

Be filled with the Holy Spirit — part 1

Message for Sunday, June 11, 2017
by Bruce Fraser

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18-21 and others

Children's Message: (based on John 7:37-39)

We had a lot of rain this spring. But now it has settled down to more normal levels. Can you pretend that you're a plant? Show me with your face and your body how you feel after you've had a nice rain to soak the ground and water your roots? (*ahhh – fresh and alive!*)

Now a week has gone by with no rain. How do you feel?

Another week.

Three weeks. It's now July, the hottest part of the whole year. The sun is blasting down on you. How do you feel?

Five weeks. By now, some plants have died from lack of water.

Finally, after five weeks, the rain has come. How do you feel?

What would it be like if you had a supply of water that never ran dry? *Yumm, good!*

In the Bible passage we just heard, Jesus talks, not about plants, but about people. Jesus invites us to believe in him. When we do that, listen to what he says will happen: “**Have faith in me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you**” [John 7:38].

Now I don't think he means that you'll have real water running out of your nose and ears – that would be messy! I think what he means is that he himself will come and live in our hearts.

Now compare that to being a plant without water for weeks and weeks. Jesus says that he will be like a river of life-giving water flowing through us! I don't fully understand that myself, but it sure sounds good!

Message: “Be filled with the Holy Spirit - part 1” Last Sunday was Pentecost Sunday, when we focus on the role of the Holy Spirit. But we scratched the surface. So now, and for the next three weeks, I'd like to go deeper into learning about the Holy Spirit, helping us to grow in our faith and our life following Jesus.

Ephesians 5:18-21, Today's English Version:

Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you; instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always give thanks for everything to God the Father. Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.

That passage has one main instruction, with four things that follow as a result.

1) Be filled with the Holy Spirit

We read in the Bible in Acts 2, that on the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. They spilled out into the street in celebration. One gift that was given to many of them was the ability to speak in other languages, and they started praising God in many different languages. Some onlookers didn't understand and thought they were all drunk [Acts 2:1-13].

There is a similarity between being drunk and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Both are “under the influence” – one from alcohol, and the other from the Holy Spirit. But the two couldn't be further apart. Drinking too much leads to loss of control and a ruined life. A person who is full of the Holy Spirit submits to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but is still in control, and it leads to abundant life. The person who is drunk becomes like an animal; the person who is full of the Holy Spirit becomes like Jesus.

When it says “be filled with the Holy Spirit,” that is not a suggestion. It is a command. This is something we need to do.

2) The result of being filled with the Holy Spirit

a) Speak to one another

The first result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is speaking with one another. This is not surprising: in Galatians 5:22, the first in the list of the fruit of the spirit is love. We may think we have a deep and intimate relationship with God, but if we are not on speaking terms with someone else in the church, then there is something vital missing in our lives.

What do we talk about? It's not just chit-chat, but “with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred

songs.” I take that to mean that a good deal of our conversation is to be about spiritual things. (I would find it hard to take that line literally, that we’re supposed to talk using lyrics from hymns!)

One result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is to draw us closer together in our fellowship with one another: “Speak to one another.”

b) Sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts

The other main work of the Holy Spirit is to draw us closer to Jesus. We delight in worshipping our Lord in songs. And even though the song comes out through our mouths, it is worship which comes from our hearts.

c) Always give thanks for everything to God the Father

We celebrate Thanksgiving in October. People who are filled with the Holy Spirit celebrate and give thanks continually. Grumbling and self-pity are again signs that something vital is missing from a person’s life.

d) Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ

The New Testament many times uses words like “power,” “win,” “victory” and “overcome;” but these words are always about our struggle within ourselves to stay free of sin. Those words are *never* used when describing relationships among Christians, or how the church is to operate.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are not out to have our way, to win arguments, to prove that we’re right. When there’s a meeting to discuss something, we don’t strive for our position to succeed. Why? Because of our reverence for Christ. This is his church, not mine, not yours.

As I’ve described today [earlier in the service, the Prayer of Confession] the gaps in my own spiritual life, and how the Holy Spirit works in our lives, you may have thought to yourself, “Yes, that’s what I need, too!” And now you may be asking, “How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?” Jesus answered that question:

John 7:37-39, Contemporary English Version:
 “If you are thirsty, come to me and drink! Have faith in me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from

deep inside you, just as the Scriptures say.” Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit.

Put your faith in Jesus Christ. Surrender your life to him. Then ask him to let that river of life flow in you; ask him to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

I’m going to lead us in a prayer right now to do exactly that. If you like, you can say this prayer in your heart.

Father God, thank-you for all that you’ve done. I confess that I have sinned, and that I need your forgiveness. Thank-you for Jesus giving his life for me, so that I may have a new and abundant life. I invite you to come into my life: to fill me with the Holy Spirit. You have my permission to change my thoughts and attitudes, so that I may be more like Jesus. Amen.