

Restoration Church

Filled with the Holy Spirit

Various

Note: This manuscript has not been edited so please overlook any grammatical and/or spelling errors.

Introduction

We've spent the last 3+ months walking through the first half of the book of Acts verse by verse, chapter by chapter – that's our usual preaching style here at Restoration Church, simply taking a book of the Bible and working right through it, explaining it and applying it to our lives.

Maybe a handful times a year we'll do something different and focus on a topic. Tonight's one of those nights. As we've spent significant time in the book of Acts, there has been a repeated topic that's come up over and over that we've not addressed in great detail.

And the topic, you ask? The Holy Spirit. From the very beginning of the book of Acts we come across the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referenced over 55 times in the book of Acts – that's about two times per chapter. We read about the *“power of the Holy Spirit”* and *“the gift of the Spirit”* and *“the pouring out of the Spirit”* and see people being *“baptized in the Spirit”* and *“receiving the Spirit”* and *“being filled with the Spirit.”*

Why This Sermon?

Over and over again, we've come across the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. But I'm not so sure we have a good grasp on the Holy Spirit. So Nathan and myself, thought it best to answer a couple questions regarding the Holy Spirit.

We'll not exhaustively explore or explain all there is to know about the Holy Spirit in this one sermon, but I do have a goal in mind. My goal is to provide a better understating of and awaken a hunger for the Spirit that you might worship God more fully.

As I've mentioned, this sermon will be different – I'm not going to be in one particular passage. I'll be all over the book of Acts, and elsewhere. I know that's going to drive some of you nuts, particularly you type A compulsive note takers. So I'll put the verses on the big screen. Also, both an outline and my entire manuscript is already on the Restoration Church blog, so go download it and your notes will be just perfect. That's my gift to you, my fellow Type A friends.

Let me also mention that this sermon will largely be informational; that does not mean it's not profitable. No, we want you to better understand the Holy Spirit that you might worship God rightly and fully. Information should lead to adoration. Our theology (knowledge) should lead to doxology (worship).

We've got some work to do, so let's stop for a minute and ask for God's help. [Pray]

Overview

What I want to do tonight is answer 5 questions in regards to the Holy Spirit. Let me tell you the questions and then we'll work through them.

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What does the Holy Spirit Do?
3. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?
4. How are we filled with the Spirit?
5. What are the results of being filled with the Spirit?

Those are the five questions we'll work through tonight.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Notice what question I did not ask. I did not ask "What is the Holy Spirit?" but "Who is the Holy Spirit?"

A Person

The Holy Spirit is a person. We see this in Acts 13:2 where we read, "*While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* Here we see that the Bible uses the personal pronouns "me" and "I" for the Holy Spirit. Jesus does the same thing in John – he calls the Holy Spirit "he" and talks about "his" ministry (15:26; 16:13).

This is the type of language we use when we talk about real people. When somebody's asking me about my wife, they don't ask "What is your wife?" They ask, "Who is your wife?" To which I'll reply, "She is Page." She is a person. And we see from Scripture, so is the Holy Spirit. He is called "he" not "it."¹

A Divine Person

But we cannot just stop there. It's not as if the Holy Spirit is just any 'ol person. He is a Divine person. The Holy Spirit is God. If you remember back from Acts 5 in the story of Ananias and Sapphira, here's what we read: "*Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."* You see that? A simple equation: Lying to the Holy Spirit equals lying to God himself. Why? We'll because the Holy Spirit is God.

Other Scriptures like Acts 28:25 show that when the Holy Spirit speaks it's God himself speaking. And 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 says the Holy Spirit is omniscient and Psalm 139 speaks of the Holy Spirit being omnipresent (v. 7-8) and Hebrews 9 speaks of the Holy Spirit being eternal (v. 14). Clearly all these attributes belong only to God. The repeated and resounding claim of Scripture is that the Holy Spirit is God.

Warning

Now, just to make you aware, there are groups, even groups who label themselves Christian, who deny both the personhood and deity of the Holy Spirit. Jehovah

¹ Additionally, the Holy Spirit exhibits characteristics of a person. He is grieved (Eph. 4:30) and quenched (1 Thess. 5:19) and lied to (Acts 5:3-4). He can be blasphemed (Mk. 3:29). He is a teacher (Jn. 14:26) and has a will (1 Cor. 12:11).

Witnesses, Mormons, and Unitarians all claim that the Spirit is simply like a ‘force’ or ‘power’. Something like Star Wars, “May the force be with you and also with you.” But the Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is both a person and the Holy Spirit is God.

A Distinct Person

When we make this dual affirmation of personhood and deity, we collide with one of the most important yet perplexing doctrines of Christianity – The Trinity.² The Holy Spirit is not just a divine person, but a distinct person just like God the Father and God the Son, Jesus. As Christians we believe in one God who eternally exists as three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—who are each fully and equally God in eternal relation with each other.³

That’s why in passages like Matthew 28:19-20 we read “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name [singular] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*”⁴ One God. Three persons. Each person is God. Each person is distinct.

The Trinity defines and separates the Christian faith. Lose the Trinity and lose Christianity. Though equal, the Father, Son, and Spirit have different roles and relationships with each other. The Father is the grand architect, the Son is the agent that carries everything out, and the Spirit applies the work of the Father and Son to our hearts and minds.

Our understanding of love, joy, community, authority, submission, humility, unity, and salvation are all wrapped up in the Trinity. Does it hurt our minds? Yes. Does that mean it’s untrue or unimportant? No. So we affirm the Trinity, and in doing so we affirm that the Holy Spirit is a person – a divine, distinct person.

Transition: Now that we’ve answered ‘Who is the Holy Spirit?’ let’s answer ‘What does the Spirit Do?’

What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

Perhaps this question is more mysterious than the first. What does the Spirit do? Does he help me decide which house to buy or which person to marry or which college to attend? Does he make me feel all warm and fuzzy or give me some subjective religious experience? Does he make me speak in tongues? Does he do miraculous healings? What does he do?⁵

The Spirit Glorifies the Son

Here’s the answer. You ready? Most foundationally, at the bottom of everything the Spirit does, the Spirit glorifies the Son. Yep, that’s the job description of the Holy Spirit,

² RC Sproull, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1990), 31-32.

³ Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears, *Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 13.

⁴ Additionally the Holy Spirit is equally and distinctly included with God the Father and God the Son in a benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14).

⁵ This is not to say that the Holy Spirit does not do any of these things (or all if understood correctly). The Spirit does guide us and give us wisdom. But because our natural and normal way of thinking about the role of the Spirit is personalized, I want to dig deeper and show at the root what the Spirit does. He does help us make wise decision and guide us, but this all happens under the rubric of making Jesus glorious!

to make Jesus look glorious. The Holy Spirit's job is to unfold Jesus in such a way that the infinite importance and glorious beauty of his person and work is revealed to the heart and mind.⁶ The Holy Spirit's job is to enable people to see and savor "*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. 4:6).

We first saw this in Acts 1:8 where Jesus said to the disciples, "*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" The Spirit is going to equip the disciples to do what? Witness about Jesus; tell people about Jesus; glorify Jesus.

Earlier in his ministry Jesus made another promise about the Spirit to his disciples saying this: "*He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you*" (John 16:14). The Spirit does not reveal himself, he reveals Christ. He never puts himself in the spotlight – he is the spotlight that puts the person and work of Jesus on display for people to see and savor.⁷

We see this clearly in the birth of Jesus. Here's the way one pastor said it: "When the time came for the eternal Son of God to be sent by his Father into the world, the work of the Holy Spirit was a quiet, unobtrusive work in the service of the Father and the Son. Through him, the Father caused the Son to be conceived in the Virgin Mary. So from the beginning of Christ's incarnation the Holy Spirit was quietly doing what needed to be done to put forward Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of man."⁸ That's a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit's role – pushing Jesus forward that he might be rightly worshipped.

We see the Holy Spirit not only glorify Jesus in his birth, but also throughout his entire ministry. At his baptism, the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus – everything Jesus does he does by the power of the Holy Spirit. How did Jesus resist temptation? Luke 4:1-2: "*And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil.*" How did Jesus boldly preach the good news? Luke 4:14-15: "*And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding county. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*" The ministry of Jesus was sustained by the power of the Spirit, why? So that he might be glorified by all!

We see the Holy Spirit not only glorify Jesus in his birth and ministry, but also in the birth and ministry of the church. Just like the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus when he started his ministry, the Holy Spirit descends upon the church at the start of its ministry – that's exactly what we saw in Acts 2. Just like the power of the Spirit enabled Jesus to boldly preach the gospel even in the face of persecution, we've seen the Spirit enable the disciples to boldly preach the gospel even in the face of persecution. Just like the Spirit used Jesus' ministry to glorify Jesus, what we've seen

⁶ Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, (New York, NY: Dutton, 2011), Chapter 2.

⁷ Adapted from "Christ Conceived by the Holy Spirit", sermon by John Piper, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, March 11, 1984; <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/christ-conceived-by-the-holy-spirit>.

⁸ Piper, "Christ Conceived by the Holy Spirit."

so far in the book of Acts is the Spirit using the church's ministry to do what? Glorify Jesus.

Transition: The Holy Spirit's job always has been and always will be to glorify Jesus! Here's how he does that today.

Through Revelation of the Scriptures

Who wrote, or inspired the Scriptures? The Holy Spirit. That's exactly what we see a couple of different times in Acts: "*Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David*" (1:16); "*Through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit*" (4:25). Here are two instances where we see the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit.⁹

And who are these Scriptures about? The story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8 gives us a real good clue: "*The Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture (that is Isaiah 53) he told him the good news about Jesus*" (v. 35). And what does Peter say about the Bible in Acts 10? "*To him [Jesus] all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name*" (v. 43). The Bible is not about you; the Bible is not just a bunch of inspiring stories; the Bible is not just a list of rules. The Bible is about Jesus. Why? Because it was written by the Spirit who glorifies Jesus!

This is why we teach the Bible here at Restoration Church. We want to create a hunger for Jesus because what you create a hunger for is what you have to feed and the Holy Spirit feeds us Jesus. Our goal in preaching is to unleash the power of God in the word of God thru the Spirit of God so that we might glorify the Son of God, Jesus.

Transition: When we do that, we the Spirit regenerates and sanctifies. This is the second way the Spirit glorifies Jesus, through the regeneration and sanctification of sinners.

Through Regeneration and Sanctification of Sinners

Martin Luther once said that all of us are curved in on ourselves. That's what sin is, a focus on self and our glory rather than on Jesus and his glory. Sin pulls us into a self-focused, self-absorbing cul-de-sac where we shut God out. Left to ourselves, everything we do and everything we are is all about us and our glory. To use an example from last week's text, we're all like Herod seeking to steal God's glory by receiving the praise of man.

But here's the problem. God will not give his glory to another. "*I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols*" (Is. 42:8). Because we all steal God's glory we are due to face his righteous judgment. Just like Herod, we are as good as dead.

But here's the good news. Though we did not live a perfectly God-exalting life, Jesus did. Though we were due to receive the righteous judgment, Jesus absorbed that

⁹ See also 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:16-21.

judgment. And we know he sufficiently absorbed and satisfied and settled God's judgment because he rose from the grave three days later. Now there's the offer of life.

But here's the question, "How do we go from death to life?" Just like Saul in Acts 9. Saul was a great hater of God, doing all he could to rob Jesus of his glory. And then what happens? Here's what Ananias says to Paul: "*Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes he regained his sight*" (9:17-18).

When Paul regained sight, he regained it not just physically, but spiritually. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, what did he see? The glory of Jesus! In the very next verse we see Paul proclaiming, "*[He] Jesus is the Son of God.*"

The Spirit awakens our hearts to see the truth of who Christ is, fall before him and put our hope and trust in him. The Holy Spirit regenerates dead people by enabling them to see the glory of Jesus.¹⁰ And the glory of Jesus finds its blazing white-hot center in the gospel of Christ crucified and resurrected.¹¹

The person who has truly been brought to life by the Holy Spirit turns from their sins that bring death and trusts in Jesus who brings life. Or to say it another way, the person who has truly been brought to life by the Holy Spirit goes from being curved-in on, glorifying self to being curved-out onto, glorifying Jesus.

Transition: Of course this does not mean we are automatically perfect at the moment of conversion, going from 100% glory hogs to 100% glory heralds. No the Spirit also glorifies Jesus in our sanctification.

Once we are regenerated from death to life, we are sanctified – that is, increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus. How? By trying harder? By following a bunch of rules? By performing a bunch of deeds? No. The Holy Spirit increasingly conforms us to the image of Jesus by continually enabling us to see the glory of Jesus. That's exactly what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*"

Beholding leads to becoming; as we admire we absorb; as we treasure Jesus we are transformed into the image of Jesus.

Here again we see the supreme importance of preaching and teaching Jesus. As John Piper writes, "If Christ is not preached and his glory is not exalted, the Holy Spirit does not open our eyes, for there is no glorious Christ displayed for us to see...The work of the Holy Spirit in changing us is not to work directly on our bad habits, but to make us admire Jesus Christ so much that sinful habits feel foreign and distasteful."¹² So the best way for me to help you stop sinning is not by giving you a list of rules and telling

¹⁰ See Ezekiel 38:26-27; 37:1-14.

¹¹ See 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; 1 Timothy 1:11.

¹² John Piper, *God is the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 91-92.

you no; it's by giving you Jesus and telling you yes. The best way to fight sin is not by saying no to bad things, but by saying yes to the best thing, Jesus!

All of us were created in such a way that it is the glory of Christ that ultimately and finally and decisively satisfies every longing in our soul. So if you are here tonight, and you've been looking elsewhere for satisfaction – in a job, in your own good deeds or morality, in your spouse or girlfriend or boyfriend, or in material possessions – know that you will not find it there.

God has done everything necessary, at the cost of his eternal Son Jesus, to captivate us with what will make us eternally happy. God sent his Son Jesus to live the life we could not, and die the death we should have to bring us to himself, the source of everlasting pleasure so that he might be gloried in our lives. And if tonight you are trying to find ultimate satisfaction in anything but Jesus, the Holy Spirit is inviting you to repent of your sin and trust in Christ as the all-supreme treasure of your life.

Transition: So we see the Spirit glorifies Jesus through revelation of the Scriptures and the regeneration and sanctification of sinners, and finally through empowering the saints, the church.

Through Empowering the Church

Just like the Spirit uses Jesus' ministry to glorify Jesus and the church in Acts to glorify Jesus, guess what he's doing here at our church? Glorifying Jesus! Think about how marvelous this is. The same Spirit that enabled the ministry of Jesus and the early church enables our ministry.

So when Amy Danks, and Alec Woloszyn and Madelin Thuline received Christ it was the Holy Spirit that revealed Christ. When we preach and you are encouraged or convicted, it is the Spirit that is showing you the glories of Christ. When we serve our community it's because the Spirit is reminding us of how much we've been served so it's a joy to serve. When you tell that coworker or friend about the gospel, you are hoping the Spirit will open their eyes to Christ and His finished work. Yes the Spirit empowers the works of the saints.

Transition: How exactly does the Spirit empower the church? By filling them with His Spirit. So let's answer our next big question, 'What Does it Mean to Be Filled with The Spirit?'

What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit?

Before we answer that question positively, let me briefly answer it negatively.

Not Two Classes of Christians

First, "being filled with the Spirit" does not mean that some Christians have the Holy Spirit and other Christians don't. In God's plan of redemption the Holy Spirit indwells and equips every believer, as Romans 8:9: "*You, however, [that is Christians] are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*" The Spirit indwells every believer.

Not Baptism of the Spirit

Second, “being filled with the Spirit” is not some dramatic personalized experience that happens after conversion giving you the Holy Spirit. This is what some call ‘baptism of the Spirit.’ They hold that after conversion, you are baptized with the Spirit and this generally, if not always, causes you to speak in tongues.¹³

There are only 7 texts that link Baptism and the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ 6 of the 7 refer to the unique, historic, unrepeatable events of Pentecost. And the other one, 1 Corinthians 12:3, speaks of a normal experience for all believers at the time of regeneration. Baptism of the Spirit is an initial and universal work of the Spirit associated with the conversion of all people, not some second experience after conversion.

Also, Scripture is crystal clear that, as we saw before, all Christians have the Spirit, but not all Christians speak in tongues.¹⁵ If you do, good! If you don’t, good. Whatever you do, make sure it’s for the building up of the body of Christ, not just some personalized spiritual experience.

Not a One Time Event

Third, “being filled with the Spirit” is not just a one time event. In the first few chapters of Acts, we see the disciples being filled with the Spirit three different times. In Acts 2 at Pentecost, the disciples are filled with the Spirit. Then again in 4:8 we read, “*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers and people and elders.’*” He then preaches the gospel, and is arrested. After his release we read about him and the other disciples being filled with the Spirit again in Acts 4:31 – “*And when they [that is the disciples] had prayed...they where all filled with the Holy Spirit.*” The disciples are filled with the Spirit multiple times over.

Transition: So “being filled with the Spirit” does not mean some Christians have the Spirit and others don’t; nor does it refer to a personalized secondary experience after conversion, nor it is just a one time thing. So what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

Being Filled with the Spirit

The Spirit’s job is the glorify Christ. So to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with knowledge of, praise for, and delight in Jesus. Don’t think of being filled with the Spirit like a cup and your just trying to get as much water, or ‘Spirit’, in your cup as possible. No, a Christian being filled with the Spirit is more like a glove. Until the glove is filled by a hand, a glove is useless and powerless, but it’s still a glove. It’s designed to do work, but can’t do it by itself. The glove does not brag or boast when it is used, because it knows the hand deserves all the credit. It works only as the hand controls and uses it.

¹³ You can hold to this position as a mature, healthy Christian. Though we (the elders of Restoration Church), based on our convictions from Scripture, do not believe this ‘baptism of the Spirit’ in this way.

¹⁴ Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16-17; 1 Cor. 12:13.

¹⁵ Here is what 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 says: “*Are all apostles? [implied answer, “No”] Are all teachers? [implied answer, “No”] Do all work miracles? [implied answer, “No”] Do all possess gifts of healing? [implied answer, “No”] Do all speak in tongues? [implied answer, “No”] Do all interpret? [implied answer, “No”]*” Not all Christians speak in tongues.

So it is with the Christian filled with the Spirit. A Christian cannot accomplish anything meaningful and lasting without being filled with the Spirit, just like a glove cannot accomplish anything without being filled with a hand.¹⁶

Being filled with the Spirit is not about some personalized existential religious experience; it's about God working through you for the glory of Jesus. The Spirit works to advance the Kingdom for Jesus' glory not simply so we can have a personal religious high. Or to say it the way I said it before, to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with knowledge of, praise for, and delight in Jesus that he might be made famous!

Transition: But how exactly are we filled with the Spirit? That's our next question.

How are we filled with the Spirit?

First of all, notice that this is passive; we are filled, or being filled, with the Spirit. We do not go fill ourselves with the Spirit. We have to put ourselves in a place to be filled. Like a sailboat, it cannot make itself go, but it can get out on the water and put the sail up ready for the wind to come. So it is with us, we cannot fill ourselves with the Spirit, but we can put ourselves in a place ready to be filled. And how do we get to that place?

Fortunately for us, this question is straightforward. How are you filled with the Spirit – primarily through prayer and the Word.¹⁷ Let me show you that directly from Scripture.

Through Prayer

Here are Jesus' words from Luke 11:13: *"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"* So how do we get the Holy Spirit to fill us? We ask!

What were the disciples doing when they were filled with the Spirit in Acts 2? Praying. As we read just a minute ago, what were the disciples doing when they were filled with the Spirit in Acts 4? Praying. In Acts 9 we read about Saul who was praying, and what happens? He is filled with the Spirit! Over and over again in Acts we see that praying accompanies the filling of the Spirit. And all these prayer are not simply for personal benefit. No, the filling of the Spirit comes not for primarily for personal gain, but kingdom growth and Jesus' glory!¹⁸

When was the last time you prayed and you asked God to fill you with his Spirit not for some personal benefit, but for the advancement of his Kingdom?

Through the Word

We are also filled with the Holy Spirit when we read and meditate and reflect on God's Word. Ephesians 5:18 says, *"Do not get drunk on wine, for that is debauchery, but be*

¹⁶ Illustration adapted from John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 250.

¹⁷ Obedience also comes into play here, for God gives his Spirit as we obey (Acts 5:32). Disobedience either quenches or grieves the Spirit (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19).

¹⁸ The prayer in Luke 11 comes right after the Lord's Prayer where the first thing prayed for is "Your Kingdom come, your will be done." And in the book of Acts, the filling of the Spirit accompanies kingdom advancement, not just personalized spiritual experiences.

filled with the Spirit.” How do you get drunk on wine? You drink it. Lots of it. The more the better. How are you filled with the Spirit? You drink Him. Lot’s of him! The more the better.

How do you drink the Spirit? Here’s what Jesus said in John 7: *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit.”* The Spirit flows out of us – that is, we are filled by the Spirit – when we drink, or believe in Christ. And how do we believe in Christ? Romans 10:17 tells us: *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”*

Or to say it another way, we drink the Spirit by drinking the living waters of Christ. And where do we find the living waters of Christ? In the Spirit-inspired written Word that points to the living Word, Jesus!^{19,20}

Just like the taste buds of your mouth are satisfied with a cool drink on a hot summer’s day or how by a piece of chocolate melting on your tongue, so the taste buds of your soul are satisfied by drinking from the Word, from waters of Christ and letting the sweetness of his life melt into your soul. Yes, this is how we are filled with the Spirit!

The filling of the Spirit is not a mystical experience bestowed upon the spiritual elite through a secret formula for their personal benefit. It is simply crying out to God in earnest prayer and taking the Word of God and letting it infuse every part of our thinking and doing and believing so that Jesus is glorified.²¹

In dependent prayer and humble reading of the Scriptures we are like a sailboat on the water. With each prayer we utter and verse we contemplate, the sail of our lives rises into the air and opens up, inviting the wind of God’s Spirit to blow us where it will. Sometimes God sends a hurricane – those are the times when you just really feel the presence of God and find your satisfaction only in him – and other times it’s a gentle breeze carrying you forward day-by-day from one degree of glory to another. Sometimes the effects are greater than others, but when you are filled with the Spirit, there’s always an effect.

And what exactly are those effects? That’s our final question.

What are the results of being filled with the Spirit?

There are many. In fact, there is a whole list in Galatians 5 called the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. You want joy, peace, self-control? Be filled with the Spirit. Instead of focusing directly on those, let me mention two others.

¹⁹ See John Piper’s article, “How to be Filled with the Spirit,” <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/how-to-be-filled-with-the-spirit>.

²⁰ We get drunk by drinking alcoholic things; we are filled with the Spirit by drinking ‘Spiritual things’ which from 2 Corinthians 2:10-14 is the Word. Also, when we look at Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:16-17, we see that “being filled with the Spirit” and “letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly” have the exact same results. Why? Because the Spirit fills those up who “hear the word of Christ with faith” (Galatians 3:2).

²¹ John McArthur, *Ephesians*, 252.

Boldly Proclaiming God's Word

First, it's clear that those who are full of the Spirit speak God's Word boldly. The first person in the New Testament who is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit is John the Baptist, and what did he do?²² Boldly pointed people to Jesus.

When Peter is filled with the Spirit at Pentecost what did he start doing? Preaching. In Acts 4 when Peter is filled with the Spirit what did he do? Boldly preaches the gospel. At the end of Acts 4, we read, *"And when they [that is the disciples] had prayed...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."* In Acts 6 we met Stephen, a man full of the Holy Spirit. And what did he do? He boldly preached the gospel even unto death. In Acts 9 we met Saul, who was filled with the Spirit, and what did he do? *"And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying 'He is the Son of God.'" In Acts 18 we'll meet a Jew named Apollos who "being fervent in Spirit [or filled with the Spirit] spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus."*

One of the results of being filled with the Spirit is bold proclamation of God's Word, pointing people to Jesus. Why? Because the Spirit glorifies Jesus and the Word is about Jesus!

Are you boldly speaking the Word to others and pointing them to Jesus? To fellow Christians? To non-believing friends and co-workers? If not, could it be because you're not full of the Spirit?

Unity in Diversity

Second, being filled with the Spirit breeds unity in diversity. The Triune God is the essence of unity in diversity – three distinct persons yet completely unified in all that they do. The church is birthed through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and is comprised of those who should be filled with the Spirit. Therefore the church should be the premier place where we find unity in diversity.

That's what we've seen in the book of Acts. People from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and beyond caring for one another. Jews and Gentiles worshipping together. Racial and socioeconomic barriers being shattered by the Spirit as he points people to Jesus.²³ The church is not bound together by ethnicity, occupation, music style, or a personal agenda. It is bound by that which birthed it, the Spirit of God testifying to the Son of God, Jesus.

To be filled with the Spirit is to humbly pursue unity with those Christians around you so that Jesus might be made much of. That's why I love this church – there is unity in diversity. Think about our church: newspaper vendors, newspaper writers, stay at home moms, nannies, students, working professionals, teachers, doctors, lawyers, scientist; Black, White, Asian, Hispanic; older and younger – all unified around the gospel.

²² See Luke 1:15; 3.

²³ See Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 10; 11-18; 19-29; 15.

That does not happen without each of you embracing the centrality of Christ – that he live the perfect life we did not, died the death we should have, and rose from the grave reconciling us back to God and to each other! There is unity in diversity because the Spirit fills us and points us to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for being a joy to pastor! If there is a brother or sister that you are not 'unified with' the Spirit is calling you to pursue unity. If you are holding a grudge, either open or secretly, the Spirit is calling you to unity. If you don't pursue that unity, you're lying about the God who you claim to serve.

Conclusion

We close where we started. Who is the Holy Spirit? God himself. What does he do? Glorify Jesus. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? To know of, give praise to, and delight in Jesus. How are we filled with the Spirit? Through prayer and meditating on the Word. What are the results? Bold gospel proclamation and unity in diversity.

May our newfound understanding of the Holy Spirit lead us to greater and deeper worship of the One to whom the Spirit points, Jesus.