

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

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When all the people had been baptized, Jesus too was baptized. While he was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him, appearing in the form of a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with you!" (Luke 3:21-22)

You, however, are not under the control of human nature but under the control of the Spirit, since God's Spirit lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of the Messiah, he does not belong to him. (Romans 8:9)

Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but keep on being filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
[International Standard Version]

1. Those who do not Have the Spirit of Christ.

Today, I would like to discuss some aspects of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul sent a letter to the people in Ephesus telling them to "keep on being filled with the Spirit." He also, wrote to his fellow believers in Rome, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of the Christ, he does not belong to Christ." Those who do not have the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Christ, which means that they are not saved yet. Even pastors of churches or the Pope, if they do not have the Spirit of Christ, they are still regarded as unsaved. Having the Holy Spirit dwelling within you and becoming the Temple of the Spirit is what it means to be saved. Only those who have been made the temple of the Holy Spirit are able to move forward and prosper in their lives in a true sense.

However, even if you believe in Christ and have made the temple of the Spirit, that is not enough. After the Holy Spirit is given to us, we need to move further and be filled with the Holy Spirit. What is most important in our life of faith is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will experience that their sufferings has ceased, problems in their life do not bother them anymore and all their needs have been provided by God.

2. To Be Filled with the Spirit.

Here, let us look at the case of the Lord Jesus Himself. Through learning His experience, we should contemplate what we need to pass through in order to be used by Jesus in His mission, shouldn't we?

Let me read these verses from the Gospel according to Luke again: 'When all the people had been baptized, Jesus too was baptized. While he was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him, appearing in the form of a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with you!"' The baptism of Jesus marked the starting point of Jesus' ministry in this world. It is written that at this moment of His baptism, the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove. Needless to say, the baptism of Jesus was of a totally different nature from our baptism. Nevertheless, what Jesus experienced here needs to become our experience too. That is to say, we also need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We are also aware that Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb from the Holy Spirit before He was born into this world. It is testified in the Bible:

After he had thought about it, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," he said, "don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:20)

Let me read another verse:

The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Most High will surround you. Therefore, the child will be holy and will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

The Scripture states that Jesus lived a life that was completely holy and innocent, free from all kinds of sins, which proves that Jesus was born by the Holy Spirit:

We need such a high priest—one who is holy, innocent, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. (Hebrew 7:26)

Although Jesus was God Himself, He chose to come down into this world at His own will. He came down to this world with the purpose of saving all humans who have been condemned as sinners, devastated, afflicted and isolated. And it is stated that before Jesus began this ministry in this world, the Holy Spirit descended on the Lord just like a dove. In the later time, Jesus testified about this incident in these words:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me to tell the good news to the poor. He has sent me to announce release to the prisoners and recovery the sight of the blind, to set oppressed people free, and to announce the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

For Jesus, who was the Son of God to be vested with the power from above, was the experience

which characterized His service on earth. The Holy Spirit remained in Jesus and He was constantly filled with the Holy Spirit.

Peter, after being filled with Holy Spirit, explained about Jesus, saying "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." (Acts 10:38) Actually, what Peter and other disciples of Jesus testified about Him in the later time, has already been mentioned by John the Baptist long time ago:

John replied to all of them, "I am baptizing you with water, but the one who is coming is more powerful than me, and I'm not worthy to untie his sandal straps. It is he who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16)

And Jesus promised His disciples that they would have the same experience:

I am sending to you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Before being raised to heaven, He declared to His disciples:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

It is stated in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that what John the Baptist mentioned and Jesus promised came true before long:

When the day of Pentecost was being celebrated, all of them were together in one place.... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:1,4)

I trust that today, the Lord still desires to fill us with the same Spirit. We believers should sincerely wish that our lives are changed, through which Jesus alone is glorified, and many other people are brought to the truth. There is nothing more important for believers than to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was so pure, innocent, and set apart from all sinners. Then, why was it necessary for Jesus to be filled with the Holy Spirit? That reason is far beyond our comprehension. I suppose it is a Divine Mystery of some sort.

On the other hand, it was a different story for His disciples. In that regard, we are in the same position as these disciples, and there is no doubt about it. That is to say, without being filled with the Holy Spirit, there has been no chance at all for the disciples to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus. However, they were actually filled with the Holy Spirit, and

then, their lives were completely changed all at once. In order for us to live a life that pleases the Lord and in order for the Lord to use us in His service, we too need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

3. Spirit Like a Dove.

So, let us start to discuss together the answer to one important question.

When the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, why was it in the form of a dove? In the Scripture, many things are told about doves, from which four major features of doves can be extracted. Firstly, its pureness; secondly its beauty; the third feature is its humbleness, and the fourth is its "willingness to serve."

Let us look briefly at the pureness of doves which can be seen from verse 9 of the Song of Songs, chapter 6, "my dove, my undefiled is but one." This is the bridegroom's judgment on the bride. Doves are pure and free from any kinds of stains.

