

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 20:11:2001

Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

8. TURN OVER THE CONTROLS

Homer Lindsay tells the gripping story of an air tragedy which occurred in his seminary days in Forth Worth, Texas. One morning at breakfast he was reading the Fort Worth Star Telegram. An article told of a tragic plane crash. A young student pilot was making one of his final training flights. Evidently he froze at the controls. Fear does cause people to freeze up at times. His instructor was heard yelling, " Turn over the controls ! Turn over the controls." The student pilot did not. Both were killed in the crash. Tragedy can occur when those who are in training don't turn over the controls to the wiser instructor. In the Christian life we must learn to turn over the controls. Indeed is this not what being filled with the Spirit is all about ? It is simply living each moment under His sovereign control.

Now in this series on " The Holy Spirit and You," I have already stressed the importance of vocabulary. A great deal of confusion, I believe, is caused by the failure of many believers to use the terminology of the Bible.

Some today speak in terms of being " slain," in the Spirit. Others speak of a " baptism," of the Spirit." Still others refer to a " filling," of the Holy Spirit. How do we work through all this confusion on this subject ? I believe we must look carefully to what the Bible has to say about it. What the Bible teaches must be our final authority. You see the command is not " Be baptised with the Spirit." Some Christians are saying today that what we need to experience is a baptism of or with the Holy Spirit. Pauls classic statement on the baptism of the Spirit is found in (1 Cor 12:13) and there Paul says: " For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body, whether we be Jews of Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Now if you can answer the question, " When was I placed into the body of Christ ?" then you can answer the question, " When was I baptised with the Holy

Spirit ?" the moment you believed. Let's not confuse the Baptism and the Filling. The Baptism is the Historical Event (Pentecost) but the Filling is the Human Experience. The Baptism is initial and final, the Filling may be often repeated or never known at all. The Baptism is what we call a Positional truth. It has to do with our belonging to Christ's body. The Filling is an

Experiential Truth. An often-used phrase is probably helpful for us, " There is one baptism, there are many fillings." Notice again, the command is not " Be indwelt by the Spirit." For Paul makes it clear that " if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The hymn-writer puts it like this, " As soon as my all I ventured " Still again the command is not " Be sealed with the Spirit," for Paul has made it clear in

(1:13) " In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

My we are never commanded to be baptised: indwelt: or sealed with the Holy Spirit. These experiences need not be sought by any child of God.

Why ? Because the moment we came to the Lord Jesus we were indwelt: sealed: and baptised with the Spirit.

These ministries of the Spirit are linked with our position in Christ. This is what God did for us the moment we believed. But we are commanded to " be filled with the Spirit." Now many people are confused about what it means to be filled with the Spirit. Some tell you that you must have some kind of ecstatic experience and speak in tongues while others approach the subject stoically. They simply recognise that the Holy Spirit is Present but think He makes little or no impact. Both are wrong. For the filling or controlling of the Holy Spirit is a profound reality in the believers life, and understanding it can change your life. So it to this five words in (5:18) that I want to direct your attention.

(1) SOME REASONS FOR A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

And the first reason for any Christian to be Spirit-filled is simple. It has to do with:

(a) OUR OBEDIENCE:

God has commanded us " be filled with the Spirit." This is not a suggestion nor a request, but a command. Dr. K. Wuest tells us that the verb here is in the imperative mood, that is it is imperative that we be filled with the Spirit, because God commands it. My being continually filled with the Spirit is not an option for the believer but a Biblical mandate. No Christian can fulfil Gods will for his life apart from being filled with the Spirit. Now any congregation would be scandalised should the pastor or preacher attempt to preach while drunk. His thick tongue, bleary eyes, and foolish thoughts would cause a quick meeting of the elders, and deacons within the church. What a disgraceful thing it would be. How tongues would wag. Yet the same verse that commands us not " to be drunk with wine," commands us to be " filled with the Spirit." " Oh," you say, " I have obeyed God's command to be baptised, I sit at the Lord's table each week," will my what are you doing with this command ? Is being filled with the Spirit normal Christian living for you ? Now I want you to notice two important things about this command:

1. THE PEOPLE EMBRACED IN THIS COMMAND:

Dr. Wuest says that this verb is not only in the imperative mood, but its in the plural number. This teaches us that this command is addressed not only to preachers and teachers but to every believer. " To be filled," is what God requires not just of pastors, evangelists and missionaries but of every Christian.

Did you notice the context in which this phrase is set ?

Its set within the context of husbands/wives, children and parents, employers/employees. " To be filled," with the Spirit is not for a spiritual elite in extraordinary conditions but for ordinary Christians in ordinary Christian service. (Acts 6:3) " To be filled," with the Spirit is normal Christian living. How do I know ?

Well, a study of the Book of Acts shows us that all kinds of Christians were filled with the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, the 120 who gathered in Upper Room, were all different. They were different in

temperament, in sex, in gift, but they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4) Impetuous people, like Peter were filled with the Spirit (Acts 4:8) courageous people, like Stephen were filled with the Spirit, (Acts 6:3 7:55) good people, like Barnabas were filled with the Spirit

(Acts 11:24) outstanding people like Saul, were filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17 13:9) responsible people, like those who served tables, were men " full of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 6:3) You see, Peter needed the filling to Preach for Christ (Acts 4:8) Stephen needed the filling to Suffer for Christ (Acts 7:55) Barnabas needed the filling to Encourage for Christ (Acts 11:23)

Paul needed the filling to Rebuke for Christ

(Acts 13:9) for to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not just something for preaching it is something for living. My are you obedient to God's express command to be filled ? 1.

2. THE PERIOD EXPRESSED IN THIS COMMAND:

For the tense here is the present tense, and gives the thought of continuance. " Be ye continually being filled with the Spirit," or " Be ye constantly, moment by moment being controlled by the Spirit." Until when ? Until glory. Some tell me what we need is a once and for all filling and if we have been filled once that will do us until we reach glory. But a quick look at the NT will tell you, that this is not a once and for all experience.

(Acts 2:4 4:8 4:31) Do you recall that on the day of Pentecost, Peter is filled with the Spirit and as he preaches three thousand are saved ? But sixteen years after Pentecost, Peter is Antioch, do you know what happened there ? (Gal 2:11) Yes, Paul had to rebuke Peter. Was he filled with Spirit then ? Sometimes we sin, we grow cold, become careless, instead of Spirit control, there is Self control. We grieve the Holy Spirit by our Sinfulness, we quench the Holy Spirit by our Selfishness. We restrict His operation in and through our lives, and we need to be filled afresh. Are you continually filled ? Are you moment by moment controlled by the Spirit of God ? (a)

(b) OUR OBLIGATION:

Believers have tremendous responsibilities that they must fulfil.

Look at the obligation of our WORSHIP LIFE:

" Speaking to yourselves in Lord." (5:19) Our worship life is to be alive with joy and the reality of Christ. This kind of worship is the overflow of the Spirit-filled life. It is what Christ called " worship in spirit." (Jn 4:24)

Look at the obligation of our WEDDED LIFE:

" Wives, submit as unto the Lord," " Husbands love your wives for it." (5:21,25) In this day of feminist movements, the role of the submitted wife is doubly difficult.

You need to know that such submission is not popular, and it has never been done in age apart from the power of the Spirit. And men, please note that far more is required of the husband than of the wife. For the wife's model is the church, but the husband's model is Christ Himself ! How is

any Christian man going to his love his wife even as Christ loved the church ? There is no way apart from the Spirit-filled life !

Look at the obligation of our WORK LIFE:

" Servants be obedient from the heart." (6:5-6) When an employer goes to the employment agency looking for new workers, he ought to say, " If you have any Christians please give them the first opportunity. I don't understand it but they are different from my other workers. They are on time: they do not gossip, cheat or steal. They work hard. You would think that that they think I am the Lord." My are you doing your secular job " as unto Christ ?"

Look at the obligation of our WAR LIFE:

" For we wrestle not against flesh and blood "
(6:12) The Christian is at war. Ours is a fight to the finish with a sinister foe, and there are no holes barred. My Satan is our adversary and he has let loose with all the artillery of hell. How can we withstand satanic opposition ? Only by being filled with the Holy Spirit. So this Spirit-filled life has to do with (a) (b)

(c) OUR OPPORTUNITIES:

For Paul says, " Redeeming the time evil." (5:16) It means to make the very best use of our time. It is God's reminder that we are to use our time and opportunity wisely. My what golden opportunities we let slip through our fingers because the Spirit is not in control. I have noted that there is a subtle but deadly thing happening in the lives of some Christians today. It used to be that believers wanted to be filled with the Spirit to have power in serving, now they want to be filled to have pleasure in living. They see the Spirit-filled life as a source for enjoyment rather than a force for employment. Ill: A woman was giving a word of appreciation to her first aid class. She said, " There was a terrible accident in front of my house. A man was lying there with bones splintered, rolling around in pools of blood. His arteries were severed. He was in a state of shock. But I remembered my first aid instructions that if I would put my head between my knees, I wouldn't faint. It worked and I didn't faint. I am so grateful that I took this class."

My are we like that ? Do we need to get our heads from between our knees and realise that the Risen Lord said, " But ye shall receive power earth."

(Acts 1:8) We are filled with the Holy Spirit not to speak in tongues, not to fall on the floor, not to bark like a dog, we are filled with the Spirit to " Rescue the perishing tell them of Jesus the mighty to save." Our opportunities are a reason to be Spirit-filled.

(2) SOME REQUIREMENTS FOR A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

How indeed does the Holy Spirit fill us ? In answering this question, it should be noted that the Holy Spirit is a Person, a Divine Person, the third person of the Trinity.

(2 Cor 13:14) He acts, wills, leads, and may be resisted, grieved, or quenched. I say this because some people think of the Holy Spirit as some kind of impersonal force or power emanating from God. The Holy Spirit does indeed have force and power, but He is a Person. So the concept of

being filled with the Holy Spirit is not that of a glass being filled with water, or a box being filled with substance. No ! This word " filled," (pleroo) in the NT was mainly used to get across the idea of Total Control. The clue is found in (5:18) " And be not drunk with wine " Now there is a striking contrast between drunkenness and the filling of the Holy Spirit, but there is also a comparison and this gives us the clue. A drunken person is controlled by the drink which he has consumed, in the same way a Spirit Filled Christian is controlled by the Holy Spirit. So being filled with the Spirit is simply being controlled by the Spirit.

Whenever a gospel writer wanted to speak of someone who was dominated by his emotions, he used this word " filled." (Lk 5:26 6:11 Jn 16:6) The gospel writers speak of hearts that are filled with fear: madness: sorrow ! A person who is filled in this sense is no longer under his own control but under the control of that which dominates him. My to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not to have Him progressively added to your life but to be dominated by Him. To be filled with the Spirit is simply living one moment at a time under His complete control. Now with that concept in mind let me mention three requirements for a Spirit-filled life. First, there must be a:

(a) SURRENDERING OF YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST:

An abandonment of your will: intellect: emotions: as well as your time: talents: treasure to God's complete control. Now this involves a Negative: in (Rom 6:13) Paul says, " do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness." Do you recall when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem after a long absence ? He discovered that Tobiah the enemy of Gods people had established himself in the temple. Incensed by Tobiahs cheek Nehemiah cast him out, lock, stock, and barrel. Afterwards he cleansed the temple and restored the symbols of Jehovah's presence. (Neh 13:6) My is this not what we need to do today ? Paul says, " Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor 6:19) Yet so often our lives are filled with sinful clutter, practice, and habit ! The result ? The Holy Spirit is grieved in our lives and his operation is restricted. Is it not time we cast out sinful clutter ?

But there is a Positive also: for Paul says, " yield yourselves to God." Ephesus was a city of Greek culture, and a wine country where overindulgence was common, so Paul says, " Just as the citizens of Ephesus, give themselves over to the wine-god Bacchus, so the believer must be completely given over to the true and living God." (a)

(b) STUDYING OF THE WORD OF CHRIST:

Did you know that the parallel passage to Ephesians Ch 5 is Colossians ch 3 ? There Paul says, " let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." (3:16) Then he begins to underline the results of that. Do you know something ? They are exactly the same results as follow being filled with the Spirit. You see to be filled with the Spirit of God is to be filled with the Word of God. Do you desire this Spirit-filled life ? Do you want to be filled continually ? Then feed yourself a steady diet of the Word of God, for when you read the Word of God you will be coming under the

influence of the Spirit of God for the Author of the Word of God is the Spirit of God.

(c) STANDING IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST:

A person who is always full of wine keeps close to the source and supply of it. My this is where we need to be, near to the Lord Jesus. This is where Peter always wanted to be. When the Lord Jesus walked down the road Peter went with him. (Matt 16:13) If Christ went up a mountain Peter went with him. When the Saviour said, " Will ye also go away ?" It was Peter who said, " Lord to whom shall we go ? (Jn 6:67-68) Peter got into trouble only when he got away from the Lord.

When he stayed close to Christ he said and did amazing things. Consider:

(1) Peter BEFORE Pentecost:

Before Pentecost he was marked by Miraculous Words:

At C. Phillipi Christ said, " Whom do men ?" Peter responded, " Thou art the Christ " (Matt 16:13)

Before Pentecost he was marked by Miraculous Works:

Do you recall it was Peter who walked on the water to get to Jesus ? (Matt 14:28-29)

Before Pentecost he was marked by Miraculous Courage: When the soldiers came to arrest Christ in the garden, Peter took out his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus. He was ready to take on the whole Roman army. My Peter was able to do the miraculous because he was in the presence of Christ, but when Christ was taken from him, Peter did not have the courage even to admit knowing him. But the on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples. Now look at:

(2) Peter AFTER Pentecost:

After Pentecost he was marked by Miraculous Words:

For it was Peter, bold as a lion who preached that mighty sermon on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:22)

After Pentecost he was marked by Miraculous Works:

Do you recall him going up to the temple and saying to the paralysed man, " Silver and gold have I none."

After Pentecost he was marked by Miraculous Courage: For it was Peter who stood before the Jewish Sanhedrin and said, " We cannot but speak "

(Acts 4:20) You see the key to Peters boldness in the Acts was that he was " filled with the Holy Spirit."

(Acts 2:4) For Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit was like walking next to Jesus.

My do you know what it is to stand in the presence of Christ ? Do you take time to be holy ? Do you speak oft with your Lord ? (1) (2)

(3) SOME RESULTS OF A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

What are the marks or evidences of being filled with the Spirit ? This is the great question that everyone is asking. Some go as far as telling me that unless I possess the gift of tongues I cannot be filled with the Spirit. But all the results or marks are right here.

Paul notes four in this context.

(a) SPEAKING: Expressing God given TRUTH:

" Speaking " (5:19) My wherever we read of Spirit filled men and women it is always associated with speaking. The woman of Samaria could not keep quiet once she had drunk deeply of the Holy Spirit. To men with whom perhaps she had sinned, she said, " Come see a man " (Jn 4:29) On the Day of Pentecost, the filling of the Spirit was accompanied by preaching.

" Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said " (Acts 2:14) Sometime later, when he stood before the Jewish Sanhedrin, we read " Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said unto them " (Acts 4:8) Do you know what happened when the Early Church prayed, " they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the Word of God with boldness."

(Acts 4:31 9:17 13:9) Do you know why we find it difficult to speak for the Lord ? Why we are timid, fearful, and reticent. We're not filled with the Spirit of God. For the first mark of a Spirit filled life is speaking.

(b) SINGING: Expressing God given JOY:

" Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (5:19) My Spirit filled people overflow in song. In the early days believers were so filled with the Spirit that even when they were taken and cast into prison they were praising the Lord. In the Reformation, Martin Luther brought hymn singing to the church. During the Wesleyan revival Charles Wesley wrote 6,000 hymns. Think of the music that came from Moody and Sankey. My it is certain that many of us do not know such a filling if we are to judge by the lack of joyful worship in our churches.

(c) SACRIFICING: Expressing God given THANKS:

" Giving thanks always for all things " (5:20) We are to thank God even in the midst of difficulties for everything which is consistent with His Fatherhood and His loving Son. Ill: One day Tauler, a 14th century mystic and preacher met a beggar, " God give you a good day, my friend, " he said. The beggar answered, " I thank God I never had a bad one." Tauler said, " God give you a happy life, my friend." " I thank God," said the beggar, " I am never unhappy." Tauler, in amazement responded, " What do you mean ?" " Well," said the beggar, " when it is fine I thank God: when it rains, I thank God: when I have plenty, I thank God: when I am hungry I thank God why should I say I am unhappy when I am not."

Do you know what the Spirit-filled life rules out ? A grumbling, complaining, negative, sour spirit. My in our Western Society we as a people, have so much. Yet we mourn what we do not have, our neighbours house: car: job: holidays: even family ! Such thanklessness indicates a life that knows nothing of the Spirit-filled life. Yes, in (a) (b)

(d) SUBMITTING: Expressing God given LOVE:

" Submitting in the fear of God." (5:21) This is the submission of love in all the relationships of life. What a difference Spirit-filled husbands and wives would make in the home. What a difference Spirit-filled employers and employee's would make in the work. What a difference Spirit-filled pastors: elders: deacons: saints would make in the church. My do you see that being filled with the Spirit affects life at

every point ? It affects the church relationship: (5:19-21) domestic relationship: (5:22-6:4) business relationship (6:5-9)

Look at (Ch 5) and notice:

In (5:19) the Spirit filled person is Joyful:
In (5:22) the Spirit filled wife is Submissive:
In (5:25) the Spirit filled husband is Loving:
In (6:1) the Spirit filled children are Obedient:
In (6:4) the Spirit filled father is Winsome:
In (6:5) the Spirit filled employee is Conscientious:
In (6:9) the Spirit filled employer is Fair:

What do we know of all this ? It was recorded of the early Christians that they were filled with the Spirit. It was recorded then. Is it recorded of us now ? One day a little came bouncing into a flower shop. He had his fist doubled up and some unsold newspapers under his arm. He said to the lady, " I want to buy the biggest bouquet of flowers you have in the store. I've been selling newspapers, and I've already sold thirty seven cents worth. Today is my mothers birthday and I want to get her the biggest bouquet you have in the shop with this money." This touched the heart of the lady in the flower shop so she got a hugh bouquet filled with roses and orchids and carnations. Wrapping it in green paper she brought it to the counter. The little boy, eyes wide and bulging asked, " how much is it ?" She said, " Thirty seven cents." " Wow, thats just what I have." He gave the thirty seven cents to the lady, took his flowers under his arm, his papers under the other and went bouncing out of the shop.

In a moment the lady heard the blaring of a horn and the screeching o tires. Rushing out she saw the little boy under a big truck. He had been hit. He was taken to the hospital. A Christian doctor who knew his family attended him. But the situation was hopeless. The little boy looked up at the Doctor and said, " Doctor, I'm not going to make it am I ?" The Doctor said, " No, son, you're not." The little boy said, " I know Jesus as my Saviour. When I die, I'm going to heaven. But Doctor, I want you to do something for me. Take the flowers to my mother. Today is her birthday. Tell its only thirty seven cents worth, but its all I got. Tell her I love her."

My have you ever told the Lord that ? Have you ever said, " Lord, I'm only thirty seven pence worth, but it's all I've got. But I love you, and I want you by your Spirit to take control of all my life."