

Be Filled with the Spirit, Part 3

Scripture: Ephesians 5:19

Code: 1941

INTRODUCTION

In Jesus' final night with His disciples, which is recorded in John 13--16, He promised them many wonderful things. The key to them all was the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17).

God often made promises through Christ that are confirmed by the Holy Spirit. That is the mystery of the triune Godhead. The Shema of the Old Testament declares, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). Scripture affirms there is only one God, yet also declares that He is manifest in three distinct Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is the coming of God the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell believers that makes Christ's promises a reality.

A. The Believer's Inheritance

1. The promise

Jesus promised His children a heavenly inheritance, saying, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). Jesus was leaving His disciples and didn't want to leave them in a fearful state.

He went on to say, "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (v. 17). God's design for the New Testament era is not that the Holy Spirit would just be alongside or with His people, as He was in Old Testament times, but that He would actually be in them forever.

2. The proof

A verification of Jesus' promise is recorded in Ephesians 1:13. Paul declares that in Christ, "in whom ye also trusted, after ye heard of the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Greek word for "sealed" is arrabon, which means "guarantee," "first installment," "down payment," or "engagement ring." The indwelling Holy Spirit is the believer's guarantee of a future heavenly inheritance. Christ was saying in John 14, "I am going to take those who believe in Me to heaven and My first down payment is the Holy Spirit."

B. The Believer's Works

1. The promise

Jesus not only promised the indwelling and guarantee of the Holy Spirit, but also that His children would do even greater works in terms of the extent and breadth than He did on earth. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

2. The proof

Jesus' ministry was confined to a local area. Believers, however, in the power of the Holy Spirit, multiply Jesus' ministry all over the world in His absence. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

C. The Believer's Prayers

1. The promise

Jesus also promised that He would answer the prayers of His own, saying, "Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

2. The proof

The fulfillment of Jesus' promise is the intercession of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. Paul said, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26). The Holy Spirit continually intercedes on our behalf before the throne of God.

D. The Believer's Indwelling

1. The promise

Jesus promised that even though He had finished His earthly ministry, He would come back and indwell the believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He said, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also. At the day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:18-20).

2. The proof

The fulfillment of that promise occurred on the day of Pentecost. Luke records: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). The Spirit of God now dwells in every believer.

E. The Believer's Fruit

1. The promise

Jesus also promised that when He finished His earthly ministry, He would not leave His children without peace. He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Jesus not only promised peace, but also joy: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you" (John 15:11). He also wanted His disciples to experience love. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). In all Jesus promised love, joy, and peace to those who trusted in Him.

2. The proof

We find the fulfillment of that promise in Galatians 5:22: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." The Holy Spirit is the channel through which the promises of Christ are fulfilled. The Lord himself said, "He [the Holy Spirit] shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14). If it were not for the indwelling Spirit in the life of the believer, the promises of Christ could not be fulfilled in his life.

Even though every believer possesses all the promises of Christ, you will never be able to appropriate them unless you are filled by the Holy Spirit. Promises unfulfilled in the life of a believer are the equivalent of promises unmade. You will never realize what it is to have security in life and death, answered prayer, love, joy, and peace unless you are controlled by the Holy Spirit. That is the context of the text we are about to study now.

REVIEW

I. THE CONTRAST (v. 18a)

II. THE COMMAND (v. 18b)

III. THE CONSEQUENCES (vv. 19-21)

A. The Inward Result--Singing (v. 19)

Questions for Singing Saints

Question #1: To whom do we sing?

Question #2: Where do our songs originate?

LESSON

Question #3: To whom do believers sing?

Answer: "To the Lord"

A. The Primary Object of Music

1. 2 Chronicles 5:12-14--"The Levites who were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets; It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever--that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord. So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

When the great Temple had been built, it was a glorious day in Israel. The Levites and other priests combined for a choir accompanied by 120 trumpets! God was so pleased with their worship, His Shekinah glory came down and filled the Temple in such a way that the priests could not minister. All God's people should desire to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and glorify the Lord.

2. Revelation 5:9, 11-13--The apostle John said, "They [saints] sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.... and I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." This is the great choir in the future that will sing to the Lord.

All music is to be offered to God. Johann Sebastian Bach, perhaps the greatest musician of all time, said that the aim of all music is the glory of God. In his own life and work the great composer and organist sought to live out that aim, frequently initialing his works S.D.G.: Sola Deo Gloria--to the glory of God alone.

Whenever believers sing, they must constantly remind themselves that their song should be a gift of praise to the Lord. Every word of every song should be biblical, rightly reflecting God's own thoughts and attitudes. It is tragic that much of the music today classified as Christian is nothing more than theological mishmash. It often reflects more of the world's philosophy than God's written revelation. It ought to be clear that Christian music is offered as praise to God.

B. The Profitable Effects of Music

As you are filled with the Spirit by offering music to God, it also blesses others. If at times I become depressed or sad, I listen to praise music and it rejuvenates my spirit. I begin to lift my heart toward God in praise and thanksgiving for what He has done in my life. A beautiful, soothing piece of music can calm nerves, remove fear and anxiety, reduce bitterness and anger, and help turn our attention from ourselves and our problems to God.

King David was a great musician, skillful singer, and a great writer of hymns. Many of the psalms are attributed to him. Whenever king Saul was troubled, he would call upon David to come and play for him. First Samuel 16:23 says, "When the evil spirit from God was upon Saul ... David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from

him." As David played his harp, Saul experienced three specific benefits: (1) He was refreshed (mental), (2) made well (physical), and (3) the evil spirit departed from him (spiritual).

1. Mentally

King Saul was in a time of tremendous anxiety, yet David's godly music refreshed his troubled mind. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century physicians often prescribed music for mentally disturbed patients. They even recommended certain types of music to treat certain types of disorders. Music does have, as William Congreve said in The Mourning Bride, "charms to soothe a savage breast." Working from a more scientific basis, modern behaviorists have proved those ideas to be sound. Have you ever wondered why you choose one dentist over another? It may not be his drill or smile, but his music. Studies have been done on what kind of music makes a person relaxed in the dentist's chair, what helps production in an office or assembly plant, and what kind of music helps reduce impatience in an elevator. Music has an ability to induce a quietness of mind.

The president of Musak (background music) Corporation has said that unlike drugs, music affects us psychologically and physiologically without invading the blood stream. Research has indicated the inherent quality of music to influence our metabolism, our heart beat and our pulse. Musak Corporation has made a unique specialization in non-entertainment applications of music as it relates to behavioral sciences. The subtle influence of music has been harnessed in programs providing a controlled stimulus for people at work. Music indeed effects our thinking. It is not possible to submit the spiritual effects of music to scientific testing, but it is reasonable to assume that music focusing the heart on God can help heal the spiritual ills of His people.

2. Physically

Seventeenth-century German Jesuit scholar Anastasias Kircher devoted a section of a book of his dealing with all forms of magnetism to the powerful magnetism of music. He discovered that music causes a reverberation of the air around the body and can cause a variation in the flow of bodily fluids whether it be blood, saliva, or lymphatic fluid. Kircher writes that a song entitled Tarantella was actually written to extract the poison from someone bitten by a tarantula spider! The famous dance by the same name accompanies it.

Music is used in many hospitals as an aid to health (note for example Music in Hospitals by Willem VandeWall [N.Y.: Russell Sage Foundation, 1946]). Sometimes on patients with the same basic ailment show that patients in rooms with music recovered faster than patients in rooms without music.

There is a certain kind of musical rhythm known as "stopped anapestic" that is known to reduce physical strength. It is composed of two short beats, a long beat, and then a pause-- opposite the human heartbeat. Music has the potential for making a profound physical effect on the human body.

3. Spiritually

In 1 Samuel 16:23, the evil spirit departed from Saul as a result of David's music. That's not a magic formula for getting rid of evil spirits, but we do learn music can be a source of spiritual restoration to someone who is spiritually depressed. God has given us a wonderful gift in music and when properly used, it can bring refreshment to the mind, healing to the body, and restoration to the spirit.

Question #4: How do believers sing?

Answer: "Speaking ... singing and making melody"

A. The General Statement

The Greek word for "speaking" is laleo, which refers to the movement of the tongue or any sound from the mouth. It is an onomatopoeic word that originated from the chatter or babble of the children such as "la, la, la." It was also used of the chirp of birds or the grunts and other noises of animals. In classical Greek, laleo is used of the noise of the grasshopper or cricket.

1. Revelation 4:1--The apostle John said, "I looked and, behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice that I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up here, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." Laleo is used here to refer to a musical

instrument.

2. Revelation 10:4--John said, "When the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write." Here the same word is used of the voice of thunder.

Speaking as defined in Ephesians 5:19 includes any sound offered to God from a Spirit-filled heart. The music from an organ or choir is no more acceptable to God than the sounds from a guitar or a home-made flute.

B. The Specific Statements

1. Singing songs

The Greek word for "singing" is ado which simply means "to sing with the voice." I have met some groups in Christianity that believe you shouldn't have choirs. But one of the best ways to make music is to sing with your voice. It is an act of worship when someone sings from their heart to the Lord. Choirs are seen throughout the Bible. You may not have a very good singing voice, but that isn't the issue--what matters is the heart. Believers are commanded to sing with their voices to the Lord. I believe the human voice is the most beautiful instrument God ever created. Because of its flexibility, God has created an incredible tool for believers to praise Him. If you are controlled by the Spirit of God, you have the right to sing to your heart's content. Whether you sing at a Bible study, in a church service, with your family, or even in the shower, sing to glorify God!

2. Making melody

"Making melody" is an unfortunate translation of verse 19 because the actual meaning in the Greek text is somewhat different. The Greek word is psallo, which at its root means "to pluck." The English word psalm comes from this Greek word and includes the idea of plucking on a stringed instrument, particularly a harp. Psallo came to represent the making of any instrumental music. Some churches in America have taught that musical instruments are sinful and should not be allowed in the church. But this portion of Scripture counters that notion because God is honored by beautiful music played and sung in His holy name. The Spirit-filled heart can express itself in any sort of vocal or instrumental music. The apostle Paul is saying there are two ways to praise God in song--with the voice and with instruments.

Question #5: In what ways should we sing?

Answer: "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"

A. Psalms

"Psalms" (Gk. psalmos), refers primarily to the Old Testament psalms put to music. It is sometimes used in a broad sense to refer to anthems to God. Luke however used it exclusively to refer to the psalms (cf. Acts 13:33; Luke 24:44). The early church did most of its singing directly from the psalter, using various tunes familiar to the congregation--a pattern followed for hundreds of years by many European and American churches, and still used in some congregations today. The psalms primarily speak of the nature and work of God, especially in the lives of believers. They are designed to magnify and glorify God.

B. Hymns

The Greek word humnos for "hymns," literally means "a song of praise." That concept of hymn is frequently connected with the work of Jesus Christ. Many biblical scholars believe that various New Testament passages such as Colossians 1:12-16 and Philippians 2:6-11 were used as hymns in the early church. They were directed at the redemptive work of Christ. Whereas the psalms were devoted to the character and work of God, the hymns in the New Testament have centered on the work of Christ on the cross.

C. Spiritual songs

"Spiritual songs" were like testimonies in the early church. The adjective "spiritual," implies such songs conveyed the singer's changed life in expressing spiritual truth. So in the church today, classic renditions of Psalm 23 or 84 would be considered psalms, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and "The Old Rugged Cross" as hymns, and "O How He Loves You and Me" and "I'd Rather Have Jesus" as

spiritual songs. Paul is not trying to classify or regulate all music in the church; he is simply giving latitude for all kinds of musical expression to exalt the Lord. Whether songs are great hymns about God or the cross of Christ, or recitations of testimony, all are the expressions of a Spirit-filled heart. The church today faces a crisis in Christian music. Many people are using music in Jesus' name just to make money. They are singing but their hearts aren't right. Some of their songs convey unbiblical thoughts and unsound theology or attempt to drag Jesus down to the level of buddy or pal. Because of improper motives, they are not unlike Simon Magus, who tried to buy the Holy Spirit's power for his own magic act (Acts 8:9-24).

CONCLUSION

Jesus said to His Father, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren [believers], in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12). Do you know who the greatest soloist in the universe is? Jesus! God has chosen to use believers as channels for Christ to do His work. As Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit and as the joy of the Lord wells up within them, then and only then can they offer their songs of praise to God. While doing so is a joy inexpressible, it is also a solemn responsibility. When you quench the Spirit, you also quench the song of Christ to the Father.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What is the key for all of Jesus' promises to believers?
2. What is the promise for the believer's inheritance? How is it fulfilled?
3. What is the promise concerning the believer's works? How is it fulfilled?
4. What promise of Jesus affects the believer's prayer life?
5. In what way is Galatians 5:22 a fulfillment of Jesus' promises in John 13 15?
6. All music is to be offered to _____.
7. What must believers remind themselves of when singing?
8. What are three profitable effects of music? Explain your answer.
9. What is the general statement regarding how believers should sing?
10. The apostle Paul said there are two ways to make sounds that praise and glorify God. What are they (Ephesians 5:19)?
11. Explain the difference between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
12. What specific problem is the church facing today concerning Christian music?
13. What is Jesus communicating to God the Father when Spirit-filled believers sing to God?

Pondering the Principles

1. Jesus promised believers many things: including a future inheritance, fruitful works, answered prayer, and the indwelling Holy Spirit. They are all brought to fruition by the coming of the Holy Spirit into the believer's life. Do you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you live this Spirit-controlled life on a daily basis? Are you aware of the promises made of Christ being confirmed by the Spirit in your daily activities? Memorize 2 Peter 1:3-4 and then begin to search the Scriptures for "His precious and magnificent promises."
2. The Scripture is replete with verses that describe a joyful saint as a singing saint. Are you so controlled by the Holy Spirit that your heart longs to sing to the Lord? Is singing even a part of your life, whether public or private? Take time now to ask the Holy Spirit to guide your life. As a result of His leading, begin to cultivate an attitude of thankfulness for all that God has done in your life and then praise Him with song.

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