Secondly, the beauty of doves is admired in many chapters of the Bible, including Psalm 68 Vs 13, "The wings of the dove covered with silver, with its feathers in glittering gold." Just like in this verse, the Bible describes doves as a very beautiful creature in many ways.

Now, the humbleness of doves is mentioned in Matthew 10 Vs 16, which tells us to "be as innocent as doves;" this implies that the Bible recognizes doves as having the innocent characteristic.

Another characteristic of doves is in its willing nature; willingness to do anything. It can be seen from the word of David in Psalm 55 Vs 6, "O, who will give me the wings of a dove...." This shows that when something happens, doves will fly to that place right away.

The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus just like a dove. It was because Jesus was already equipped with all these characteristics that doves possess, which are perfect pureness, beauty, humbleness and its willingness to serve. God backed up this fact by saying, "You are my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with you."

Now, it is a completely different story for us. It is not possible to expect this pureness in ourselves; we are all impure. We only think about our beauty, and because of this, we are all despised in the sight of God. We cannot expect real humbleness from ourselves, we are all proud of ourselves or proud about our achievements, and this makes us arrogant to some extent. We cannot also expect willingness to serve ourselves; we are all self-pursuing and self-centered in nature. We all have the nature to always

acquire everything our own way. We all have been such kind of beings since we were born and we will remain that way until we die, won't we? Unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we would have to remain in this state forever.

The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus just like a dove. It was because Jesus was the only One who was equipped with all the characteristics of a dove, which are perfect pureness, beauty, humbleness and willingness to serve. Actually, in the lives of those who are filled with the Holy Spirit, some if not all of these characteristics, pureness, beauty, humbleness, and willingness to serve will be clearly revealed. People like ourselves who have a deep heart, with the nature of snakes should be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we will be transformed into those who have these features of doves.

4. Those Who Are Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, what does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? As we have just seen, it means to know the pureness of Jesus, to reflect the beauty of Jesus, to share in the humbleness of Jesus as well as to experience Jesus' willingness to serve.

To begin with, those who are filled with the Holy Spirit understand the pureness of Jesus. Only Jesus can sanctify the lives we live. Before the disciples of Jesus were filled with the Holy Spirit, they have been under the control of their flesh, which kept their lives full of ups and downs all the time. They were so proud of themselves, so envious, so factional and divisive, revengeful, and full of critical thoughts. However, once they were filled with the Holy Spirit, there was no room left within them for pride, envy, factional spirit, vengeful passion, or critical thoughts anymore. They experienced being sanctified and purified internally.

And this is exactly what we are in serious need of at this moment, isn't it? In order words, we need sanctification from all kinds of stains. If the Spirit of the Lord God can fill us, not only shall we come to know the purity of Jesus, we will also see the impurity and all stains that lived within us. We are allowed to come to the Lord just the way we are, that is to say, in this impure condition, we can confess all our mistakes and arrogance in front of the Lord. When we do so, the Lord will cleanse us again from the stain of our sins.

Some people seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit expecting it gives them strength in real life, but it is not the strength that we truly need to receive above all other things. It is an internal purification that we need. It is not until we are cleansed that the Lord can begin to use us as His vessel in His service.

Secondly, those who are filled with the Holy Spirit

come to reflect the beauty of Jesus. Some people spend a lot of money trying to look more beautiful with cosmetics and other things. However, true beauty is only revealed when the Holy Spirit fills us. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are so beautiful and attractive, aren't they? A man called Stephen, who is in the Bible was the very first martyr in the early churches. He boldly preached and testified about Jesus. He was truly a vessel held in the hands of Jesus. It resulted to him being persecuted; he was brought to the council and was called to account. Stephen, standing in the council is described in this verse:

Then everyone who was seated in the Council glared at him (Stephen) and saw that his face was like the face of an angel. (Acts 6:15)

The face of an angel is undoubtedly more beautiful than anything. Why did Stephen look so beautiful? It was apparently not the natural beauty he had from birth. It is written that Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit.

But Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55)

Those who look up to the Lord in the way Stephen did shall come to see the glory of the Lord too. When Stephen looked up to Jesus, the beauty of Jesus must have reflected on his face. Looking up to the Lord is of supreme importance for us.

Thirdly, those who are filled with the Holy Spirit come to share in the humility of Jesus. To put it in another way, as stated in the Gospel, according to Matthew, chapter 11 Vs 29, the Lord desires to transform us to be gentle and humble in nature.

Place my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)

One of the biological characteristics of doves is that they do not have a gallbladder. Bile that comes out from the gallbladder is known to be one of the bitterest discharges in animal bodies. Bitterness, contention, and pride are what characterizes the nature of we humans, aren't they? Contrarily, doves are characterized by their meekness, humility and mildness. How human lives are damaged and ruined by the bile of pride?

In what way can we portray the humility of doves? When you realize that you did something wrong, you need to step forward and confess it sincerely. You have to say, "Please forgive me for what I said a while ago. I should not have said such a thing." Or, you may have to say, "I realized that my attitude to

you was judgmental, I talked about you without much consideration. I sincerely apologize for what I did." This is the humility that the Lord is seeking from us.

