



**Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? – Part 3**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP – 02/20/2010**

As I have already mentioned to you at the opening of this series, there is no rhyme or reason from one sermon to the next. With most sermon series' I preach, I typically know the next topic or Scripture passage that is coming up a week or more in advance. Last week I didn't know until Friday night and this week I didn't know until Thursday night. The Holy Spirit Himself is choosing the specific topics and giving me the material and the verses to use as I yield myself to Him each week.

One thing I have learned in the weeks leading up to this series as well as in the time I have during this series to continue reading and listening to sermons on the topic is, we need to exercise caution. Some authors and preachers are heavy on teaching the experience side of the equation and very weak on expounding what the Scripture says. In other words, their teaching is primarily based on what they have individually experienced and not primarily on what the Bible says, or sometimes very loosely on what the Bible says.

The problem with this is their experience becomes the basis and the standard for what all other believers should experience; and if you have not experienced the same thing they have experienced you have somehow missed something; you have somehow missed God. And you are then left with confusion or you are left with the sense and feeling that you are somehow an inferior Christian or a second-rate believer. You don't measure up or you haven't attained the spiritual status that this person has; or worse yet, God must not love me as much as He loves so-and-so.

And this leads to one of two things: You either walk away from that church or from church completely because you feel like you don't measure up, or your entire focus is now on accessing or gaining the same experience so-and-so has had; you now have tunnel-vision in seeking that same experience. And once you have that experience you are on to the next. And beloved, an experience based Christian existence will lead you into a roller coaster faith that goes up and down in conjunction with the level of your experiences. You live in victory and happiness when your experiences are where you desire but you live in defeat and depression when your experiences are not up to your expectations, or not on the same level with some author or preacher you admire.

If your Christian life is based on feelings and experiences what happens to you when the feelings and experiences aren't there?

This goes back to what we have already studied; in that we need to be sure we are viewing the Holy Spirit in His proper place. We need to make sure we are viewing Him as God and as a Person, and not just as a great power and experience and influence we can access. Our thinking must not be what we can do with the power of the Spirit or what we can experience with the power of the Spirit, but instead we must be seeking what the power of the Spirit can do with and through us as He sees fit.

And while we should be seeking the gifts of the Holy Spirit in general, we should much more so be seeking the Holy Spirit Himself and leave the distribution of His specific gifts and experiences in His fully capable hands. He knows exactly what you need and He knows exactly what I need in order to accomplish His plans and His purposes in each of our lives and in this church.

So tonight we are going to study the Word of God and find out the primary purposes of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. I don't want to by any means pigeon-hole what the Spirit does in a believer's life, for the Holy Spirit is as vast as He is infinite, but we do have much evidence in the Bible as to what His primary purpose is for filling us and using us. And I believe that as we are open to and follow what God's Word says, He will then know we are ready to be used by Him in a multitude of other ways; which may or may not include specific and individual supernatural experiences.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Acts**.

### **Acts 1:8**

Let's pray.

If we begin where the disciples began we must recognize that the Holy Spirit's power in a believer's life is for the purpose of being a witness. The power of the Holy Spirit flowing through your life gives you the ability to proclaim the message of salvation; the message of Jesus Christ coming to this earth to live a sinless life, die a substitutionary death, and to rise again on the third day so that we may be eternally forgiven and become a child of the Almighty God; heirs of the Father and joint-heirs with the Son.

The implication in this verse is that apart from the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through you, you will not have the ability to proclaim the gospel message. You may be able to speak the words but without Holy Spirit power the message will not have its desired effect.

In the gospel accounts we don't see the Apostles accomplishing much in the way of drawing people to Jesus. We see the occasional account of them casting out demons and healing the sick, but by and large the Apostles were limited in their ability to get others to believe that Jesus was the Son of God.

After the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came mightily into their lives, Peter preached one message in the power of the Spirit and three thousand people believed and were saved and baptized. And that was just the beginning. As they continued to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, it says, "**And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved**" (**Acts 2:47b**).

Notice they didn't have to wait until the Sunday church service, or in our case the Saturday night church service, to be saved; but instead the people were being saved day by day as believers were being filled with the Holy Spirit and then being witnesses for Jesus Christ by proclaiming the message of salvation.

The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 1:16a**, “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...**” So is it any wonder that most Christians do not want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? I mentioned in the first sermon of this series that Christians do not want to be Spirit-filled because they do not want to yield control of their life to Him; preferring instead to do things the way they want to do things. Add to that the fact that the primary purpose of being Spirit-filled is to be a witness and you dwindle the incentive down even further to live a Spirit-filled life.

And let me add a little more to the depth of meaning as to what a witness is. The Greek word in **Acts 1:8** is *martus*, from which we get our English word, martyr. One of the early church theologians, Tertullian, stated, “Their blood became the seed of the church” – speaking of the Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered witnesses of Jesus Christ. Through the centuries many have been drawn to Jesus Christ because of how calmly and joyously Christians meet their death. These witnesses were willing to seal their testimony with their own blood.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Revelation**.

### **Revelation 12:10-11**

The word of our testimony, the word of our witness, is connected to the salvation and the power and the kingdom and the authority that is ours through the Holy Spirit’s activity in our lives. It is how we overcome Satan and his demons and the powers they possess (which we will get into in a moment); but it is also how we reach the point of not loving our life – even to the point of surrendering this life for the cause of Christ.

Which again, goes back to the point of being Spirit-filled; for when you are Spirit-filled your focus is on the things of the Spirit and not the things of your life. How else could anyone face martyrdom if they love this life more than they love Jesus Christ?

If the overwhelming concerns of your life are about your stuff and your comfort and your dreams and your desires and your bank account, and even your family, are you exhibiting the characteristics of living the Spirit-filled life? – Of course not. You obviously cannot totally eliminate your thoughts about these things, nor should you in most cases, but you most definitely will not be Spirit-filled and you most definitely will not be in the same attitude of not loving your life even when faced with death, if your primary and overwhelming concern is focused on the things of this life.

The word of your testimony, the word of your witness, will be weak or almost non-existent. The power of the Holy Spirit will not be evident or operating in your life.

One of the illustrations that has been used through the years, and one in which I discussed with one of our folks after church last week is valid: Picture a drinking glass in your mind. If it is filled half with you and half with the Holy Spirit can you call that Spirit-filled? If it was one-quarter you and three-quarters Holy Spirit, is that Spirit-filled? If it is 10% you and 90% Holy Spirit, is that Spirit-filled?

Beloved, being Spirit-filled is an all-or-nothing proposition. Yes, you have received the Holy Spirit if you are a genuine believer and He is with you always and forever, as we

studied out a few weeks ago, but receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit are two entirely different things. Being Spirit-filled means every thought and decision and action are yielded to and controlled by Him. You must empty your heart and mind of self and be filled with His heart and mind.

It's difficult for me to explain and describe the intensity of thought and the narrowness of focus that I have when preparing for and/or delivering a message. The filling and control of the Holy Spirit in my life during these times is amazingly strong at times and then there are times when I am at a loss and find myself searching for that filling and power and control.

When the Holy Spirit is strong upon me during these times I can't seem to type or speak fast enough; but as long as I am focused on Him and His leading, the words come, the Scriptures I am to use come, and He has His way and receives the glory. But when my focus on the Holy Spirit and His leading and His speaking to me is distracted, it's like the wind in my sails goes to a dead calm and I am stranded in the middle of the ocean.

If this happens during my preparation time I can literally stare at my computer screen for 10-15 minutes before I go to prayer and plead for His filling and for His help once again. If this happens during the delivery of a sermon you will notice me glued to my notes more so than looking up at you while speaking. Sometimes my words will seem disjointed during these times because in the midst of saying the words written on the page I am also praying in my mind for the Holy Spirit to resume control.

Hold your place in **Revelation**, because I want to make another application from this passage, and turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Luke**.

### **Luke 11:9-13**

Now I know you have probably always looked at this passage as being that teaches persistence in your prayers in order to get the answers you desire, but Jesus concludes this teaching by telling us the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him; and this is not a passage about salvation folks, He is talking to His children; the parable is illustrating a son coming to his father to ask for something he needs.

So if the application is to believers, who already have the Holy Spirit residing in them, what else could it possibly mean that the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him then to be the filling of the Holy Spirit? Does that then not make sense that everything you ask for you will receive, and everything you seek you will find, and every door you knock on will be opened? If indeed you are filled with the Holy Spirit will not your every prayer be in accordance to the will of God and thus be guaranteed to be answered as **1 John 5:14-15** says?

Being Spirit-filled is not something most Christians really desire when they understand the implications, but for those who do desire it, Jesus teaches us to simply ask; but it is a passionate and genuine request as if you will not survive apart from it. The illustration the Lord uses is one in which the son is in need of nourishment; this is not an "Oh by the way, I'd like to be filled with Your Spirit" kind of asking.

Okay, let's get back on track as you find your place in the Book of **Revelation** again.

### **Revelation 12:10-11**

Hopefully you see that the first and foremost purpose of being Spirit-filled is to be a witness for Jesus Christ. But there is another purpose for being Spirit-filled that is introduced in this passage as well: Having the ability and the power to overcome Satan and his schemes against you.

