

A Spirit Filled Life

Ephesians 5:18

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Introduction

Today, as we continue to work our way along slowly through the letter of Paul to the Ephesians,

- we come to a command that is very important for us to have a right understanding about.
- We are here called to be filled with the Spirit.

This little command is presented to us in a very quiet sort of a way...

- It comes on the end of a command to avoid drunkenness...
 - “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”
 - It almost seems to be secondary to the prohibition...
 - As when a mother says to her three year old son,
 - “Don’t hit your sister, be kind!”
 - The specific concern is to stop hitting—and being kind is just sort tacked on...

But as it turns out in the context,

- this little command to be filled with the Spirit becomes the theme about which Paul speaks all the way into the middle the next chapter!
 - He goes on to explain what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit...
 - He explains it by series of participles—
 - you know, a participle is an “ing” phrase if your grammar is a little rusty.
 - You can see them there...
- Look at verse 19...
 - It says, “**speaking** to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and **making** melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - That explains what you do when you are filled with the Spirit...
 - You speak to each other in songs of praise that you sing from the heart...
 - The Spirit filled person lifts up sincere praise and thanks to God...

- Then in verse 20, there is another participle...
 - “**giving** thanks always for the all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
 - This also explains what is means to be filled with the Spirit...
 - When you are filled with the Spirit you will be very conscious of all the mercy and grace that the Lord has lavished upon you—
 - Instead of grumbling and complaining, you will be filled with an attitude of gratitude.
 - You will see yourself as one who is given much instead of one who is given little.

- And then in verse 21 there is yet another participle that explains the command to be filled with the Spirit...
 - It says, “**submitting** to one another in the fear of God.”
 - The word translated “submitting” literally means “lining up under each other,” in the sense of each one taking his place according to his calling...
 - It is a call for those whom God has called to lead to take their places of responsibility...
 - And a call for those whom God has called to follow to obey those the Lord has placed over them
 - This third participle is then explained in detail in the ensuing discourse...
 - The rest of chapter 5 has to do with wives lining up under their husbands,
 - and with husbands taking their place as the head of their homes after the example of Christ...
 - Then in chapter 6,
 - children are called to line up under their parents and fathers are called to take their place over their children as ministers of the Lord to them...
 - to take up their responsibility to bring them up in the discipline and training of the Lord.
 - And then in verse 5, slaves are called to line up under their masters to obey them cheerfully,
 - and masters are called to exercise authority as those who are themselves lined up under Christ.

So you see that this little command in verse 18 that we be filled with the Spirit is one that Paul makes much of...

- For that reason, it is very important for us to understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit.
 - There is a lot of confusion about this today...
 - Some people think that being filled with the Spirit means that you start exhibiting all sorts of bazaar behaviour—
 - you've seen it—moaning or barking, laughing uncontrollably, falling and rolling around on the ground—you know the kind of thing I'm talking about.
 - What you may not know is that this idea of being filled with the Spirit goes back 2000 years before Christ in pagan worship...
 - There idea of being filled with the Spirit is that one becomes possessed—taken over—by the Spirit...
 - The Biblical view, as we shall see, is that one is enabled by the Spirit—transformed to live a holy life in communion with God.
 - Rather than the Spirit taking over your body to do things instead of you, the Spirit gives you the strength and desire to obey the Lord.
- Sometimes those Christians who have the pagan view will kidnap a good biblical phrase...
 - Because they call their bazaar behaviour being filled the Spirit,
 - when they come to you and ask you if you believe in the filling of the Spirit,
 - You want to “no” because you know what they mean by it...
 - But really, you shouldn't say “no,”
 - but rather: “of course,”
 - and then explain what you mean by it...
 - We need to reclaim the phrase rather than allowing them to steal it from us.
 - I don't mean that we get stuck on one particular phrase, for there are, I suppose, about a thousand other ways to speak of the filling of the Spirit...
 - and we do well to use a variety of expressions,
 - But if we hear one of our brothers we know to be sound in his faith asking God to fill us with the Spirit,
 - we ought not to live in such a climate that we suppose he is starting to get off track...
 - that he is going to start hooting or rolling on the ground...
 - We need to understand that by asking God to fill us with the Spirit,
 - he is asking the Lord to do something that the Lord has promised to do and has commanded us to seek.

TRANS> All this to say again, we need to understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

- So this morning I want to do an overview of this important topic,
 - and then in the weeks to come we will look at how the Spirit is to affect our:
 - worship,
 - our attitude,
 - and our relationships with one another in the home and in the work place.

So to start off, I want to show you that:

I. The filling of the Spirit is a prominent feature of the New Covenant.

A. The prophets of the Old Testament speak of it often...

1. In Isaiah 59,

- the passage that we read this morning,
 - the Spirit is promised as coming when God sends the Redeemer to Zion to those who turn from their transgression...
 - Isa 59:20-21: "The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD. "As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."
 - Of course the Redeemer who will come to Zion is Jesus.
 - God's covenant with those who repent when He comes is that He will put His Spirit upon them and upon their descendents forever.
 - The promise of the Spirit is to them and to their children—

2. In Joel 2, there is a similar promise...only the language is a little different...

- In Joel, the Lord promises that in the last days, He will pour out the Holy Spirit upon His people—
 - a. Pouring out, of course, is what God does when He fills us...
 - The Spirit is poured out in order that He might be poured upon us or into us to fill us...
 - b. In Acts 2, Peter tells us that this pouring out was done by Jesus when He ascended into heaven.

- In Acts 2:16-18, Peter quotes from Joel. He says:
 - Acts 2:16-18: ““But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.’”
 - You see that the promise is that the Spirit will be *poured out* on all flesh...
 - They will, as a result, all be filled the Spirit...and this will be evidenced by signs and wonders...
 - The main idea here is that this filling—this fullness of the Spirit—will not be restricted to only a few prominent persons as in the Old Testament, but it will be for all flesh...
 - “All flesh” does not mean every person, but as the passage explains, the young as well as the old...servants and well as the masters...
 - The filling of the Spirit will be given to all sorts of persons.
- In Acts 2:32-33, Peter explains that this prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus at His ascension.
 - What the people saw happening before their eyes on the day of Pentecost was the pouring out of the Spirit, or the filling of the Spirit that was prophesied...
 - In Acts 2:32-33, it says:
 - Acts 2:32-33: ““This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”
 - Jesus, having accomplished all things for the remission of our sins, now pours out His Spirit on the church.
 - This is the characteristic feature of the New Covenant.
 - Peter promises that the Spirit will be given to all who repent and are baptised, along with their descendents—
 - In Acts 2:38-39 he says:
 - “Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.””

- It is not just for prophets anymore, but for everyone who believes.
- The emphasis is not that there was no Spirit, but rather that the fullness that was given only to a few in the Old Testament will be given to all in the New...
 - so that the least in the Kingdom will be greater than John the Baptist...

B. See how the filling of the Spirit is presented as the sum of the blessing of the New Testament.

- This is demonstrated in many ways...
 1. For example, it is demonstrated by the fact that baptism, the very sign of New Covenant, represents the pouring out of the Spirit to cleanse and sanctify.
 - a. We have already seen that Peter promised the Spirit to those who repented and were baptised at Pentecost—
 - But before this, when John the Baptist was baptising,
 - He spoke of the direct connection of baptism with the pouring out of the Spirit by Jesus the redeemer...
 - In Mark 1:8, he said,
 - Mark 1:8: "I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon God's people to fill them.
 - b. And the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit is washing—washing of regeneration and sanctification...
 - The giving of new life from the dead—which is, of course, represented by washing with water in baptism...
 - 1) You can see this in Titus 3:4-6:
 - Titus 3:4-6: But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.
 - 2) The connection between baptism as the symbol of the cleansing of the Spirit is also shown in Acts 10 when Cornelius, the first Gentile is baptised.

- This passage shows that he is baptised because he has received the Spirit...
- In Acts 10:44-48, we read:
 - Acts 10:44-48: While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.
- The logic is, the sign should be applied to him because he has received the thing signified.

TRANS> By this you see that the New Covenant sign represents the cleansing that comes through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- The fact that the very sign of the New Covenant is so closely associated with the pouring out of and filling of the Spirit shows clearly that the filling of the Spirit is a key feature of the New Covenant.
2. A second evidence of this is the fact that Paul, when he wants to summarise the promise of the New Covenant that was given to Abraham,
 - Summarises it as “the promise of the Spirit.”
 - He does this in Galatians 3:13-14 when he says:
 - Gal 3:13-14: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”
 - Here again, we see that the Spirit is poured out on those whom Christ has redeemed...
 - and that this pouring out of the Spirit is called “the promise” made to Abraham that is now received by the Gentiles.
 3. And a third evidence that the giving of the Spirit is a key feature of the New Covenant is found in John 7:37-39—
 - If you have your Bible,
 - I would encourage you to turn there for a moment because this is a very instructive passage about the filling of the Spirit as at the very heart of God’s New Covenant blessing...
 - First, let me read John 7:37-38:
 - John 7:37-38: On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who

believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

- a. Now if you only read that far, you might not realise that Jesus is speaking about the pouring out the Holy Spirit...
 - Jesus is inviting them to come to Him for drink that will satisfy, but He does not mention the Holy Spirit...
 - But happily for our sake, John tells us plainly that Jesus was indeed talking about the Spirit...
 - In verse 39, he adds this explanation of Jesus' words:
 - John 7:39: But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
 - This interpretive comment gives us insight into some of the other things Jesus said...
 - It shows us that Jesus was probably referring to the Spirit at other times as well...
 - for example, when He spoke to the woman at the well and told her that he would give her living water...
 - or when He talked about His Father giving good gifts to His children.
 - This gift of the Holy Spirit is an essential promise of the New Covenant!
- b. And you will notice also from verse 39 that John says that the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified...
 - But how could that have been?
 - Did people not have the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?
 - I mean, how could they have been converted and come to God?
 - Of course they did have the Holy Spirit,
 - But the difference is in profusion... in volume...
 - It is not until Jesus comes that the Spirit is poured out in abundance on all flesh—all who are in union with Christ...
 - He was given in the Old Testament, but He was not given as profusely as He has now been given...
 - That abundant outpouring had to wait until Jesus had come and have atoned for His people's sins!

TRANS> Okay, so having seen that the filling of the Spirit is a prominent feature of the New Covenant,

- I now want to show you:

II. Three ways that believers are said to be filled with the Spirit and how each of these applies to you as one who is commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

A. First, there is the filling of the Spirit to perform certain works...

1. This is seen throughout the Bible...

- For example, the first mention of the filling of the Spirit is in Exodus 31 when we are told that Bazalel, the son of Uri, was filled with the Holy Spirit to design artistic works in gold and silver as a craftsman...
- There are many others as well...
 - There are the prophets who were given the Spirit to prophecy...
 - There are the kings, like Saul and David who were given the Spirit to rule...
 - And there are judges like Samson on whom the Spirit of God came to enable him to do feats of strength.

2. And then in the New Testament, we see special filling for special works:

- These we may put under two categories...
 - a. First, there are the fillings of the Spirit to do miracles...I mean to perform signs...
 - Paul is filled with the Spirit in Acts 13:9 to strike Elymas the sorcerer with blindness...
 - And in Acts 2, the disciples are filled the Spirit to speak with tongues.
 - b. Secondly, there are fillings of the Spirit for ability to do other non-miraculous works...or works that are not signs...
 - For example, in Acts 4:31, the disciples are all given a special filling of the Spirit to have boldness in times of persecution—
 - a boldness they could not muster up by their own strength.
 - In 2 Corinthians Paul speaks about how the Holy Spirit comforts us through God's promises in our sorrows so that we do not despair...

TRANS> So you see that there are these particular fillings of the Spirit to enable us to do specific works

3. How does this apply to you?

- a. Well first, let me say that it is not for you to get caught up trying to conjure up miracles...
 - It is a real reproach on the name of God when Christians go around trying to act like they are speaking in tongues or prophesying...
 - These were special gifts that were given when the Holy Spirit was first poured out to show that He had been poured out...
 - They are called sign gifts, signs of the apostles, but they are no longer needed...
 - It is a well-established fact that the Spirit has been poured out on the church, and we no longer need signs to show that it is happened...
 - We know that it happens from the promise of scripture.
 - The important thing is not the tongues or the miracles, but the new life of communion with God through Christ.
 - The problem is that those who try to pretend to do these things don't do anything very miraculous at all—
 - Not only do these well meaning disciples get diverted from God's call as they try to mimic the apostolic miracles,
 - but worse than that,
 - they make people think the apostolic miracles were as shallow and unconvincing as their imitations.

TRANS> Okay, then how do special fillings of the Spirit apply to us now?

- b. You need to seek special fillings of the Spirit when you have a great task to perform for God—
 - whether it be to speak to an offended relative in a godly way or to bear up with patience under affliction,
 - It is for you to pray and seek the filling of the Holy Spirit to enable you to do what God has called you to do.
 - You can call it looking to God for help or seeking His grace, or whatever you want...
 - but it could also be called seeking the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - You need to know, as our confession teaches, that every God work requires a special enabling of the Holy Spirit—
 - a special filling by Him (an actual influence) if it is to be done in a way that is acceptable to God.

- Phil 2:13 reminds you that it is God who is at work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure...

TRANS> So you need to seek the filling of the Spirit for every good work... that you may do it to the glory of God.

- That is the filling of the Spirit for the performance of specific works.

B. Second, there is the filling of the Spirit as a permanent characteristic of some persons.

1. When the deacons were chosen to serve in Acts 6, one of the requirements was that they be men who were full of the Holy Spirit...

- It was not that they had received the filling of the Spirit for some specific work or miracle that qualified them,
 - But that they were men who were characterised by a life empowered by God's Spirit...
 - Men who were constantly responding to Him, depending on Him, living by His grace, living in obedience to Him.

2. This, of course, is something we should all desire to be characterised by.

- To be a person whose life demonstrates that God is continually at work in you.
- As this was a feature that distinguished certain disciples from others,
 - it is evident that not every believer is characterised by it.
 - Indeed, every believer has the Spirit, else he's not a believer at all—
 - For if anyone does not have the Spirit, He does not have Christ...
- But to be filled with the Spirit is to have that abundance of Him and His influence...
 - It is to have a life that is consistently evidencing His presence by the consistent exhibition of the fruit of the Spirit—
 - “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,”
 - to use the list in Galatians 5:22...
 - or the fruits of “goodness, righteousness, and truth”
 - to use the list in Ephesians 5:9.

TRANS> I say then, a person is described as being one who is filled with the Spirit when he consistently exhibits this fruit.

- That is the second way persons are said to be filled with the Spirit.

C. Thirdly, there is the filling of the Spirit as something to be pursued and maintained from day to day.

1. Now obviously, this closely related to what we just looked at...

- But when you are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, as you are in our text—Ephesians 5:18—
 - then this is a filling that you are to evaluate from day to day... even from hour to hour...
- Just stop and look at yourself at any moment and say,
 - “Am I filled with Spirit right now?”
 - “Am I abiding in Christ?”
 - “Am I walking with God—living in communion with Him—drawing from His grace and seeking to glorify Him?”

2. The point is, you can at any given time be more or less filled with the Spirit...

- Parents, don't you see this in your children?
 - You look over at them and you can tell right away by their attitude that they are not filled with the Spirit—
 - You can see that they are not walking with God
 - You can see that they are a problem waiting to happen!
- Before they do something that you will have to chasten them for, why not call them over first...
 - And ask them if they are having a hard time—if they have lost their focus...
 - and if they agree that they have,
 - pray with them and ask for God's help!
 - Ask that they would be filled with the Spirit so that they will not go on living contrary to the Lord!
- And you—you know when you have that hateful spirit or that whining spirit or that complaining spirit of self pity, or that vindictive spirit, or that “leave me alone” spirit—you know it...
 - So what should you do when that happens?
 - Well, you should obey the command of Ephesians 5:18 and be filled with the Spirit...

TRANS> So you see that you need to seek the filling of the Spirit in all three ways...

- You need to seek be filled for specific works you are called to do...
- You need to seek to be filled as a characteristic of life...
- You need to seek to be filled from moment to moment...

But my friends, how can you obey this command to be filled with the Spirit?

- Well that is the third thing I want to look at on this subject today...

III. How can you obey the command of Ephesians 5:18: “Be filled with the Spirit”?

A. First of all, to be filled with the Spirit, you must have faith...

1. Paul makes this very clear in Galatians when he is fussing at the Galatians for supposing that they would receive the Spirit by observing the ceremonial law...

- In Gal 3:2, he asks them,
 - Gal 3:2: This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
 - Then he says:
 - Gal 3:3: Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?
 - And in verse 5 he adds:
 - Gal 3:5: Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

2. But what does this mean? How does this work?

a. Well it means that you have to believe the promise of the Spirit given through Jesus Christ.

- It means you look to Christ as the one who reconciles you to God through the cross to give you His Spirit...
- This is very important!
 - If you don't believe that God really will give His Spirit to you—
 - and that the Spirit really will transform you and give you fruit—
 - then you will just go on in your old impotent ways—
 - unchanged...

b. It is rather for you to believe the promise that God will give you His Spirit...

- To believe Jesus when He said:

- Lu 11:13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"
- When you believe, you ask—you even plead.

TRANS> But the filling of the Spirit is more than just saying a prayer and then saying, "there, now I am filled with the Holy Spirit."

B. There is also a need to make use of the means of grace for a greater and greater filling as you interact with life...

1. By the means of grace, I refer to those ways that God has given us to receive His grace; namely, the word, sacraments, and prayer.
 - Receiving God's grace is really the same as being filled with God's Spirit...
 - So you could just as well call "the means of grace" "the means of being Spirit-filled"
2. Now I have just shown you how Jesus told us to pray that the Father would give us the Holy Spirit...
 - and prayer is one of the means of grace...
 - it is one of the means by which you are more and more filled with the Spirit...
3. But as I showed you last week, the Word of God is also a means of grace...
 - Remember how we looked at 2 Timothy 3:16 where it says that Bible is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and disciplined training in righteousness...
 - doctrine—to teach us all we need to know...
 - reproof—to show us what is wrong with us—our sin...
 - correction—to show us how to correct the wrong...
 - and training in righteousness—to keep us in God's way...
 - To benefit from the word, you have to receive it through preaching and reading...
 - And as you receive it by faith, it will enable you to be more and more filled with the Spirit...
 - The Spirit works in conjunction with the Word...
 - so that when you read doctrine, you learn who God is and what Christ has done, and how great His love is...

- and the more you learn of Him, the more you will be filled with the Spirit...
 - you will begin more and more to see His glory and to admire Him and to be grateful for what He has done...
 - And that will change you through and through...
- And then the reproof...
 - When I say that the word shows you what is wrong with you, I want you to know that it does it deeply...
 - At first, yes, it shows you (for example) that it is wrong to be angry with your brother in your heart...
 - You understand that, but as you stay in the word, you begin to see just **how** wrong it is...
 - You begin to see more and more the sinfulness of your sin...
 - to come to grips with it and to become more and more disgusted with it so that eventually, it loses its appeal!
 - That is being filled with the Spirit.
4. And then there are the sacraments—
- In these you see Christ visibly represented as the one who cleanses you and nourishes you...
 - And God promises that when you come to the Lord's table, you actually partake of Christ—
 - In 1 Cor 10, it says that you have communion in His body and blood...
 - This happens through faith as you receive the bread and the wine...
 - By the promise of God, you are actually strengthened,
 - seeing afresh what Christ has done for you and resting in Him.
 - You are filled with the Spirit.

TRANS> So you see then that to be filled with the Spirit,

- you need faith in God's promise to give you the Spirit through Christ...
- And you need to make diligent and regular use of the means of grace...
 - But there is also something to avoid...
 - This is found at the beginning of verse 18...
 - It is that which is set in contrast with the filling of the Spirit...

- Gal 3:18: Be not drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

C. Consider how drunkenness is set in contrast with the filling of the Spirit.

1. Now I have been telling you what the filling of the Spirit is...

- The true Spirit filling is when you begin to live under the power and direction of the Spirit.
 - It means that you live by the grace of God in all of your life, so that your attitudes, your responses, your decisions, your actions—everything about you is unto God—lived in response to Him as your gracious Saviour and lord, in joyful obedient submission—for His glory.
 - It is about denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Him.
 - It is about living the way Jesus lived.
 - And it is about doing all this with the Spirit's help.
 - It is about coming to God more and more to live in true communion with Him...

2. The drunkard is doing just the opposite of this...

a. Rather than coming to God, he is trying to avoid God—

- rather than taking up the calling that God has given him, he is trying to escape responsibility.
- There is a proper use of wine for celebration of God's goodness—for relaxing and getting away from the grind to give thanks...
- But the drunkard is using his wine for the very opposite reason—
 - He is using wine to get far away from God—and that is why he drinks to excess...
 - He is displeased with reality—with the real world that God made—
 - because he knows that he is guilty before God and he would rather not think about it...
 - He wants to escape his problems and escape his responsibility.
 - He uses His wine to escape.

b. That's why his drinking is so addictive...

- Who cares about the unpaid bills when he is drunk? Who cares about the neglected wife and children?
- And of course when responsibilities are not dealt with and problems are not faced and sin is not confessed,

- things are only going to get worse...
- The first thing the drunkard is going to want to do when he gets sober is drink again...

TRANS> It is a sad, sad spectacle...

3. And there are other ways besides wine that people use to avoid coming to God...
 - a. Steve Schlissel puts it like this...
 - A guilty conscience, such as our generation has, often tries to drown out consciousness in order not to be aware of the pain of guilt. Drugs, booze, and the pursuit of deadening pleasures of all sorts, the constant thump-thump music or the ubiquitous narcotic of television—all are ways to drown out the guilt of consciousness, lest we find ourselves alone with our guilty thoughts.
 - b. Brothers and sisters, once these means are resorted to,
 - It is very difficult to come back and face the truth again.
 - The sinful human heart would rather intoxicate itself than face God as God really is.
4. This is why the solution to the problem of drunkenness is being filled with the Spirit in all of life...
 - As Paul goes on to show us...
 - in praising God from the heart (rather than avoiding Him with drunkenness...)
 - in giving thanks to God in all things—in looking upon what He has given in Christ instead of whining about your problems and running for escape...
 - and in submitting to one another in the fear of God—in taking up your responsibilities in your family and in the work place...

Conclusion:

- Do you see this my friends?
- Our society has a huge problem with intoxication—not just with wine and drugs, but with all sorts of things!
 - We are trying to avoid what God calls us to be...
 - Instead of coming to Him to be filled with the life He gives through Christ, we are running off to all sorts of diversions!
 - I dare say that many of us really know what it means to praise God from the heart with Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual songs...

- we are intoxicated with other things instead of filled with the Spirit!
- Nor do we know what it is to live in constant gratitude because we have not taken notice of what the Lord has done for us... in Christ...
- The Spirit was poured out after Christ came because it was then that we were able to begin to grasp the depth of God's love and holiness.
- And then in the family and in work—who knows what it is to serious take up your daily calling for the glory of God?
 - To give to your family as Christ gave Himself for the church—to really love them and care for their needs? to take responsibility for them.

Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit!

- The man pursuing his wine is pursuing death...
 - The man pursuing the Spirit is pursuing life... and he is finding it...
 - Don't you see my friends!
 - The filling of the Spirit is about living a supernatural life for God by the grace and power of God!
 - It is about coming into all that God has for you!
 - It is about finding life as it is meant to be!
 - It is about coming to know God and to delight in His glory.

The Spirit-filled life is not a thing to run away from!

- It is a thing to run to as fast as you can!
- Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled the Spirit.
 - This is what God has prepared for those who love Him.
 - This filling will be complete when God at last brings us home to glory.
 - Then we will be filled with the fullness of God...