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Series: People In Step With The Spirit
Message: Filled With The Spirit, Part 2

Transcribed Message
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Ephesians 5:18

Some of you are old enough to remember the original television series *Candid Camera*. Some of you are old enough to remember what I think might have been the original host Allen Funt. Some of you are old enough to remember an episode in 1948 which no, I did not watch this episode in 1948. I wasn't even watching TV in 1958 but that's for another time. But in 1948 there was a TV episode of *Candid Camera* called "Missing Motor". They had an old car and they took the motor out of it. Then they gave the lady who was driving it and her son a push down the hill. She pulled into what was then a full-service gas station. For many of you, you don't have any idea what a full-service gas station is. A full-service gas station is just what it says. You pulled in, the bell rang and a guy came running out. He would put in as much gas as you wanted in your car. He checked your oil and your tire pressure. He did all that stuff for you. So this lady pulls in and this guy begins to do these various things. He lifts up the hood of her car and lo and behold, there's no motor there. He comes over to her window and he asks, "How did you get here?" She says, "I drove here." And he goes, "You've got no motor." And she goes, "You're kidding me. Well, would you try to start my car for me?" The guy can't believe it. He says, "Lady, you don't have a motor. You can't start your car." And she asks, "What am I going to do? What am I going to tell my husband?" The man says to call the police, and she responds, "I don't know the police. Could you call the police? And would you please try to try to start my car?" And he goes, "Lady, you don't have a motor. Your car can't start."

I thought of that episode when I read recently this statement: "The Christian life is not difficult. The Christian life is impossible apart from the Holy Spirit." And yet here's the amazing thing, the surprising thing. There is a certain percentage unfortunately, sometimes a very high percentage of Christians who are trying to live the Christian life

apart from this amazing, available, inexhaustible source of power that we know to be the Holy Spirit of God.

So we want to pick up this morning where we left off last week. We're looking at how it is that we're filled with the Spirit and this is simply part two of that study. We're going to stay with the same big idea because that hasn't changed from this week to last. We're looking at the fact that nothing is more important to your spiritual life than this matter of being filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit literally wants to dominate your life. He wants to influence your life. He wants to control you every day.

We begin with a review to get everybody back on the same page. About 80% of this is review and I've thrown in a few new things along the way here. But let's start off by just recognizing the fact that the Scriptures seem to indicate that there's a distinction between the filling of the Spirit and the indwelling of the Spirit. There is a distinction between the filling of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit. There is a distinction between the filling of the Spirit and the sealing of the Spirit. There is a distinction between the works of the Spirit in those specific ways.

We believe that's the case because as we read our Bibles, as we study the Scriptures it becomes clear to us that those things of indwelling, baptizing and sealing all take place at salvation. The moment one puts their trust in Christ, those experiences by which we are indwelt, baptized and sealed all take place instantaneously to that moment of faith in Christ. We look at the Scriptures and it would seem to indicate that those are once-for-all experiences. Those aren't repeated experiences in other words. We're never told to seek the indwelling. We're never told to seek the baptism. We're never told to seek the sealing of the Spirit. Those things happen at faith at salvation and they happen one time, never to be repeated again.

We look at those and we see that they are also irreversible. When God gives us this forever gift of eternal life, it is truly indeed that. It is a forever gift. His indwelling and His baptism and the sealing of the Spirit are those gifts to us that God says are irreversible.

Then you notice secondly that there are some Scriptures that when we speak of the filling of the Spirit seem to emphasize it first of all in terms of an event. The filling of the Spirit in some passages of Scripture seems to focus on a special task that is at

hand. To fulfill that task, God fills individuals with His Spirit. That is oftentimes the case in the Old Testament passages where God gave someone a specific task and He filled that person with the Spirit to enable them to fulfill that task. But it's not just in the Old Testament. It is also in the New Testament. In Luke chapter 1, when Mary came to visit Elizabeth we read in verse 39: "In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zachariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby (that is John the Baptist right) leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit." God gave to Elizabeth the filling of the Spirit specific to the task of bringing into this world this great man of God, John the Baptist. Over in in the same chapter and verse 67 speaking of Zachariah we read this: "And his father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied..." God filled individuals with the Spirit, the Scriptures tell us, for specific tasks.

Then there's another side to this filling. That's the side we're looking at this morning and it is this matter of the control of the Spirit in our life on a daily basis. We have the Holy Spirit coming and filling people specific to a task. But then we have many other places where there's the matter of control, the matter of influence in our lives speaking to the quality of Christian character that God wants to develop within us. For instance, in Acts 6 when the apostles realized that they had too much going on and they needed help, we read the account of the deacons. As they begin to look for deacons, what were they looking for? They're looking for men, it says in Acts 6, who were filled with the Spirit. Other qualifications were there but the filling of the Spirit, which was producing godliness and Christlikeness in their life, was high on their list of things that they were looking for. Stephen. When he was being martyred it was his life that demonstrated so beautifully the Christlikeness that so irritated and angered the religious leaders. We read in Acts that it was this man Stephen who was filled with the Spirit. The same thing is said in Acts 11 of Barnabas. Barnabas, we read, was a man who was filled with the Spirit and with faith. And we know of Barnabas's life and how it is that he exemplified the quality of Christian character. So these references are references that have to do with the quality of life. They have to do with living an exemplary life and of living a Christlike life.

Take a minute and just look at your outline. Look at all of the references in those two points. This is just a side note. There's no extra charge for this. What do you see about all of those references? What is something that as you look at all of those references and those two points having to do with the filling of the Holy Spirit in relation to a specific task or the filling of the Spirit in relation to Christian character? What is an observation that you can make about all of those passages? They're all in Luke and they're all in Acts. The Holy Spirit shows Luke the Gentile writer of Luke and Acts to give us this huge portion of teaching with regard to the Holy Spirit. We know John does that in the Upper Room. Paul really fills out the rest of that doctrine in the letters that he writes. But here is Luke giving us a good bit of instruction with regard to the filling of the Spirit.

There is one passage that we looked at last week and we'll continue on in today that clearly directs this matter of the filling of the Spirit as being a command. Here is in Ephesians 5:18 this central passage with regard to the filling of the Spirit and we looked at it in detail last Sunday. "And do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit." I want us to see two observations that flow out of this. We touched on them last week but I'll expand on them a little bit this morning.

Each one of us has a responsibility to obey this command. Here is a command of Scripture. Be filled with the Spirit. Each person, each believer has a responsibility before God to be filled with the Spirit. This is a command. This isn't an option. This isn't do this if you if you want to. This is God stating His will for our life. His will for our life is that we be filled with the Spirit. We noted that it's in the present tense, so it is unlike being indwelt, unlike being baptized, unlike the sealing ministry in the Spirit which is a one-time once and for all event. Here the command that is given to us is that this is to be a continuous, ongoing matter. This is something that is repeated as often as is needed. Here is a point of contrast. The filling is a filling that is to be repeated as often as is necessary.

Thirdly, we said it is in the passive voice, which is the voice of grace and something that we receive. We're not told that we're to go out and look for the indwelling, to look for the baptism, or to look for the sealing. Here is a command and we

receive this command. The Holy Spirit in His grace is going to work in our lives in fulfilling this command.

Then this last point. It is in the plural. It is in the plural. That just reinforces what we've said. This is for everybody. This isn't for a super class of Christians. This isn't for people who are higher somehow spiritually than everybody else. Paul actually writes to the church in Ephesus and he says I want you to know the will of God for your life. It would be as if he's speaking to them collectively like I am to you. I would say it is God's will for all of us as the gathered community at Covenant. It is God's will that all of us be filled with the Spirit. Not only does that reinforce that it is true for every one of us, but I'm pretty sure it has something to do with community life. I'm pretty sure it has something to do with the instruction that is involved here and its impact on us as a gathered community. If the Lord allows us at the end of this series, I want to do two different things. One Sunday I want to look at what it looks like to be in a marriage in which people are filled with the Spirit. I'd like to finish the series by seeing what it looks like for a church to be filled with the Spirit. I think that's what he's talking about here. He is saying collectively all of us are responsible here and we're responsible in this together.

Secondly, I want you to see that it's possible then for a Christian not to be filled with the Spirit. We were talking again about a command. It is the responsibility of every Christian. We are by definition indwelt by the Spirit. We are by definition as Christ's followers baptized by the Spirit. We are by definition sealed with the Spirit if you're a follower of Christ. That's the promise of the Word, but you're not necessarily this morning at this moment of time filled with the Spirit. The only way that is true is if you are walking in obedience to this command. It is true in light of this statement in Ephesians 5 to be a child of God, to have experienced all of these various blessings that we talked about and yet not be filled with the Spirit. That is evident just as it is self-evident when we are filled with the Spirit. We'll look at that in a future time.

So here is the question before us this morning. How is it that we obey this command? This brings us to the question that we raised last week. How is it that I'm filled with the Spirit? You're going to have to come back next week to get the answer to that. Wait. I used that last week. How is that we're filled with the Spirit? That's the question before us.

I want to start off by saying some things that I think it's not. I'm going to give you three things that I don't think are involved or required in order to be filled with the Spirit. First of all, it's not a matter of waiting or tarrying. It's not a matter of waiting or tarrying. Why do I make that point? In Luke 24 and verse 49 we read: "And behold I am sending the promise of My Father upon you, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Out of Luke 24:49 there has been a teaching that has risen within some traditions that we wait for the filling of the Spirit. In fact, the word "stay" has been translated in the King James version as tarry. It sometimes is referred to as the tarrying ministry of the Spirit. We're tarrying. We're waiting. We're anticipating that the Spirit is going to come and fill us. A problem with that of course is Luke 24:49 isn't talking about the filling of the Spirit. This is pre-Pentecost in Luke 24. The Holy Spirit hasn't even come up on God's people in the way that He would at Pentecost. I think clearly in Luke 24 Luke has in mind what is yet to come. And what were they supposed to do? They were supposed to stay in the city. If that were still true today, then we have to go to Jerusalem and we have to stay in Jerusalem and we have to wait for the Holy Spirit to come and fill us up. I don't think that's in view here.

Secondly, the filling of the Spirit is not a mechanical formula. There's not a mechanical formula for the filling of the Spirit. I know a lot of us, myself included, like to check off things. We like to have our list of things that we need to do today or things that we can follow to have a certain outcome. Yet I don't think that the Bible supports the idea that there's some formula. Take step number one, step number two, step number three and boom! You're filled with the Spirit. I don't see that presentation given to us. We are not given a formula as much as we're given guidance for what it is that we need to do.

Then thirdly, the filling of the Spirit does not come about simply based on an emotional experience. We're not pressing into some emotional experience. We're not pleading with God. We don't need to beg God for something that He has already told us is readily available. He has given as a command. We're to respond in obedience to that command, right? It's not required of us that we beg and plead with God to do the very thing that He has promised that He wants to do for us. We don't need to work ourselves

up into any kind of an emotional state and link that somehow to the filling of the Spirit. I believe that there are times when the filling of the Spirit is an experiential event. I'm pretty confident there are other times when the filling of the Spirit is non-experiential, that is we may not feel anything at all. That is not what the Scriptures would put forward as if there is some emotional response that will bring the filling of the Spirit into our life.

What is it then? Well, let me just suggest by way of guidance from Scripture what I think is involved in the Holy Spirit filling ministry. It begins I think where it has to begin. It begins with us focusing on a relationship. This is about a relationship. Being filled with the Spirit is about being in a relationship with the Spirit. In the second lesson in this series, we talked about the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit is God. We are to be relating to the Holy Spirit in the same way that we're relating to the Father and to the Son. The Holy Spirit should not be the forgotten member of the Godhead in our relationship to the triune God. We should have as much desire to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit as we do with God the Father and God the Son.

What is it that is required for there to be a relationship? If you're going to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, what's going to be involved in that? Well, there certainly is going to have to be an awareness of this very point. The Holy Spirit is a person. He wants to fellowship with us. He wants to commune with us. He wants to have conversation with us. There has to be interaction. There has to be fellowship. There has to be awareness for there to be any kind of a relationship. Just think of the relationships in your life right now. What is it that fosters and encourages growth in a relationship? The very things that will foster, encourage and grow our understanding and our relationship to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is not an it. The Spirit of God is not an impersonal force. The Spirit of God is a person, a member of the triune God.

Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 3. I think this is very instructive. In his prayer for the church in Ephesus Paul says this: "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the

saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

We don't have time this morning and maybe we'll look at this on a future Sunday. Being filled with the Spirit or being filled by the Spirit. That little preposition can be understood in either way. We can be filled with the Spirit. Literally, the Spirit is the one who fills us. Or we can be filled by the Spirit. I kind of lean towards the truth that we are to be filled by the Spirit. And what is it that the Spirit fills us with? He fills us according to what Paul says here with the fullness of God. It is God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit that we enter into this amazing relationship with. We have this interaction with the triune God of heaven who literally takes up residence within us. By that means we are filled with the fullness of the power of God. That seems to me is the prayer of Paul in this regard. It begins by having an understanding that we're in a relationship with God, with God the Spirit.

The second thing. I hope you see when we're done that these all just intersect together. These all work simply in concert together. You can't just pick one of these and put emphasis on it. They just all work together as I believe God intends them to. But secondly, it's about obedience. To be filled with the Spirit is about obedience. If you had to put a one-word condition on how it is that we're filled with the Spirit, I don't know how you would come up with a word better than obedience. There are synonyms to that word. The whole matter that we sang this morning. I surrender. What is it to surrender? It is to be obedient. What is it to be obedient? It is to be dependent, to yield. All of those it seems to me speak of what it is to live life under the Lordship of Christ. We're living life under the Lordship of Christ. We're walking in obedience to Christ. It is to acknowledge (another word) that we're helpless. When Jesus said to the disciples in the Upper Room, without Me you can do nothing, He seriously meant without Me you can do nothing. He meant you're going to have to walk in obedience with Me and I think that's the other picture that we just read in Galatians 5. What does it mean to walk by the Spirit? To walk by the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? To be filled with the Spirit is to walk by the Spirit. These all work in concert with each other. Someone rightly said if you're full of yourself, it's pretty hard to be filled with the Spirit. That is simply a reflection of who is running your life. What is

Lord in your life? What is it that you give allegiance to? What is it that you submit yourself to?

I believe as you study the New Testament, and we'll develop this Lord willing even next Sunday, there are four attitudes that we can have towards the Holy Spirit. You can grieve the Holy Spirit – Ephesians 4. You can resist the Holy Spirit – Acts 7. You can quench the Spirit – 1 Thessalonians 5:19. Or you can be controlled, filled by the Spirit. We'll think through that list. You can grieve the Spirit. You can resist the Spirit. You can quench the Spirit. You know what you can't do? You can't be filled with the Spirit and do any of those other things. If you're grieving the Spirit, you're not filled with the Spirit. If you're resisting the Spirit, you're not filled with the Spirit. If you're quenching the Spirit, you're not filled with the Spirit. So when you think in terms of the attitude that we can have towards the Spirit of God and these are the choices that are before us, the first three make the last impossible. The last, being filled with the Spirit, will rule out the first three. That is to be our heart.

When Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that we are to take every thought captive into obedience to Christ, what was he talking about? He is talking about being filled with the Spirit. Do you know what filling of the Spirit looks like? Taking every thought into captivity for Christ. It is living out this matter of Lordship of Christ in your life, taking every thought moment by moment. It is an attitude of God, I am trusting You. my actions, my words and my thoughts. What do your actions, your words and your thoughts look like when you're walking in obedience to the Spirit? They look quite different than when we're not. Do you want to be filled with the Spirit? Then live out the life of Christ.

We spent months just in the previous series looking at the Sermon on the Mount. And what was the title of the Sermon on the Mount? What was it that we tried to remind ourselves of every Sunday? This is the Christ-life. Living life the way Jesus did. And so if you want to know what does that look like? Just regularly read the Sermon on the Mount and ask how is this looking in my life. It touches, as we saw, every area of life from the things of the world and material things that we possess, the stewardship of time and energy, relationships. It's all there. What is the Sermon on the Mount? It is the life of Christ. What is the life of Christ? It is living filled with the Spirit. Jesus lived every

day of His life in submission to the Father. Psalm 40: "I have come to do Your will, O my God." He lived every day of His life in submission to the Father. He lived every day of His life filled with the Spirit. It is the Christ-like life that we are called to.

Thirdly, how do we do that? How can we live the way Jesus lived? God's Word permeating every area of our life. God's Word permeating every area of our life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says if anyone is in Christ, if any person is in Christ, they're a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new. He's talking about our position, about our standing before God. How do we move from this place of position in which we have all of these spiritual blessings that we listed a few weeks ago, 36 of them. That is our position in Christ. How do we move from that truth into practice? You have to know what it is that God is requiring of us and where do we find that? We find that in His Word. It requires the knowledge of the Word.

Why is it that the church in America is anemic and weak? There is a direct corollary to the fact that we are basically a Biblically illiterate group. Those things are not unrelated. When surveys and questions are asked of the people of God who have spent years in the church basic doctrinal questions and they don't have the answer to it, how could they ever possibly take every thought captive to Christ if they don't even know what the thoughts that Christ wants us to have are? If you're not getting the Word of God into your life every day, you really don't have much chance of walking in obedience to God because you don't know what He is asking of you. how in the world could you be filled with the Spirit if you don't know what it is that the Spirit has called us to do and be?

We are in a relationship with a person. We are in a relationship in which we're to obey the Holy Spirit and we are finding out what that looks like in the Word of God. Listen, my friends. Life change always begins with the truth of God's word. There is no change that is going on in your life that is of eternal consequence that is not directly related to the truth of the word of God. We can sit in in groups and have conversations and be all over the map. We can all share our feelings about this and our feelings about that, our thoughts about this and our thoughts about that. At the end of the day if we're not informed by the truth of God's Word, we're missing out on the greatest resource God has given to us –His Word and His Spirit. Jesus said in John 15:7 abide in Me and

I will abide in you. what is that? That's the truth of God's Word permeating our life. That's living life filled with the Spirit. You abide in Me and I'll abide in you. The best evidence of the filling of the Spirit in your life is obedience to the Word of God.

Then finally, we'll discuss this one briefly because this will be our study next Sunday. The filling of the Spirit is all about dealing with sin when the Holy Spirit brings it to mind. Dealing with sin when the Holy Spirit brings it to mind. If you ask me what is the greatest single hindrance to the filling of the Holy Spirit in my life, I would say without hesitation it is sin. What is the greatest hindrance to the filling of the Spirit in your life? It's sin. What is sin? Anything that is contrary to the will of God in our life. So again, you can't quench, grieve or resist the Spirit, all of which constitutes sin, and be filled with the Spirit. When you're filled with the Spirit and when you're walking in obedience, then you have obviously the result of the filling of the Spirit. Paul says in Galatians 5: "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other..." To be filled with the Spirit is to be in a relationship with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to walk in obedience to the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to know the Word and to confess sin. Nothing is more important to your spiritual life than the filling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to dominate your life.

What do we take away? Being filled with the Spirit and staying filled with the Spirit is the best way to make sure that you're living within the will of God. Remember Ephesians 5:17? What is the will of God for your life? The will of God for your life is to be filled with the Spirit. God's protection over our life, God's protection over our daily experience is to be filled with the Spirit.

The first step of course for all of us had to begin by putting our trust and our faith in Christ. That's what we spoke of and what we saw at the very beginning this morning. The gospel. The gospel of God's grace that comes into this messy world, this broken world, and God, by His great love, speaks His truth into our life, telling us that we can put aside all of our human efforts and all of our human work. We can trust Jesus alone for the gift of salvation.

Let's pray. Father God, we ask that by Your Spirit You would do that in the life this morning in someone's mind. Open to them, Father, the wonder of Your grace, of

Your love, of Your goodness, of Your mercy. Father, we as Your people want to do the works of God. We want to walk in the will of God. We can do that only as we allow the Spirit of God to fill us. Father, call us to a greater obedience. Call us to a greater sensitivity to Your Spirit, to Your Word, to Your truth, to sin. May we flee and run from all that is opposed to You and may we embrace and run to all that is good and holy. We ask in Jesus's name, Amen.