

THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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We have followed Christ in His ascension, as entering the presence of His Father. He asked and received from God the Holy Spirit. We have also seen how Christ made Christians. "Christ" means "anointed "; " Christian" means "anointed one." The words "chrism " and "Christ" are identical in derivation. A man becomes truly a Christian when he is anointed with the Holy Spirit.

I speak now of the other aspect of Pentecost, because, though it is quite true that Pentecost means the anointing on the head and heart, it also means the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in Act_2:4 we are told that they were all--women and men, laymen and apostles--all were alike "filled with" the Holy Spirit.

Now, Eph_5:18 gives each one of us a positive command: "Be filled with the Spirit." It is very remarkable that in Acts 2 and Ephesians 5 the infilling of the Holy Spirit in its effect is compared to the effects of wine on the physical system. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit," and you can never have excess, you can never have too much of the Spirit.

There are three points of comparison that I want you to notice--joy, speech, power.

First. Wine produces a sense of exhilaration. A drunken man will sing as he reels to his home, and when a man is really filled with the Holy Ghost he becomes a singing Christian, and a Spirit filled church is always a singing church. Every great outburst of the Holy Spirit's power has been accompanied by singing. Luther's revival spread through Germany by singing Luther's hymns. Whitfield was accompanied by a Wesley, and Moody by a Sankey, and in Germany the Moravian Church has given to us the songs of Gerhardt, with many more.

Secondly. A man who is filled with wine is garrulous. He talks; you cannot keep him still. And a man who is filled with the Holy Spirit Calks, he cannot keep silence, he must tell what God has done.

Thirdly. A man who is filled with wine is conscious of a great increase of power. He feels as if he could stand alone against the world. So the man who is filled with the Holy Ghost is full also of the power of God.

Now this filling of the Holy Spirit may come suddenly, or more unconsciously, just as in Scotland they have what they call a "spate "of water, or a well may fill up with water percolating in drop by drop. Whenever the spirit of man, smitten with thirst, comes to Christ, and opens its whole content towards Christ, instantly Christ begins to infill that spirit. It may not be conscious of the gradual infilling, but by His grace He will never stay His hand until the earthly system has been filled to the very full from the river of God, which is full of water.

Now, there are three tenses used in the Greek, of this filling. In Act_13:52 we are told of the converts in the highlands of Galatia that they were being filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost all the time. They were like some mountain tarn which is always being filled from the melting of the snows above; and as the water flows on to enrich the pasture land beneath, so water is ever percolating in from the upper snow. O child of God, be a brimming lakelet or tarn, on the one hand always giving out to a dying world, but always kept full because you receive every moment from Jesus!

Then Act_6:5 tells us that Stephen was a man full of the Holy Ghost--" full," the adjective; from which I gather that he was an equable man. He did not have fits and starts, he was not now lifted up and then depressed; but always, whenever you met Stephen, there was the same heavenly look, the same tender gracious word, the same perfect beauty of character, and the same eagerness to glorify Christ. O, beloved friends, I wish that you may keep on being filled, and that you may always be full!

And then, Act_4:8 tells us that Peter, though he had been filled on the day of Pentecost, nevertheless was suddenly filled again as he had to speak to the Sanhedrim I suppose that for a moment he centered himself on God; he "looked up, and received a sudden and immediate and complete equipment for his work.

Beloved minister, you may be a man full of the Holy Ghost in your family, but when you kneel in your vestry before entering your pulpit, before attempting a mission, before undertaking any definite work for God by lip or pen, be sure that you are specially equipped by a new reception of the Holy Ghost. In my own life I have found it absolutely necessary, after such a mission as this, when the whole system has become exhausted by the demand made upon the spirit, the nerve, and the physical strength, to get quietly away with God, and to renew one's strength by receiving out of the fulness of the Holy Ghost, breathing in a new supply.

Now you will notice also that the work of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, filling the heart, has in the character of the believer; and these are set forth by Christ in three verses, each of which begins with the words: "In that day."