the way that Jesus lived His life.

Secondly, what's the difference between the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit? You could almost substitute the word "indwelling" or "sealing" with the word "baptism". Baptism is a good point of contrast so when you think of the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit, these are some ways that they are in contrast to each other. The baptism of the Spirit occurs one time. It occurs at the moment of faith I believe in Christ, whereas the filling of the Spirit is something that is a repeated experience. We are told to continuously be filled with the Spirit. We're never told to seek the baptism of the Spirit. It never happened before the day of Pentecost, speaking of the baptism of the Spirit. It never occurred before Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost initiated this work of baptism, whereas being filled with the Spirit was something that as you read the Old Testament you will occasionally encounter where it says that so-and-so was filled with the Spirit. So-and-so was controlled by the Spirit.

So that's a definite difference between the two. The baptism of the Spirit is true of all believers. If you're a believer, you've been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. It isn't necessarily true that every child of God here this morning is filled with the Spirit. We've noted that for the last couple weeks. It's not necessarily the case in each of our lives. The baptism of the Spirit can't be undone. It can't be undone whereas the filling of the Spirit is something that can be undone. The baptism of the Spirit results specifically to our position in Christ. We are placed in Christ. We are brought into this vital union with Christ. That is speaking of our position, our standing before God.

Then the filling of the Spirit results in power. The power to live a life of godliness, a power to walk with God in the power of the Spirit. There's no condition for the baptism of the Spirit apart from faith in Christ so that when you put your faith in Christ you are brought into the body of Christ. Apart from that, there really are no conditions, whereas as we've noted with the filling of the Spirit, it clearly depends on our obedience and our yielding.

When should I be filled with the Spirit? When should I be filled with the Spirit? The answer is always. Always. We should always be filled with the Spirit. When Paul says in Ephesians 5:18 don't be drunk with wine for that's debauchery but be filled with

the Spirit, we emphasize that not only is that a command which we are to obey, but it's in the present tense which tells us that this is to be our continuous response to the Holy Spirit. So if you're awake this morning and really, it's way too early in the message for anybody to fall asleep yet, so if you're awake this morning you're to be filled with the Spirit. That's God's will for your life as a child of God. Right now, in this moment, you and I are to be filled with God's Spirit.

How am I filled with the Spirit? We touched on that. Obedience is the issue. Obedience is the issue. I think in many respects that begins with desire. There's a command that is given to us here that we are to obey on just a very, very practical level. One of the things that I regularly do as I start my day, most often before I even get out of bed, I simply say something like this: Good morning, Father. Good morning, Lord Jesus. Good morning, Holy Spirit. I want my life today to reflect Your glory. I want to walk in obedience to what You have told me to do today. That's not just something that you do when you get up and it's not a prayer to say just when you go to sleep. It's to be a continuous desire and I would suggest to you that if you regularly do that in conversation in your relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit it can dramatically change the way that you live out your day. If you are that much in conversation regularly, continuously because that's what He's telling us. Walk in obedience to the Word of God. It's a habit of life that we're trying to develop with our spiritual muscles of growing in our walk with God.

It is not on your outline because we're going to look at this next week, but what happens when I'm filled with the Spirit? What happens when I'm filled with the Spirit? Lord willing, that's what we'll take up next Sunday. So let's look this morning at how do I stay filled with the Spirit? When you look at that question, the very nature of the question tells us that we are not always filled with the Spirit all of the time.

When we're interacting with the question of how I stay filled with the Spirit, we're acknowledging that this side of heaven we're in a conflict. We're in a struggle. We're in a battle. We're in a spiritual battle the Bible tells us very clearly. No one is going to be joyful a hundred percent of the time. No one is going to be in submission to the Spirit of God and to the will of God every moment of every day. That is not a reality. We are in a battle. That's why Paul constructs it in the way that he does in Galatians 5. Be filled with

the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. If you're not filled with the Spirit, you're fulfilling the lust of the flesh. You're doing your own thing. You're going your own way. Our heart's desire should be to always be filled with the Spirit. That's the aim, the goal of the Christian life. It is to be like the psalmist in Psalm 42 –as the deer pants for water so my soul longs after you. The psalmist reflects that. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. To satisfy that kind of desire requires faith, requires obedience. It requires that we preach to our soul a sermon of hope because in the fifth verse of that same Psalm, the psalmist says why are you downcast, o my soul? Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God for I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God. So we set our sights on the promises of God. We set our sights on the will of God. We say God this is what I want for You to do in my life. This is the desire that I want for You to be creating within my heart, within my mind, within my soul so that it can be said of us as it was said of Stephen and Barnabas that we are filled with the Spirit and we're people of faith. That's ultimately our desire. That's our goal. That's what we desire.

So how do we do that? How do we stay filled with the Spirit? We talked last week about attitudes that we can have towards the Holy Spirit. I think this is a key to understanding and answering this question. There are four attitudes and we looked at them just in passing last Sunday. We're going to dig in a little deeper this morning. The first one we're going to just touch on because this is the whole crux of what we've talked about for two weeks. Yield to the spirit. The first attitude that we can have is the one that we want to have. It's the one that we should have. Yield to the Spirit. That's the whole point of Ephesians 5:18. Don't be drunk with wine for that's debauchery but be filled continuously all the time with the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. Don't fulfill the lust of the flesh. Amos 3:3 says how can two people walk together unless they be in agreement? So that's what we're looking for. We're talking about a yielding to the Holy Spirit. This begins with this desire that we just expressed. Father, I want to walk in harmony with You. You've told me what Your will is for my life. It's right here. It's on all of these pages of Your Word. This is God's will for my life. Help me increasingly to come under the direction of Your will because it's here that God has given me that kind of instruction. So the first attitude is the one that we want to have. To yield to the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit.

We don't always find ourselves there. Sometimes we adopt the second attitude towards the Spirit and we grieve the Holy Spirit. We grieve the Spirit. Ephesians 4:30. Don't grieve the Spirit of God by whom you are sealed into the day of redemption. When you look at Ephesians 4:30, Paul is probably making a reference to Isaiah 63:10 where Isaiah the prophet spoke of the people of God in the Old Testament and said you have rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. You've grieved the Holy Spirit, Isaiah said. Just like in Ephesians 5:18, what do you suppose the directive is in Ephesians 4:30? Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Don't grieve the Spirit.

What do you suppose that verb is? Anybody want to take a guess that it's a present tense imperative? It's a present tense command. He's saying don't do this and if you are doing it, stop. So he steps right into our world, right into our life and he says at this moment I want you to be yielded to the Spirit. I want you to be controlled by the Spirit. I want you to be filled with the Spirit. What I don't want is for you to grieve the Spirit.

I don't know about you, but just when you hear the word "grieve" in English is an emotive word. It brings emotion with it. That certainly is true in this usage here. It is an emotionally packed word that speaks of a wound. It speaks of causing pain. It speaks of sadness and hurt. One of the things that you notice about the word "grieve", it generally is within the context of love. When you grieve somebody, it generally is the response of somebody who loves you or somebody that you love that you feel grief about and that you're grieving in regards to. Within our family settings, we understand this, don't we? We do something that is hurtful. We do something to wrong each other whether it's in our personal families, whether it is within the family of God. We say things that are hurtful. We say things that are harmful. Sometimes if we're at any level of sensitivity as soon as we do it, we can see on the face of the person that we've struck out against. We can see that we have grieved them. If we have any level of sensitivity within our own heart, we can sense that they have borne a hurt from us. This word is easy for us to grasp in terms of what this looks like in our life. Paul just takes that over into our relationship with the Holy Spirit.

He says there's some measure in which the Holy Spirit, remember the Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is a person. We can grieve the Holy

Spirit. We can cause sadness if you will to come into the heart of the Holy Spirit. You say what would that look like? In Ephesians 4 where this verse is given to us, in that 30th verse you look back at verse 25 and you read to verse 31 and it's a whole series of statements about how it is that we're relating to each other. There's a whole series of commands here about how we treat each other and how it is that we live our life. We won't read through all those verses but it's pretty obvious that Paul doesn't want us to leave Ephesians 4 just wondering what in the world would grief look like with regard to the Holy Spirit. He literally lays it out point by point by point. You do these things and you're grieving the Spirit of God. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. That's why he says don't do that.

The third attitude we can have towards the Spirit is we can resist the Spirit. We can resist the Spirit. Back in Acts chapter 7 and verse 51, Stephen is ready to be stoned and with great boldness is speaking to these religious leaders and to those that are surrounding him. And he says to them: You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears. You always resist the Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. So we come right back to where we were in the point before and we ask the question again here – what does it mean to resist the Spirit? Again just look at that word. To resist means to strive against. It means oppose. Stephen is reflecting back on the children of Israel and their attitude and their heart response towards God. He says that as a general practice there's been an attitude of resistance. God has communicated with His people and is ready to pour out His blessing upon them. What He's asking of them is to walk in obedience and they're resisting Him. They're pushing back against Him. They're opposing Him. They don't want to do what He's asked them to do. They in fact want to do the opposite in many respects of what He wants them to do. I think it's interesting in the context as Stephen describes this, he describes it as something that is in connection with relation to God's Word to His people. You always seem to resist the voice of God if you will. You consistently have turned away from His Word and His truth. So it would seem to me that there's probably something here for us as well in that regard.

We could ask the question: how is it that we resist the spirit today? Well, one of the things that we could do and we get pretty good at is we can sit week to week under the teaching of the Word and we can hear it but not do it. We can hear it but not

respond to it. We can hear it and in some instances actually simply resist it. Isn't that the whole point that James made when he wrote in the first chapter of his letter: don't be hearers of the Word only, but be doers of the Word, deceiving your own selves. He's talking about us when we hear the Word and instead of welcoming it and receiving it and responding to it, we hear it and in some cases we just choose to ignore it. In other cases, we literally resist it and we push back against it. As God opens His Word to us week to week and the Holy Spirit speaks to us, and here's something specific that is happening in our own life experience and God by His Word directs us that this is the course of action. This is what it looks like to walk in obedience. and we simply choose not to. That is to resist the Holy Spirit.

Paul when he wrote to the Bereans and when Luke gave us that record in Acts 17 said why don't we all be like the Bereans who when Paul brought the Word of God to them, they opened the Scriptures and they studied the Scriptures to see how these things compared and how it impacted their life. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:13 and he says when I came to you I didn't come to you with the words of men, but I came to you with the Word of God. You welcomed it. You welcomed it into your life. That's the opposite of resisting the Spirit. The Spirit of God speaks His Word and His truth into our life and we're to be like the psalmist. Psalm 139. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my way. Show me if there is anything in my life that is not consistent with what You want for me. I tell you what. God will faithfully do that.

If every time you open this book, and maybe that's why many don't. Maybe that's why many don't, but if you as a child of God want to know the will of God for your life, you're going to be opening this book every day. You're going to be saying as you do that, God, search my heart today and speak by Your Spirit and by Your Word into my life. Show me where my life is not in step with Your Word. Show me by the light of Your Word where I'm walking literally in darkness spiritually. So we resist the Spirit when the Spirit says go, we stop. When the Spirit says stop, we go. We resist the Spirit in that way.

The fourth attitude that we can have towards the Holy Spirit is we can quench the Spirit. We can quench the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 19. One short,

straightforward and simple statement. Do not quench the Spirit. I need some help here. I'm looking at this verb. I'm trying to figure out what you think this verb is. Come on. Somebody help me. What do you suppose this verb is? Do not quench the Spirit. It is a present tense imperative again. Every time we look at one of these attitudes towards the Spirit, the Spirit of God directs us into a continuing attitude and heart relationship in which we're either yielding and are filled, or we are resisting and we're quenching and in some way grieving the Spirit. Here it is again. It is a present tense imperative. Another command. And here again it is the plural, so he is talking to all of us. The NIV says do not put out the Spirit's fire. A paraphrase says don't be a wet blanket over the Spirit.

The word "quench" brings to mind the fire is literally being quenched. When you look again at the context surrounding all of these things, you see how this comes to light in this passage because we are to esteem each other highly. We are to encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all. Don't repay evil to anybody. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks. This is the will of God for your life. Don't quench the Spirit. He just goes through a whole series of statements. Tucked away right in the middle of all of those commands is the statement. Just be sure that you're not quenching the Spirit. Don't be throwing a wet blanket over the Holy Spirit. Don't be keeping the Holy Spirit from doing His work in your life. Again the word is definitely involved in this attitude, in this relationship with the Spirit. We're either following, we're hindering, obeying, doing our own thing.

Here's the bottom line. I look at those attitudes, those last three in particular. You look at those three attitudes that we can have: grieving, resisting, quenching. The bottom line in all three of those cases there is one thing that describes all three of them. It begins with an S and it ends with an N. you can buy a vowel to put in the middle. It's sin. It's sin. How is it that we grieve the Spirit? By sin. How is it that we resist the Spirit? By sin. How is it that we quench the Spirit? By sin. If obedience puts you in a right relationship with God to where you are yielding and walking and being filled with the Spirit, then it is pretty clear that disobedience is the thing that keeps you from being filled. It is disobedience that causes you to grieve the Spirit and resist the Spirit and quench the Spirit.

The reality is we all leak the Holy Spirit. We don't stay filled and so what are we going to do? I said last week that you can't grieve the Spirit and be filled. You can't resist the Spirit and be filled. You can't quench the Spirit and be filled. These things are mutually exclusive. You can't do those and at the same time be filled with the Spirit. Either we're saying yes to sin and our own selfishness, or we're saying yes to God. So here is what I want to ask you. how is it that we are going to maintain this filling of the spirit?

Here is the sad thing that I've encountered in almost 40 years of being in the ministry. I've had countless conversations with people who have chosen something that is clearly contrary to God's Word and God's will. They are walking in a place of disobedience to God. They have chosen a lifestyle or a behavior or an attitude or an unwillingness to conform to the Word of God. I can't tell you how many times I have sat across from somebody who at the same time is claiming to be walking in the will of God, to be doing what God wants them to be doing to in some instances, actually telling me how God has arranged the circumstances of their life in confirming that this is what He wants them to do when it is absolutely contrary to what Scripture says. That's the point that Paul wants us to understand here. You cannot grieve the Spirit, you can't resist the Spirit and quench the Spirit, and at the same time claim to be walking filled with the Spirit and in the will of God.

We come to a point where we acknowledge how it is that I walk in agreement with God. Let's look at that as we close. Sin, confession and forgiveness is where this is found. Sin by its very nature separates. That's what sin does. Sin separates. We deal with that in two ways. We deal with that first of all in terms of our relationship with God. I'm born into this world separated from God by sin. There's a great big word that we use right out of the pages of Scripture called "justification". It is to be declared righteous. That's what God does in our lives when we step out in faith and believe that what Jesus did was all that needed to be done. God says He justifies us when we put our faith and trust in Christ. The separation between us and God is ended. We are brought into a relationship with Him that is eternal. The result of that transaction is that we are eternally given life that is unchanging. That's one aspect of this matter of what sin does in a person's life.

But there's another part of this. That's my relationship to God. But there's a piece that we call fellowship with God. This is what we're dealing with in being filled with the Spirit. This whole matter of fellowship with God is also one that we encounter with regard to what sin does in our daily experience, our daily walk. The solution for sin in my daily walk, in my day-to-day experience is a big word called "sanctification", which means to be set apart. God is about the business in my daily life of setting me apart to do His will and that results in something temporal in my life called fellowship. That can change from moment to moment, from day to day obviously.

If you look at it in terms of an illustration, we go to the cross and from the cross you have 2 circles. The first circle represents this matter of justification. The X in that circle represents an unchanging relationship with God. That is something that is not going to change. My relationship with God has been secured through justification. But in terms of my fellowship with God, there the X is in relation to either I am in fellowship with God, filled with God's Spirit, or I am outside of fellowship with God because sin has broken that fellowship.

It is really easy to illustrate this within the context of marriage. Everybody that's been married and everybody who is married knows that on a very rare occasion you'll have a disagreement, and you might even on occasion have a knockdown drag out battle. That's the reality of married life. After you have one of these particularly unwelcome events, what do you do? Well, of course, you call the church office to get a pastor to meet you somewhere and you get remarried. Of course not. Of course not. Why don't you? Because you don't need to. You entered into that marriage covenant together and you promised that whatever was going to come your way, you were going to work it out. What you do need to do is you do need to deal with your fellowship with each other because that's been hurt. You've grieved each other, just as you've grieved the Holy Spirit. That fellowship is restored by confession. Honey, I'm so sorry I said that. I should never have brought that up. Whatever that was. What happens when you do that? There is a transaction of fellowship restored. That is the same in terms of our relationship to God.

So what brings that about? Confession by its nature involves agreement. Just as sin by its nature results in separation, so confession by its nature involves agreement.

When we read in 1 John 1:9 if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's what he's talking about.

The word "confess" is the word *homologeō*. *Homo* the same. *Logeo* to say. Say the same thing. What does that mean? Say the same thing that God does. I said something that I shouldn't have. God says that is wrong. I've hurt somebody. I have an unforgiving spirit of bitterness in my heart. I took something that wasn't mine. Whatever it was that constituted sin I simply agree with God that it was wrong, that it was sin. That's confession. We agree with God. When God says it's sin, I agree with God.

I can't grieve the Spirit, I can't resist the Spirit, I can't quench the Spirit, and at the same time be filled with the Spirit and be in fellowship with the Spirit. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. That's Paul's statement in Colossians. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Stop rationalizing your sin. Stop excusing your sin. Stop covering it up. Stop pretending like what you did or said didn't hurt somebody. Run from it. Avoid it. But when you fall confess. Because when you do the result is forgiveness, which by its nature restores. Forgiveness by its nature restores.

Listen to what CS Lewis said: "A Christian is not someone who never goes wrong, but someone who is enabled to confess, repent and pick up and begin again after each stumble, because the Christ-life is inside him repairing them all the time." I have said it many times. The Christian life is a sin-confessing life. The Christian life is a sin-confessing life. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Sin resists the Holy Spirit. Sin quenches the Holy Spirit. Confession frees the Holy Spirit to fill my life with the Word and truth of God. I want to live a life in which I'm practicing confession. A life without sin and a life without struggle is impossible. But I will say to you, a life without confession for a Christian is a life of misery. If you are living your Christian life apart from the doctrine of confession, you're living in misery on some level because you're not enjoying the things that God has for you to enjoy. Don't fight the Spirit. Don't grieve the Spirit. Don't quench the Spirit. Yield to the Spirit. Submit to the Spirit. Obey the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is essential to our spiritual growth and confession of sin is essential to being filled.

What do we take away? My hope is as we've gone through these principles, you've seen that the Word of God and the Spirit-filled life go together. The Word of God

and the Spirit-filled life go together. We need to know the Word. We need to submit to the Word, obey the Word, heed the Word, welcome the Word. When you do, you'll be filled with the Spirit because that's the promise of God.

I ask each of us this morning to listen to the Spirit in these closing moments and invite Him to just point, to put His finger on something in your life that even this morning might be grieving Him, might be quenching, might be a point of resistance. Then as the Spirit does that, then submit in obedience to what He has called you to do. Maybe this morning the Holy Spirit will be calling you to respond to the gospel. This good news of what it is that Jesus has done for us. The fact that Jesus came to this earth, died on the cross and did so for our sin, did so in such a way that that we don't have to do anything else to earn God's favor. God by His Spirit may be speaking and calling to you this morning and saying come all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Answer the call of God's Spirit.

Let's pray. Gracious Father, thank You in Your wonderful and marvelous plan and in the riches of Your grace You have provided for us not only to be in a relationship with You, Father, but to be in sweet fellowship. We thank You for the Word of Christ that dwells richly within our lives. We pray that we will with faith trust you, believe you and respond to that Word and that truth and experience the blessing of God in our life. We ask in Jesus's name, Amen.