

# Following Jesus - Part 4: “The Spirit Filled Life”

## Introduction

Good evening, so glad you can join us tonight in our fourth and midpoint of our series here on Following Jesus. This is a very important session, and I hope it will be a huge blessing to your heart and life. We are really talking about spirit-filled life. Now, just about a week ago, someone asked me, What is that one word you think of when you think about the Holy Spirit? I thought for a while, and I said, my answer would be misunderstanding. What do you mean by that? You see, I think we live in a day where there is a huge amount of misunderstanding regarding the work and the person of the Holy Spirit. There are some people who attribute to the Holy Spirit crazy things that the Holy Spirit doesn't do. But they say that's the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, there are people who haven't seen those kinds of crazy excesses being attributed to the Holy Spirit, they retreat to the other end by saying we don't want to talk about the Holy Spirit. So as a result of that, I believe many people are robbed of the beautiful understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is really important for you to live life in the Spirit. And I'm glad you can tune in this evening to find out more. Now, the basis of our understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit must be found in the Bible. So we're looking at Ephesians chapter five and verse 18, is a very simple verse. This is like a launchpad for us to look at the various aspects of the spirit-filled life. It says, “do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit”. So that's where we get that phrase, spirit-filled life. We need to be filled with the Spirit.

## Priority

Now, the first thing I'd like you to notice in this verse is the priority of being filled with the Spirit, the importance of being filled with the Spirit. Now we are left in no doubt this is important. Because this being filled with the Spirit is spoken off in the same breath as not getting drunk with wine. We know that being drunk with wine is sinful. You wouldn't want your pastor to be preaching when he's drunk. But at the same time, it is also important for the pastor to recognize I must not only not be drunk with wine, I must be filled with the Spirit. In other words, being drunk with wine is important. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is also important. Not to be filled with the Spirit is as sinful as being drunk with wine. So, this is God's command, “Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the spirit”, that Greek tense there is that this is an imperative, or the voice there is that it is an imperative, it is a command, not an option.

Now, I also want you to remember that Jesus before He ascended into heavens, he ordered his disciples to wait for the promise of the Father, that they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Now, the disciples have learned a lot from Jesus. They know the gospel. They are a people who have learned theology from Jesus. They are to go to evangelize but Jesus says don't go yet, you have to wait so that you may be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Now, this reminds me of a story I used to tell very often in our church, and it's a story of The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, you will know that there is a particular battle between a general Cao Cao and the opponents Liu Bei and Sun Quan and this is a very unequal fight because Cao Cao outnumbers his opponents, but the problem is that this battle will be fought on the waters and his troops are not very equipped to battle on waters. So, Liu Bei and Sun Quan had a ploy. They realized the only way to defeat Cao Cao is by fire attack. So they sent a spy somehow deceiving Cao Cao into linking and tying all his boats and rafts together saying that if all your boats are tied together, it will be more stable and you will win the battle. Of course Cao Cao fell into that ploy, that trap, tied all his boats and they were now ready for battle. What Liu Bei and Sun Quan were waiting for is for the right time to launch out boats that have been set have blazed by fire, thereby obliterate all of Cao Cao's fleet. If those set ablaze, boats and rafts will hit them. So, they waited and they waited and they waited, but they never sent out the boats yet. And so, someone asked the advisor, Zhu Ge Liang, why is it that we are not sending out the boats to destroy Cao Cao's fleet? And so Zhu Ge Liang had this very famous saying, “欲破曹公，宜用火攻。万事俱备，只欠东风。” (To defeat Cao Cao, use fire attack. All is ready, just need Eastern wind). Zhu Ge Liang is saying if you want to destroy Cao Cao, you want to defeat him, you've got to use the fire attack. And we've got everything ready but we lack that Eastern wind. If we send the boats out, and it is the wrong wind direction, the boats will be blown back to us, and we will only kill ourselves. And in a sense when Jesus said, don't go until you have the power of the Holy Spirit, He is saying “万事俱备，只欠圣灵的风。” In other words, everything is ready, you are taught, you have the gospel, but you lack the wind of the Spirit. So, I think the Bible tells us that the flesh, our own efforts, they profit nothing. It is the spirit that gives life. And so, it is really important, it is priority that you should be filled with the Spirit. All right.