The supernatural word of testimony and witness that only comes through the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through you is the same power that defeats Satan and his demons.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Matthew**.

### **Matthew 3:16-4:1**

Jesus Christ Himself, in His humanness, was not prepared and ready to take on the attacks of Satan apart from being filled with the Holy Spirit. That may be a startling statement for some of you but it is true. Up until this filling of the Holy Spirit there are no recorded miracles, no healings, no casting out of demons; literally no anything that would ascribe Jesus as being the Son of God, other than His sinless life. The power manifest in the life of Jesus does not show up on the scene until He is filled with the Holy Spirit.

With this filling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus thwarted every attack and defeated Satan at every turn. So why do we think we can take on Satan and his evil hoard without being Spirit-filled? Why do we think we can handle the things that come into our life by ourselves? Why are we so self-sufficient all the time? Why do we wait until all other avenues have been exhausted before we turn to the Lord and scream, "HELP"?

Are we that arrogant? Are we that ignorant? Are we that rebellious? Are we that filled with pride? The answer must be yes on all accounts if we somehow think we can handle anything on our own, when the King of kings and Lord of lords needed to rely on being Spirit-filled for every step of His life and ministry.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Ephesians**.

### **Ephesians 5:15-21**

There is a ton of application in this short passage but I want to zero in on the fact that we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (**5:18**). Being Spirit-filled is not an option for the genuine child of God; and Paul gives us several evidences of being Spirit-filled. You are going to speak and sing God's Word to each other (**5:19a**), you are going to sing praise and worship to the Lord and have a melody in your heart (**5:19b**), you are going to be thankful for all things (**5:20**), and you are going to be submissive to each other in the fear of Christ (**5:21**).

Paul then goes on to outline Spirit-filled submission in our human relationships. Wives cannot be submissive to your husbands as you are commanded to apart from being Spirit-filled (**5:22-24**). Husbands cannot love their wives as Christ loved the church apart from being Spirit-filled (**5:25-33**). Children cannot be obedient to their parents as they should apart from being Spirit-filled (**6:1-3**). Parents cannot raise their children as

they should apart from being Spirit-filled (**6:4**). None of us can properly and completely be submissive to the authorities in our lives apart from being Spirit-filled (**6:5-8**). None of us who are in positions of authority can properly exert that authority apart from being Spirit-filled (**6:9**).

The next section of Paul's admonition to us is in regards to being Spirit-filled in our spiritual relationships: "**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might**" (**6:10**). You can't be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might by yourself; you have to be Spirit-filled to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The Lord's strength and the Lords' power is manifest in us only through the Holy Spirit, and God gives us the vivid picture of putting on armor to illustrate how vulnerable and exposed we are to the enemy's attacks without the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The only way we can stand firm against the schemes of the devil is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**6:11**). The only way we will be able to resist in the evil day is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**6:13**). The only way we can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**6:16**). The only way we will be able to wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the spoken Word of God, is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**6:17**). The only way we will be able to lift up our prayers and petitions in the Spirit, for all the saints, is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**6:18**).

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Galatians**.

### **Galatians 5:16-26**

Beloved if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit you will constantly be susceptible to the deeds of the flesh. Immorality, and impurity, and sensuality, and idolatry, and sorcery (which is more so drug and alcohol abuse in our culture), and enmities, and strife, and jealousy, and outbursts of anger, and disputes, and dissensions, and factions, and envying, and drunkenness, and carousing, and things like these will bombard you, and chew you up and spit you out, and have dominion over you, if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit (**5:19-21a**). And also you will be boastful, challenging one another and envying one another if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit (**5:26**).

And beloved you will not have the capacity to love as you should love if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You will not have the peace you could have if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You will not have the ability to be as patient as you should be if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You will not be able to be kind and good like you ought to be if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You cannot be faithful as you should if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You will not exhibit gentleness as you should if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit, and you will not have the self-control you desire or you should have if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit (**5:22-23**).

The bottom line is you simply cannot crucify the flesh with all of its passions and desires (**5:24**) and be able to live and walk by the Spirit if you are not filled by the Holy Spirit (**5:25**). You are simply no match for Satan, you are no match for the lowliest demon, and you are no match for the desires and passions of your own humanity apart from being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Being a witness for Jesus Christ and overcoming Satan and his devices are the first two primary reasons for the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life. There are more, and we will continue down this path next time, but for right now where does the account of your life fit into just these first two? Are you a witness, a *martus*, to the point of not loving your life even to the point of death? And are you overcoming Satan, and his demons, and the desires and passions of your flesh?

Jesus says to ask the Father and He will give you the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray.