THE ORCHARD

Series: Exploring Christianity: The Foundations of Our Faith

Title: How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit

Passage: Ephesians 5:15-21

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Introduction:

- For the past several weeks, we've been exploring the foundations of the Christian faith.
    - And let me give you a taste of what's to come, next week, we'll see what the Bible commands us to do, when we see injustice in our world.
    - And then, the following week, we'll look at how the world is going to end, and what the Bible says about, end times.
    - And then finally, we'll finish this series by looking at the purpose of the church, and how we can love the church, the way Christ loves the church.

- But this morning, as we continue in our series, we'll learn, how we can be filled with the Holy Spirit.
    - And how apart from the Holy Spirit, it's impossible to live the Christian life.

- Now, let me ask you, have you ever felt that the Christian life is hard to live?
    - It may be, you're struggling to break a habit, or moving on from disappointment, or battling depression, or struggling to wait, or needing guidance, and you don't know what to do.
    - Or it may be you already know what you need to do, but you feel powerless to obey God's word.

- Do you ever feel a lack of strength, or motivation to follow God's command?

- The Christian life isn't an easy life.
  - Jesus even says:
  - **"In the world you will have tribulation."** John 16:33

- But the good news is that God never intended for us to live by our own strength.
  - Yes, we'll have tribulation.
  - But, we also have the power of God.
  - And instead of being filled with the Spirit, when you try to live apart from him, that's when you'll feel drained, and discouraged, and overwhelmed.
  - But, when you learn to be filled with the Spirit, you'll experience a spring of living water flowing out of your heart.
  - You'll experience strength, when you feel weak.
  - You'll experience joy, even in trials.
  - You'll experience peace, even when you have to wait.

- And so, we need to learn, how to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
  - We need to learn, how we can walk in the Spirit.

<u>4 Opening Points:</u>

- If you remember from a few weeks ago, we learned how the Holy Spirit, isn't an it, but a he.
  - The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinty.
  - He's not a burst of emotion.
  - Rather, he's God.
  - That means:

- He has a mind.
- He can act.
- He can speak.
- He can work.
- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.

- Furthermore, the Bible is clear, that the Holy Spirit lives in every person who believes the gospel.
    - Listen to Romans 8, verse 9:
    - **"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."**
    - If you believe in Jesus Christ, that means the Holy Spirit lives in you.
    - The presence of God is with every believer.

- The Bible also states that every believer is sealed with the Spirit.
    - Listen to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13:
    - **"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance…"**
    - The presence of the Spirit is a sign that you belong to God.
    - When you see someone wearing a wedding ring, it's a sign the person belongs to someone else.
    - In the same way, when you believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is a seal that shows, you belong to God.
    - Even though we don't see the Spirit like a wedding ring, we can feel him, and we can know, that we're children of God.

  - The Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit, that we're children of God.
  - It confirms, who we are in Christ.

- And the wonderful truth you find in the Bible, is that he'll never leave you, nor forsake you.
  - Once you're sealed with the Spirit.
  - You're sealed forever.
  - That's why it says he's the guarantee of our inheritance.
  - He makes sure you receive eternal life.
  - He makes sure your redemption is secure.
  - He's the guarantee of your salvation.

- Let me summarize, what we've learned so far.
  - We've seen how:
  - The Holy Spirit is God.
  - How, the Holy Spirit dwells with every believer.
  - How, the Holy Spirit is the seal of our redemption.
  - And how, the Holy Spirit, will never leave you.

- This is great news, isn't it?
  - But this also raises a serious question.
  - When we read Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18, Paul writes:
  - **"And do not get drunk on wine…but be filled with the Holy Spirit."**
  - If the Spirit dwells with us, if we're sealed with the Spirit when we believe.
  - What is Paul speaking about, in chapter 5?
  - How can we be filled, if we're already full?
  - If the Spirit never leaves us, why do we need to be filled with the Spirit?

- When you believe, you're sealed with the Spirit.
    - But, in Ephesians chapter 5, the Apostle Paul isn't speaking about the sealing of the Spirit, but the influence of the Spirit.
    - God has given to us, the responsibility, of submitting to the Holy Spirit.
    - That's what it means to be filled.
    - To allow the Spirit to lead your life.
    - And when we do, that's when we can experience joy, and peace, and power, and wisdom.

- This also means, it's also possible for believers to go against the Holy Spirit.
    - In other words, our decisions are able to effect, the filling of the Spirit.
    - We can grieve the Spirit.
    - We can quench the Spirit.
    - We can walk against the Holy Spirit.
    - And when we do, we won't be able to find the strength we need.
    - And so, in chapter 5, to be filled with the Spirit, means that we worship and obey the Spirit, instead of going against the Spirit.

- And in our passage, we're given 4 descriptions of how the Holy Spirit can change our lives.
    - We're shown what it could look like for you, and for me, to live a Spirit filled life.
    - And as we go through these 4 descriptions of the Spirit filled life, I want you to consider, what this might mean for you.
    - Think about how the being filled with the Spirit can change your life.

Point 1:

- First, when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll begin to make wiser decisions.
    - The person who's filled with the Spirit makes better decisions.

- Let me read, verse 18.
    - **"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit…"** Ephesians 5:18
    - Paul contrasts the Holy Spirit with getting drunk.
    - It's possible he lived in a culture where Christian believers were struggling with getting drunk.
    - But another reason for this analogy is because being drunk is the perfect contrast, to the person who's filled with the Spirit.

- When someone is drunk, we say they're under the influence.
    - This means, they're under the control of alcohol.
    - Their judgment is impaired, so they'll make foolish decisions.
    - Their speech is impaired, so they'll say words, they don't mean.
    - Their mind is impaired, so they'll act without thinking.
    - Their emotions are impaired, so they may get angry, or sad, in a way that's uncontrolled.
    - If someone is drunk, for no reason, they may begin to cry.

- But the person under the Spirit, is the exact opposite.

- Instead of being out of control and foolish, it's a person who has self-control and wisdom.

- There are some who think that you need to be DRUNK on the Spirit, and not FILLED with the Spirit.
  - And so, they think a person under the influence of the Spirit, is someone who acts and speaks in uncontrollable ways.
  - But that's the exact opposite of what the Bible says.
  - Listen to what the Bible says in Galatians chapter 5:
  - **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control…"**
  - Alcohol makes you lose control.
  - But the fruit of the Spirit is self-control.
  - And so, Paul doesn't say, be drunk on the Spirit, he says to be filled with the Spirit.

- Not only does the Spirit help you to have self-control.
  - He also empowers your judgment, and mind, and speech, and emotions.
  - Alcohol, impairs.
  - While the Spirit, empowers.

- And so, as you walk in the Spirit, you'll make better decisions.
  - Instead of making decisions out of fear.
  - Instead of people pleasing.
  - Instead of feeding your selfish ambition.
  - Instead of seeking the most comfortable path.
  - You'll learn to make decisions that honor God, and gives him glory.
  - You'll be able to make difficult decisions, even though it may be costly at the time.

- But you'll know, that in the end, your decisions will lead to better outcomes.

- When our family first moved to Vernon Hills, in 2021.
  - I decided to ride my bike up to 176.
  - There's a bike trail, near that road, that takes you to the Des Plaines River Trails.
  - Unfortunately, on my way back, my phone died, and I got lost.
  - I had no idea where to go.
  - I tried going one way, then another way, and for the life of me, I couldn't find 21.
  - If I could find 21, I knew I could get home.
  - But I just kept going in circles.
  - Finally, I had to stop someone on the road, and ask for directions.

- In a similar way, apart from the Spirit, we'll never fully understand the will of God.
  - One decision may feel right.
  - Another decision may seem beneficial at the time.
  - But in the end, it'll make us go in circles.
  - We'll keep making wrong turn, after wrong turn.
  - That's why Proverbs 14:12 says:
  - **"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."**

- But the person who's led by the Spirit, is the person who's being led, in the right direction.
  - Even though the path is difficult.
  - Even though the road is narrow.
  - Even when decisions are costly.

- The person who's led by the Spirit, will end up in a better place.
- That's why Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 and 6 say: **"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."**

- When you're filled with the Spirit, you'll begin to make wiser decisions in your life.

<u>Point 2:</u>

- Second, when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll become a voice of encouragement for others.

- Let me read verse 19.
  - **"Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart…"** Ephesians 5:19
  - To address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, doesn't mean we need to start singing to each other, instead of speaking to each other.
  - It doesn't mean, we sing:
  - "Hello, how are you?"
  - "I'm good, and how are you?"

- Now, of course, one way we can apply this verse is by singing to one another during worship.
  - I'm very encouraged, when I hear all of you sing to the Lord.
  - That's definitely one way to obey this command.

- At the time same, I think we can expand the principle, and say that those who are filled with the Spirit, are those who joyfully encourage other believers, with God's word.
    - Let's consider carefully what this verse is teaching.

- To address others with psalms is a way to encourage others.
    - The psalms are given to lift the heart, to teach God's truth, to mourn with those who mourn, to rejoice in the goodness of God.
    - In other words, the psalms were given to encourage believers.
    - And so, to sing to others is a command to strengthen others, and to encourage others.

- Moreover, to sing to others means you're not tearing others down, or judging others, or speaking down on others, but joyfully encouraging others.
    - You can't sing judgment on others.
    - "What's wrong with you."
    - "You're a failure."
    - "I can't believe you did that."
    - Rather, singing is a way to communicate with joy and love.

- And to sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, means you're encouraging others with truth.
    - Husbands, I suppose you can encourage your wife, by singing Richard Marx, or Boyz 2 Men, or Bryan Adams.
    - But here, the principle we're taught, is that a person filled with the Spirit encourages others, with God's word.

- A person without the Spirit, may bring others down.
    - They might find it hard to encourage others.

- But when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll be able to build others up, and help others grow, and joyfully encourage, with the word of God.

- This past Friday night, I was in a LIFE Group with some of the men in our church.
    - And it was an encouraging time.
    - We encouraged each other to be better husbands.
    - To be better fathers.
    - To seek after Christ.
    - We didn't have an earth shattering theological discussion.
    - We simply shared, how God was working in our lives.
    - And it was a tremendous encouragement to me.
    - I felt the Holy Spirit speaking through these men.

- Haven't you had this experience, when you're speaking to someone, and you felt the Holy Spirit speaking to you.
    - The person might not be singing to you, but their words may have felt like a song of encouragement.

- That's what we can do for others when we're filled with the Spirit.
    - God can speak through us, to give encouragement and strength.

- I truly believe this can be a powerful ministry for our church, and our world today.
    - In our world, people are hurting.

- People feel like they're failing in marriage, failing as parents, not good enough at work, and that they don't measure up in society.
- And what they need is a word of encouragement from the Lord.
- They need faith, hope and love.
- They need to hear, that they have a Savior they can trust.
- That they could have eternal life.
- That they have Savior who loves them unconditionally.

- And so, let's think about the people in our lives, and what it could mean, for us to be filled with the Spirit.
  - A parent filled with the Spirit, would become voice of encouragement for their children.
  - A husband or wife, filled with the Spirit, would become a voice of encouragement for their spouse.
  - A Christian, in the workplace, would become a voice of encouragement for those in their work place.
  - A LIFE group leader or a pastor, filled with the Spirit, would become a voice of encouragement for those under their care, for others in their congregation.

- When you're filled with the Spirit, you'll become a voice of encouragement for others.

Point 3:

- When you're filled with the Spirit, you'll be able to make better decisions.
  - You'll become a voice of encouragement.
  - And third, you'll learn to give thanks to God, in all circumstances.

- Take a look at the last part of verse 19 and verse 20:
    - **"Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ…"** Ephesians 5:19-20

- Not only is the person filled with the Spirit someone who sings to others, it's also a person who sings to God, and gives thanks to him.
    - The Spirit filled person is a person who honors God.
    - They're singing to the Lord.

- And notice how it's someone who serves God with joy.
    - It's not someone who's pretending to have joy.
    - It's a person who's filled with joy.
    - That's why they're singing with all their heart.
    - They make melody to the Lord, with all their heart.

- Furthermore, it's a person who gives thanks in all circumstances.
    - They always give thanks.
    - This doesn't mean, we're supposed to thank God for difficulties in their life.
    - We're not commanded to pray for hardships, or to thank God for bringing sickness and trials.
    - Rather, to give thanks to God for everything means that we praise him when he answers prayer, and we learn to be content, and give thanks, despite the hardships we face.
    - That's what it means to always give thanks to God for everything.

  - In other words, our joy doesn't come from the trial itself.
  - Rather, our joy comes from knowing that even in the trial, God is working in us.

- When the elders or our church, asked me to help start a campus in Vernon Hills, I was really excited, but to be honest, I felt afraid.
  - "What if we couldn't find a building?"
  - "What if no one signed up to come and help start this campus?"
  - And when Covid came, and most of our plans fell through, I felt even more nervous.
  - "What if we couldn't start this campus?"
  - "Everyone will think I'm a failure?"
  - So many questions filled my mind.
  - But then, I came to a point, where God reminded me that the results were up to him.
  - That I needed to trust him, no matter the outcome.
  - And when I came to that point, I was able to give thanks, and be content.
  - I was able to serve God in the Spirit, and not in fear.
  - No matter the results, I gave it all up to God.
  - Now of course, we didn't shut down, and praise God that we're here today!
  - Amen?

- There will be times when God may ask us to wait.
  - There will be times when God says, no, to what we want.
  - And when you're living in the flesh, you may try to force the outcome.
  - You may try to go against God's will.
  - We may keep making wrong turn, after wrong turn.

- But when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll be content and rejoice, with all that God has given to you.
    - Instead of seeing, what you don't have.
    - You'll begin to see, all that you have.
    - Instead of looking at the relationships you don't have, you'll treasure the people you do have.
    - You'll notice small blessings, God gives each day.
    - When facing failure, you'll be content, that at least you were able to try, and learn from the experience.
    - And instead of asking for more, you'll begin to thank him, for what he's already given.

- Pastor Kent Huges illustrates this point so well with a story.
    - He writes:
    - "I once met a pastor in a remote little western town. His church met in rented facilities, and his car had seen better days, as had his house-trailer. But as we walked down Main Street, stepping around the tumbleweeds, he remarked, "I can't believe how good God is to me. I have a wonderful wife, a church to serve, and sunshine 365 days a year!" And then he spent the day helping me set up a week-long outreach. What an argument for the reality of Christ and the life-changing power of the gospel in a world that has forgotten to be thankful." (Hughes, Ephesians, 215)

- When you're filled with the Spirit, you'll learn to give thanks to God, in all circumstances.

<u>Point 4:</u>

- Fourth and finally, when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll be able to cultivate healthy relationships with others.

- Right after writing about the Holy Spirit, Paul speaks about marriage.
    - Then he speaks about parenting.
    - And then he speaks about our relationships in the workplace.
    - Do you see what the Bible is teaching?
    - The way we can build healthy relationships with others, is through the Holy Spirit.
    - If you want to have a better relationship with your spouse.
    - If you need wisdom to parent your children.
    - If you want to be a better co-worker, or a better manager.
    - First, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- And when the Spirit fills our lives, he'll change the way we relate to other people.
    - Instead of putting our needs first, we'll learn to put the needs of others before ours.
    - We'll learn to submit to others, and to die to ourselves.
    - Listen to what Paul says in verse 21:
    - **"Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ…"** Ephesians 5:21

- To submit to others doesn't mean we let people walk over us.
    - It doesn't mean we can't have an opinion.

- But it does mean, that we lay aside our comfort, to provide for the needs of others.
    - It does mean we lay aside our pride, and learn to apologize.

    - It does mean, being gentle and humble, even when you're right.
    - It means we're vulnerable with others, and share our weaknesses.
    - It does means, we ask others for help, instead of trying to do everything ourselves.

- We live in a world, where submission is seen as a sign of weakness.
    - I do think, there's an underlying belief in our world, that you shouldn't apologize, even when you're wrong.
    - That you shouldn't share your weaknesses, and if you do, you should frame it as a strength.
    - "My weakness is that I work too hard."
    - "My weakness is that I care too much about excellence."
    - In our culture, we're told to project our image, to defend ourselves, to keep our guard up.

- But if that's how we operate, it'll be very difficult to have honest and healthy relationships.
    - Being vulnerable, being humble, asking for help, putting the needs of others first, these may be hard to do.
    - But when you're filled with the Spirit.
    - He'll help you to submit to others.
    - And he'll help you, to bring healing to relationships in your life.

- Be filled with the Spirit, and you'll see how he can transform the relationships in your life.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

- And so, the final question that remains, is then, how can we be filled with Spirit?
    - What can we do, to allow the Spirit to have a greater influence in our lives?

- The answer isn't very complicated:
    - Instead of trying to control your life, let the Spirit control your life.
    - Serve the Lord, as the master of your life, and you'll be filled with the Spirit.

- Instead of demanding from God, change your prayers to say, "God I'm content with what I have, and that is enough."
    - "You're all that I need."

- Instead of trying to change other people, pray for them, and do the best you can, to love, and provide, and help, and serve.

- Instead of making decisions that bring immediate comfort, consider the harder path, go down the narrow road, think about what brings glory to God.

- Instead of comparing yourself with others, thank God for all that he's given to you and count your blessings.

- Serve the Lord, as the master of your life, and you'll be filled with the Spirit.