Comparatively, if someone says to the other, "I demand an apology from you," what is revealed there is arrogant, harshness and aggressive nature of that person. Our Lord Jesus says, "Place my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble, and you will find...." something you can never have otherwise, which is, a "rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

Our Lord Jesus was a Man with a gentle heart, but He has never been weak. One of the greatest concerns of Jesus was how His disciples who had been following Him could become the Apostles in the real sense. Needless to say, Jesus is seeking people who follow His footsteps closely. How will it be possible for us to follow the footsteps of Jesus? When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were completely emancipated from their own arrogance, self-pursuit, and aggressiveness. Sharing life with all those brothers and sisters who are filled with the Holy Spirit brings true joy and blessings. How can the human mind be changed? It can only be changed by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Fourthly, all those who are filled with the Holy Spirit experience the determination of Jesus to serve willingly. To put it in another way, what makes those who are filled with the Holy Spirit special is their desperate willingness to fulfill every will of the Lord. The determination to abandon our personal needs in order to serve the Lord alone, which makes us act instantly on whatever Jesus tells us. Desperate desire to participate in all things the Lord wants to do; these things need to characterize our lives. It will be a great blessing for us if this next Psalm, which is the future confession of the Lord Himself, is also the expression of our own heart desires:

Then I said, "Here I am! I have come! In the scroll of the book, it is written about me. I delight to do your will, my God. Your Law is part of my inner being." (Psalms 40:7-8)

Do we truly desire to do the will of the Lord from the bottom of our heart? And how can it be possible? When the Holy Spirit fills us, we shall also be filled with a desperate desire for nothing but the Lord's will to be done no matter the outcome in our lives. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will cry out to the Lord this way, "Lord, no matter what will happen, may Your will be accomplished in my life."

5. How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Finally, let us talk about this last question. What do we need to do in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Paul came to testify this way:

My message and my preaching were not accompanied by clever and wise words, but by a display of the Spirit's power. (1 Corinthians 2:4)

What is the secret to live a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit?

The first secret is to completely surrender to the will of the Lord. Jesus completely obeyed the will of His Father God. "Yet not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). This desperate cry has been an unchanging prayer of Jesus throughout His life. It was because of this that Jesus has always been used as an obedient vessel in the hand of His Father God. His attitude has always been this way; "Father, I am here for You. Please do whatever You want with me." This prayer of Jesus was an expression of His never-changing desire; "May only Your will be done on this earth, I will do anything You tell me to." When Jesus showed such determination, the Holy Spirit began to dwell in Him as a power given from above.

The second secret is to pray. It is in the verses we read at the beginning of this sermon from the Gospel according to Luke chapter 3 Vs 21- 22, "While He (Jesus) was praying,the Holy Spirit descended on Him." Prayer is a prerequisite for being filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is written in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2 that while some brothers and sisters were gathering to pray on the day of Pentecost, "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." And after this incident, all disciples were again filled with the Holy Spirit as the answer to their prayers:

When they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken, and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak messages from God boldly. (Acts 4:31)

"The Acts of the Apostles" describes the history of the early churches. Saul, to whom the secret of the churches was manifested on to be made a chosen vessel, appears in many chapters of this book, including chapter 9 Vs 11, which describes him as "at this very moment he is praying." And right after this, he too was filled with the Holy Spirit. "He was praying," and as the answer to his prayer, the most unthinkable thing happened in his life.

If we sincerely wish to be filled with the Holy Spirit, our entire life needs to be surrendered to the Lord. It needs to become our heartfelt desire that we do nothing but the will of the Lord. Furthermore, our prayer needs to be something like this; "Lord, I wait for and follow direct orders from you alone."

When Jesus stood in the Jordan River to be

baptized, sincere desire and prayer that filled the heart of the Lord Jesus was this; "Father, I stand here, may only your will be done through me." The Holy Spirit then descended on the Lord Jesus as a power from above, which was necessary for the Lord Jesus in order to fulfill the mission given to Him.

Today, Jesus is telling us, "Just like the Father has dispatched me, I am sending you into this world." Not only the Son Jesus but His Father God who is also hoping to send us and use us in His work. Instead of sending us alone, the Father God made the Holy Spirit descend and dwell within us.

Those who hear these words of the Lord Jesus are blessed; "Through Me the Father, the power of the Holy Spirit has accomplished the work of redemption. And now, we are sending you people into the world. Through you all, anyone can receive the forgiveness of their sins, peace with God as well as eternal life. However, I will never let you walk alone. Hand over the full control of your life to Me, then I will be able to use you in My work. Spirit of the Lord shall fill you, and you shall be used as a vessel for My work."

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Firstly, it is to realize the pureness of Jesus. Secondly, it is to reflect the beauty of Jesus. Thirdly, it is to share in the humility of Jesus. And fourthly, it is to experience the willingness of Jesus in serving others. There is absolutely nothing more important than to be filled with the Holy Spirit and nothing greater than to be a vessel in Jesus' hands.