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Being Filled with the Spirit

Open up Ephesians chapter 5. I touched on this last time and I want you to go there with me again to Ephesians 5.18.

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."

What a wonderful, wonderful command.

Matter of Control

You drink wine or liquor, it ends up in nothingness. Doesn't take you anywhere, doesn't solve anything. Clouds your mind for a while and then as you come out from the stupor, look around, you see the same world, same problems. It has led you nowhere. If anything, it's taken something away from you. Taken the time of your drunkenness away. It's, we know today that it actually destroys your brain cells. Do it long enough, it'll destroy your life. Your physical life may cause liver disease and all the other things, but I'm thinking of the life of living with other people. You, you know, relationships are built around interaction. When you're in a stupor, you can't interact. Of course, this goes for drugs just as well. When you're not able with your mind and your heart to interact with other people, really you're tearing down a relationship.

And so the end result of it is sometimes, and very often, very commonly, broken relationships. Broken marriages. But it isn't just the husband and wife that are affected. The children are affected. My father was an alcoholic, I'll say it. He had to drink every day. And sometimes, two or three times a week, he would be truly drunk. And as a child, I had to watch that in my home. And I grew to hate it. I saw what it did to my father and mother's relationship when he was drunk, and I saw what it did to me and to my sisters in his drunkenness. It's irrationality at times. It didn't build our home, it tore at the foundations. God's Word is true. You want to be filled with wine, it leads you to dissipation.

There's another way. It's being filled with the Spirit of God. Now, just as you have to take sip after sip of wine to really get to the place where you're filled, so it is with the Spirit. The Spirit doesn't come in measure at all. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit. If he's there, he's there. There's never an issue about how much of the Spirit you have. If you have him, you have him. The question is, how much of you does he have? How much of you is he able to influence? How much of you is he in control of? Now, that's a different story. The appeal here in

the Word is for you to be filled with the Spirit. To the place where the Spirit's influence is total.

It's that way with wine or hard liquor or... I've even seen people get to that place with beer. But they're totally under the control of the drug. Certainly true with hard drugs. God wants his Spirit to be in total control.

Moment by Moment Choice

Well, let me read this little section together with you, and we'll come back and talk about these things.

Verse 19, "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God."

So when we go back and look at that idea first of filling, I want you to understand this is not a single, all-empowering event. And some churches teach that it is. You want to get filled, you have this fantastic one-time event. It happens at a point in time, it does, when you yield yourself to the Lord, the Spirit of God does have, by your surrender to him, He has control in your life. So it does happen at a point in time, but it must be repeated. It must be repeated countless times for it to be a normative part of your life, for it to be an ongoing experience. In other words, to be a constant experience. That surrender has to be done over and over and over. That's the way you're made.

I tell you, if you fully yield to God this morning with all your heart, as a human being, you are not made for that to last for the rest of your life. You do have a will. You do make the choice of surrender or non-surrender. You can choose to surrender all the time. And though you should pray and be most sincere in that yieldedness here this morning, if I were to meet you on the street on Wednesday or Thursday or Friday, chances are that you won't be surrendered. Maybe you don't like to hear that. But God wants it to be a constant experience for us.

You see, you have to decide to invite God into your thought life. And that means that as you go through the day, you should try to have a conversation with him. Do it all day long. Have a conversation with him. Tell him what's hurting you. Tell him what your hopes are, what your dreams are. And ask him to help you every time, every time you face some challenge or some problem or some new demand. Ask him to help you every time. He wants you to come to him. And then thank him. Thank him every time you see a problem resolved in your life, every time you see some answer or some working.

Now here's something very personal, but very necessary. And by the way, missing from most Christians' lives, when you're having those conversations with the Lord, say what this little song said. I love you, Lord Jesus. You might even say what Al Smith¹ has put here for us. "I love you with all my heart." Say that to him. Say that to him. You know, you can only say that to him if he's really personal to you. That's why I say this is something very personal. Every time you see him working in your life. I was thinking about this, saying this to you this morning.

One thing that came to my mind was standing in our yard and looking at some of the flowers that Susan has planted and nurtured. They're beautiful. They're delicate. Some of them have a sweet smell. But just to stand there and look at those, it just to make, it makes me so aware of God, of his sense of beauty, of his sense of delicacy and tenderness. I see the same thing when I look at the wood duck. I can't imagine that what mind would it take to put all that, those various colors together and end up with that beautiful wood duck. I can't imagine, you know, if I tried to put green and yellow and blue and red and, you know, mix all those things in there, try to make something pretty, it would be a mess. God hates to be thanked.

Eph. 5:19 Inwardly, Outwardly

But this verse here, verse 19, speaking yourselves, or speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, this verse has two levels in it. There is this first level that's outward. That's this phrase here, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. That's outward. That's to others. But then there's a second level, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Now, that's inward. Of course, you can sing out loud to the Lord, but I mean, it's an inward activity.

First of all, in your heart. Not that the other isn't from your heart. I just mean, I want you to see that one is private and personal and the other is outward to other people. What are the contents of that outward singing? Well, he tells you, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. In a minute, we'll see how you can do that. I know you can't see yourself with your, one of your friends singing a song. When's the last time anybody here ever sang a song to their friend? Just raise your hand and tell me. Anybody here that has done that in the last week? You have a friend that you sang to? Good. Good. What did you sing? Oh, can't remember. Okay. Well, I'm glad you did sing. Okay. Okay. That's what the Lord tells you to do. I just didn't expect to find anybody here that did it. That's all. I'm blessed to say that you did it. That's wonderful.

¹ Al Smith

So first, let's take the second part about singing to the Lord. That's easiest to deal with for me. Can you see yourself singing to the Lord? I know, first of all, you think, well, that means songs that I know. Well, that's true. You can sing hymns, you know, that you know from the hymn book. You've memorized them. Some of you are very musical and you have memorized 20, 50, 100 songs. You'd be surprised if you're riding along listening to a Christian station and some music comes on, not with words, but just the instrumentality, the instruments of it, how the sound of the melody will bring those words to mind. And you can go along, you'd be surprised how much you know. So you could have known songs that you would sing. That's one thing you could sing to the Lord. Yes.

But there's... There's also, I noticed when Al and Travis were with us, they were always singing, "Oh, how I love Jesus, because he first loved me." And I find myself thinking about Al and Travis here, and I think of that song. "Oh, how I love Jesus, how I love Jesus, and I just think of that." Well, I want to go to the next step and say there's much more beyond these songs that we know, you know, inwardly and in our minds. We need to learn to look at something or think of something that you want to praise God for. When that happens, then you can talk or speak or we could say sing. All the praise to him that comes into your mind as you focus on whatever that is. In other words, a kind of a spontaneous thing. It's not because you know a particular hymn or song, but just seeing something makes you want to praise him and you just do it in a... by speaking it or singing it or thinking it to him as praise, really.

Whether it be for what I talked about a flower, but it could be just for seeing him do something in your family or in a relationship. But focus on that subject and raise that up to him with some thanksgiving. You'll find that giving thanks will be a part of your praise. It'll always be there. You'll be pouring your heart out to the Lord and God will hear it. And you'll be, as it says in the scripture here, you'll be making melody in your heart to the Lord. But let's go back to that first thing, that outward matter of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to others.

The Process of Put Off, Put On

There's a basic truth that you have to have from Ephesians 4. Go back a page, you know, to Ephesians 4 at verse 22. I'm going right to the core of what this truth has instead of just all the preceding verses that lead up to it. I want you to get right to the core at verse 22 and on. Let me read this, "That you put off concerning your former conduct." Now, former conduct is conduct before you receive Christ, before he made you a new creation, before you were changed, before you were born again. "Put off concerning your former conduct the old

man," that means the old person that you were without the Lord Jesus, the old natural person you were, "put that away which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lust." The old person that we are when we come to the Lord Jesus, if you didn't come to the Lord, I'm going to tell you that old person will get more rotten, corrupt means rotten, more and more rotten day by day by day. You're not going to get better and better.

Christian science says this, "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better." That's a lie, it's a self-deceiving lie. Maybe in every day in every way you're trying to get better and better but the scripture says you're getting worse and worse, you're corrupting, you're rotting. It is a smell is getting better and better or worse and worse or bigger and bigger but you're not getting better and better. "Put that away," God says, "and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." That's a small s on the word spirit there and I think here as God tries to help us understand how we're made, yes the scripture does say your body, mind, and spirit but you see the spirit, the eternal part of a person, is expressed through the mind.

In other words, we make decisions, that's a spiritual act, decisions are spiritual acts. God holds us responsible for our decisions spiritually, those are spiritual acts. And so as we reason and see the options open to us when we come to the place of making the decision, it isn't simply a matter of reason. Oh it is if you want to tie your shoe this way or that way or you know want to pick up this rock or that rock, that might be a reasoned decision. Or if you want to be good at math, you want to add or subtract or multiply or divide or do a little calculus, you know, there isn't going to be anything spiritually good about ending up with two and two equal four or spiritually evil about it, it's just part of the creation, that's the way it is.

But when we make a decision that offers us good or evil, right or wrong, ourself or God, that's a decision of our spirit. And the spirit of your mind, your spirit acting through your mind, he says choose the good man, the new man, choose what God has made you in Christ. Do that, be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man.

See Jesus has made you a new creation, old things are passed away, all things have become new. But you have to put the new man on. It's like saying, well you know, when I get to heaven, I'm going to wear a robe of righteousness, white robe. A lot of good Christian spirituals from long ago, that have been sung about having my robe on in heaven, my white robe, everybody's going to have a white robe and shoes, which they didn't have in those days when they made

those songs up. But this is for right now, this is to put on, by choice, put on this new man, put on the new man,² which was created according to God.

When God recreated you, when he made you a new creation, what pattern do you think he used? He was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. That's what he created you to be as a new creation. Now you're hearing from the scriptures, well yeah that's true, I am a new creation, but in the Lord, but I have to put it on, I have to wear it, I have to use it. Just because you're clean in Jesus doesn't mean that you're not going to do sin. You don't have to, if you'll choose to act this way according to how you've been made in Jesus, but you can. The appeal from God's heart is for you to put this on.

The How To Illustrated in the Old Testament

Now the question is, how do you do that? Well I want you to stay here with your one finger in Ephesians 4, but the other finger can go with me back to Psalms, or the easy way is to let Nigel³ do it for you.

Go back to Psalm 16. I just have a little section in here, a little verse or two that I want you to see. 16:7. "I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel. My heart also instructs me in the night seasons." If you make your choice to live by God's counsels, that's His word, you'll find that you will be able to bless the Lord, praise the Lord, as you make that choice to live by his word. And if you live that way all day long, let me tell you something, when the night time comes, you will think that way. You will think that way through the night. If you spend your days letting him have your mind according to his word.

In fact, that next verse, just that first part of verse 8, "I have set the Lord always before me." I have set the Lord always before me. It doesn't say 10 minutes a day or a minute here and there. The scriptures say if you want to really be living out God's thoughts, God's counsels, God's will, keep the Lord out there before you. Keep his counsels ever prominent for your mind, for your thinking. Let him be the one to guide you in your thoughts. So I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel. His book is your book of counsel. You know there's no subject in life that's basic to life, no subject that isn't covered in this book. He's given me counsel. My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

The heart has to get involved. It isn't enough just to read it. You have to give your heart to it. It has to be yours. You have to make it yours. Lord, I see

² Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:8-10

³ Nigel Lee runs a program for display of Scripture

what you say. I make it mine. I believe it, but I make it mine. This is what I'm going to live by, what you say.

Now you take that with you back into Ephesians and go back to Ephesians 4:23. Look what it says. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness." Now there is a process, just so you understand what this is talking about. There is a process in renewing of the mind that starts when the mind is exposed to the Word of God. That's where it starts. His counsels, like we read here in Psalm 16:7, 8. His counsels. You get exposed to his counsels. Then your will has to yield to that.

What does that mean? It means you're rejecting self and self-will and godlessness and all the stuff of the world would have you to do, all that Satan is tempting you to do from time to time. And believe me, he's your enemy. You have to, in your spirit, you have to consciously choose to reject that. And accept the Word of God and the things of the Word of God as the new substance of your values, of what truth is, the new substance of your thoughts has to come from God's thoughts. I promise you when you put God's thoughts in and make them yours, time after time after time after time after time, they will become yours.

When somebody says something on a subject, boom, you start thinking exactly the way God does on that because you have taken his thoughts and made them yours. They become more and more our way of thinking. What we bring to others then in our words and in our thoughts will be the way that God speaks in his Word, in the scriptures. That's what we'll tell them, that's what we'll talk about. When we speak to others, we'll be bringing them psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. You may not be singing, but you're going to bring to them the stuff of God's thoughts and words, and they will be as psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and praise to the Lord. When we're speaking, seeking to encourage somebody, to uplift somebody, to praise the Lord, we're gonna use this newfound way of thinking.

Times of Charing hard Counsel

Now, there will be times of hard counsel. I wouldn't say that when you speak with somebody with hard counsel, you're singing psalms and hymns to them. There'll be times of rebuke, but you know, they'll also be based on God's Word. They'll be motivated, and here's the key, even in rebuke, motivated by love. That's the key. And if you've ever been a parent, or ever planned to be one, you know that you have to learn the lesson that if you're going to discipline a child, you better be sure that you're doing it because you love them. If you do it with anything else in control, like anger or bitterness of whatever sort, or just

emotion, if you do it with something else in control, you know it's going to be destructive. The only kind of correction that really is profitable is correction that is motivated in love, directed in love, empowered in love, has its goal to fulfill love in them.

Now, I know sometimes it does require the chastening. God tells us that in Hebrews 12, that whom the Lord loves, he chastens and every son he receives. I mean, if God can chasten because he loves us, I know it's possible for human beings to do it. The problem is that we shouldn't do it any other way if we do it. So I know there is that side of going to other people from our hearts, from the Word of God, in those times that are difficult.

Memory Work

And we have some very specific instructions here in this chapter 5 of Ephesians. You go there with me. And here, I want to finish out our time helping you memorize a little bit. I haven't done memory work with you folks for a long time. Now, in this memory work, I want you to actually speak the words. And if Nigel will help me, I want, when I have him put something up there, he will put it up there and then we'll take it away. We're not going to leave it up there because I want you to speak and I don't want you to read, okay? I want you to do something in here. Well, I'll get to it before he puts it up there. Nigel, Eph. 5:22.

Wives, read it with me out loud. "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." Now, Belinda and I read that very well, but I didn't hear the rest of you. Would you all join Belinda and I? "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." Kyle, your lips are not moving. I know you don't have a wife, Kyle, but you should memorize this. If that tragedy ever should enter your life, you might want to know this, you know. Okay, okay, let's do it.

Everybody, we're going to, because we're going to take it away in a second, I'm going to ask you to say this, okay? Say it with me. "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." You're getting it now, thank you. It's gone. Now let's say it. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Just the men. "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." You should say, gentlemen, you should say that with more feeling, you know, this is to the wives. Okay, come on. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. Gentlemen, come on. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Okay, now listen to the women say this. They'll get this. They know it's for them, right? Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

You know, if you make that a part of your way of thinking, if you say, you know, that's the word of God, that's mine now. That's my outlook about how wives should act toward their husbands. I'm going to take that, make it mine. I'm going to think that way. I don't want to infuse it with my private thinking, tear it down. I want, if I have to expand on it, I'm going to find out what else the word of God has to say about it, but I'm just giving you the germ, the nucleus, the beginning place. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. You might want to chew on that a while.

How does a wife submit to the Lord? Hmm. That's the way I'm supposed to submit to my husband. Okay. Work on that. All right.

Now we're going to go down to verse 5:25. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her." I like this new King James female pronoun, her. That's correct, by the way. She's being spoken of here in this chapter as the bride of Christ. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her." Read it with me. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her."

Ladies, can you do it? Read it and then we'll take it away. Okay. First read it, ladies. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her." Now we'll take it away.

Say it again, ladies. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her. Husbands, can you do this?

Men, husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her. Brandon, were you talking that time? You were? Okay, I just wanted to check. Okay. See, if Kyle gets married, you have to know the other half of that is that he'd be a husband. See, okay, just so you know. And I want you to know the verse so that if that happens to him, you can inform him what the Lord says to him. You can call him someday and say, Kyle, are you following what the Lord says in Ephesians 5:25? Are you doing it? Are you loving your wife just as the Lord loved the church and gave himself for it? Remember that.

Okay, now we're going to go down to chapter 6, verse 1. This is one that you really should love. Say it with me. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." My mother didn't know scripture very well, or she would have given this to me very often, I'm sure. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Again, "children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Parents have to understand that obedience is not the issue, because parents could ask children to do some things that they should never ask them to do. This is not what the scripture says. It says that children are to obey their parents

in the Lord, so as they obey, they're responding first to the Lord in their obedience, for this is right.

How Do We Provoke Our Children

Now we're going to go one more, 6:4. I don't know if you can get all of this, but this is really, this is for parents. It's a lot of it. I don't know, maybe we should just do that first part. Well, no, I don't know how you can without the most important part. Well, let's read it. "And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. I've got King James, nurture and admonition in my mind, so I've got to get training and admonition of the Lord. Okay, let's read it now. "And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

How do you provoke a child to wrath? Well, I'll tell you a good example is boxing them in, kind of like putting walls around them and then demanding that they get out of there. But you put walls around them. Every time they run somewhere, you put a block there. Then they run somewhere else trying to obey you, but you put a block there. It's called frustration. It's frustration raised to the pinnacle. You demand, but you don't give them any chance of real fulfillment. Do you know parents can do that? Parents can frustrate their children to the place where the child just, well, as they get older and older and older, I'm going to tell you at some point you will have what is called in the scriptures rebellion. But for younger children, what you have, they don't burst outward at you. They kind of go inward and they kind of are crushed inward. You crush them. They withdraw. It's not a good thing. It's hard on them. It frustrates their development, frustrates their love for you. Don't do that, God says to parents.

Conclusion

Aren't these good verses? For wives, for husbands, for children, for parents. You make them yours. Make those principles yours. That's just an example. Make those principles yours and say, now, listen, I'm going to live by this. Lord, this is the way I want to think. Not the old way. Now, as you take me along and show me other ways of thinking on other subjects, fine. I'm going to adapt those and my mind is eventually it's going to be remade. I want a new outlook. I'm going to set the Lord always before me.

Let's pray. Thank you for your word, Lord, to lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Oh, Lord, thank you. You want us to love you and to hear your word and to live by it so that we can know your love lived out in our lives. Help us not to cheat ourselves from what you give us in your thoughts, your counsels, your word. In Jesus name, amen.