## Process

Number two, in this text, I want to share with you the process of being filled with the Spirit. Now we know it is important to be filled with the Spirit. But what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? The word filled is the keyword of interest here. Right from the beginning. I want to tell you the word filled means to be controlled. That's it. So read it this way. Do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery but be controlled by the Spirit. You see this word is used in Acts five, verse three, why has Satan filled your heart? Why has Satan controlled your heart, influenced your heart, to lie to the Holy Spirit? And if you look at this verse, Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, you see a parallel: don't be influenced, don't be controlled by alcohol. Don't be controlled by the alcoholic spirit but be controlled by the Holy Spirit. So, the idea of being filled is that of control. You see, this is different from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Let me give you a little diagram to illustrate.

Suppose this is a picture of you and me before we came to know Christ. So the only ruling authority in our lives is ourselves we rule ourselves, where is God, where is Jesus? He is outside our lives, and this is a picture of a non-Christian. But do you know the day you believed in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes into your life to live in you many Bible verses tell us that that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. If anyone has not the Spirit of Christ is none of His. So the Bible tells us the day we believe in Jesus something automatic takes place, the Holy Spirit of Christ comes into our life. But when he comes into our lives, it doesn't always mean he rules in our life, because we can choose very unwisely to say no to the spirit, and we would still sit on the throne. When someone lives like that we can call him a

disobedient or a worldly Christian. He is not after the things of God, he is still wanting to fulfill the lusts of his life in this world. However, by the grace of God, there may be some who say no, I want to surrender the control of my life to the Holy Spirit. And now the Holy Spirit sits on the throne of our lives. We surrender ourselves to His Lordship, and this is what we would call a spirit-filled Christian. So we are trying to distinguish between the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit. So the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is simply that the Holy Spirit lives in us. But the spirit-filled Christian is when the Holy Spirit is Lord in us, there's a big difference. And I'm sure you understand that. The first kind of Christian, the worldly Christian is where the Holy Spirit is merely resident. But the second is where the Holy Spirit is precedent, he rules over us. So let's keep things simple again. We are saying that the priority of a Christian is that we must be filled with the Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? It means we are controlled by the Spirit. He sits on the authority the throne of our lives. This is a command by God, we need to do it. And we need to surrender to it. And let me say this one more thing in this verse, it is in the continuous tense, meaning it should be properly read, be continuously filled with the Spirit. In other words, this is not once for all, this is a continuous moment by moment reality we have to be mindful of. We have to be always consistently surrendering ourselves to the Spirit's control. So, that's the priority. That's the process. I hope you understand. And you are saying, Alright, I need to be controlled by the Spirit. But the next question you have is how, how can I do that? I'm glad you asked.

### Pathway

We come to point number three, which is the pathway, how can we be filled with the Spirit? Three things for you to remember, I know there's a lot to remember, but I hope you're jotting down notes. You're taking down messages here, and you will refresh them in your own time.

#### a) Recognise

But three things I'd like you to know, in a pathway to being filled with the Spirit, number one, to be filled with the Spirit to be controlled by the Spirit, it necessitates that you recognize the person of the Holy Spirit living in you. I emphasize the word person, because he's not just a power. Many people are fascinated today by Star Wars, and you have the Jedi and they say the May the force be with you. And that's how we think about the Holy Spirit. But no, no, no, no, the Holy Spirit is not a force like in Star Wars. He is not just a power because he is a person. The Bible tells us we can have fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the word there is communion, sharing with the Holy Spirit, you don't share with a force that is impersonal, you share with a person and the Holy Spirit is not an IT. It is a He, He lives in us that we might commune and fellowship with Him. He is a person because the Bible says we must not grieve the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us we can quench the Holy Spirit, we can sort of shut him up and lock him up from his influence in our lives. Don't do that he's a person. And I'm sure you remember Acts five, verse three, how Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, you don't lie to a force, you lie to a person. So the first thing about living life in the Spirit is you've got to recognize that he lives in you. He lives in us. The next thing not just to recognize is to relinquish, to surrender, to submit the control of our lives over to him. So we want to do what he wants us to do. That's the idea of relinquishing. We surrender our desires, our own ambitions to do what he wants us to do. Now, how do we know what he wants us to do? The key verse is in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you". Now, what's so special about this phrase? Well, I'd like you to look at this passage in Ephesians Five, like I said, we are

looking at Ephesians 5:18 as a launchpad. And let's look a little bit beyond verse 18. We see verse 19 to 22 that we have to address one another in psalms, hymns, songs, singing, giving thanks, submitting to one another. Great, but I'd like you to look at then Colossians 3:16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. And you notice, it also speaks about psalms, hymns, thankfulness, submission. What am I trying to aim at? Well, you will see that the results of both passages are pretty much the same, songs, hymns, giving thanks, submission. And the point is this. To be filled with the Spirit is to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. In other words, I believe to be filled with the Spirit necessitates and means that we are obedient to the Spirit's Word. The Bible is given by the inspiration of God, it is God breathed, the Holy Spirit gives us His Word. So to relinquish control, to be filled with the spirit means that we are to be obedient to his Word. A very interesting phrase is seen in Galatians 5:25 that we are to keep in step with the Spirit. keep in step, it's a marching imagery. It's like that of a soldier. Left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right. You follow the rhythm, the timing, the instruction of the Spirit. So I believe To be filled with the spirit means I recognize His indwelling in my life.

b) Relinquish

And number two, I relinquish control of my life to his will as spelled out in the Bible, I will obey His Word. That's what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

c) Rely

And number three, I rely, I wish the word 'rely' is longer so that it looks symmetrical but I think you'll get the three R's: to recognize, to relinquish, and to rely on the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Romans 8:13, "For if by the Spirit you put to death, the deeds of the body, you will live". The only way we can conquer sin in our lives, is when we rely on the Holy Spirit: His power. He lives in us, depend on Him, His power to fight sin, to resist temptation, to be victorious in our sanctification, being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit who changes us. From Glory to Glory. You know, the Lord who is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is who we rely on for life change.

So we have learned a few things about the spirit filled life, we see that number one, this is absolutely important, because God commands it, and we desperately need it. Number two, we learned that this is not simply indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but the control of the Holy Spirit, on a day-to-day basis. And the way we live that spirit filled life is when we recognize he lives in us. We relinquish our desires to his will as spelled out in his word, and we rely on his power to live that victorious life.

Power

Then finally, I want to share with you the power of the Holy Spirit, that difference this spirit filled life makes to you. We see again in Ephesians 5:18, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit". Now I said earlier that there's a kind of comparison here, right? To be filled with the Spirit is like being controlled by alcohol. Don't be controlled by the alcoholic spirit but be controlled by the Holy Spirit. There is a comparison but there is also a contrast. The contrast is when you are

controlled by the alcoholic spirit, you live a life of debauchery, of riotous living, you live a careless, sinful lifestyle. But when you're filled with the Spirit, the opposite is true. You live a controlled, holy and righteous life. That is the point. And that's exactly why Paul could say, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, that's the power of the Holy Spirit. He bears this beautiful fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. And again, but I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. If you're struggling with sin. You want to be a more holy person in Christ. I say you can't do that, apart from the Holy Spirit, you've got to walk by the Spirit. And again, what by the Spirit is also the idea that is given in Romans eight, verse two, "for the law of the Spirit of Life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death". Again, who sets you free from sin, the Holy Spirit. And we have looked at this verse, "we are transformed from one degree of glory to another by the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18). Look at that. The Christ's likeness, you long for is achievable in the power of the Spirit. So do not be drunk with wine that leads you to a life of sin, but be filled with the Spirit, it leads you to a life of Christ likeness. And if you follow through verse 19, onwards, this life in the Spirit fills you with joy, with thanksgiving, you address one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, you will be a thankful person, and you will be able to submit to one another. Now, what does it mean? If you look at Ephesians, five and six, you will see how it refers to the role of a wife submitting to the husband, how a husband would serve his wife, love his wife, give Himself for her, how children will obey their parents and parents would teach their children well, it even governs relationships in a workplace that master the servant. And so the point is this. You want to be a better husband, wife, child, parent. You can't do it unless you live life in the Spirit.

### Conclusion and Prayer

And again, let's end where we started. The only way we can be effective witnesses for Jesus. It's not that we become eloquent or smart, but that we must have the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. So, he empowers you to preach the word, He convicts and convinces sinners. We need to live life in the Spirit. So I hope this four things captured in this short time will be something you are chew upon, that you can live life in the Spirit. Thank you for listening in. I look forward to fielding your questions right after this in our Q&A. But before that, let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you so much for your gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Forgive us for ignoring him. Forgive us for denying him so many times in our lives. We pray that as we know your word, you will give us wisdom daily, to surrender ourselves to your spirit's control. lead us into that spirit-filled life, that we may live lives that truly glorify you. Thank you. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless.