

# Filled!

3 days ago

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Last week, we learned much about the person and the works of the Holy Spirit as revealed through the Bible, which He inspired. This week, we're going to learn how to receive the Holy Spirit and to stay filled with Him.

A phenomenon that becomes difficult for us to wrap our minds around is that although the Holy Spirit is everywhere always, we find that something interesting is true when it comes to mankind. A person can either be void of, or filled with the Holy Spirit. God's desire is that we be filled with the Holy Spirit at all times, that He dwell with us in complete intimacy. He not only desires to know us completely, but also wants us to know Him completely as He reveals His secrets and mysteries to us as well as His will for our lives.

However, there is something that separates us from God and prevents us from being able to dwell together with God in this complete intimacy; sin. Before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, our sins must first be dealt with. This is why Jesus came, not only to pay the price for our sins and reconcile us to God, but also to then send us the Holy Spirit. He comforted His disciples in John 14 and told them that Jesus would not leave them as orphans, but that He would send the Holy Spirit who would teach us all things and who would glorify Him.

The one prerequisite to receiving the Holy Spirit is to accept God's salvation. This is not something that can ever be earned by good works, but is the free gift of God paid for by Jesus that we receive by faith alone.

## **Ephesians 2:8-9**

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

## **Romans 10:9-10**

9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

If this is something that you have not yet done or you once did, but have walked away from God, we're going to take the opportunity right now for all of us to accept God's free gift of salvation so that our sins can be forgiven and we will no longer be separated from Him by our sin.

## **\* Salvation Prayer \***

At the very moment that we accept God's salvation, we also receive the Holy Spirit.

## **Ephesians 1:13-14**

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

However, just like a bank account in the natural, we are able to contain far more than just an initial opening deposit. That \$25 opening deposit won't get us too far, however. Just like opening a bank account makes you a member of that organization and gives you access to their benefits, the Holy Spirit marks us as God's as we are adopted into the family of God and grants us access to the riches of Heaven.

That initial deposit gives us a measure or degree of power and freedom in our lives to live for God, to be His witnesses, and to overcome sin. We can operate on that initial deposit, but there is something far greater that God offers us. God's desire is not that we remain content and satisfied with that initial deposit, but that it gives us a hunger for more of Him and to be FILLED with the Holy Spirit.

In keeping with scripture, we baptize new believers in water as an outward sign of the choice that a person has made to put their old selves to death and to rise up into the new life and be the new creation that God has made them to be. The word baptize in the Greek simply means 'to immerse or submerge'.

However, scripture also teaches us of a second baptism as well. John the baptist reminded everyone of this second baptism that Jesus would perform while he was baptizing people with water and preparing the way for Jesus.

### **Luke 3:15-16**

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

In Acts 2, when the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples received this baptism of the Holy Spirit. When a person is filled with (or baptized) in the Holy Spirit, not only does a person change significantly on the inside, but we also see a change on the outside as the person is enabled to speak in other tongues.

### **Acts 2:1-4**

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Not only did they speak in other tongues, but their lives were clearly changed. Jesus told them in Acts 1:8 that they would receive power when they received the Holy Spirit. This power that they received transformed their lives. Peter, who had not so long ago cowered away and denied even knowing Jesus, now stood up and boldly preached Jesus as the Messiah to those who were making fun of them for speaking in other tongues.

The same occurs with us. We receive POWER when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and our lives and our words should be clearly displaying that power. We know that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever and that He does not change (James 1:7; Hebrews 13:8). It may come as a surprise to many, but being filled with the Holy Spirit is not something that was a brand new occurrence at Pentecost. We find all through scripture, including the Old Testament, where God would fill people with His Holy Spirit. One of the first instances that we find of this is in Exodus 31 where Bezalel was filled with the Holy Spirit and given great knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and all sorts of skills to serve in building the tabernacle. In fact, we even find in Luke 1 that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth and that Elizabeth and Zechariah were also filled with the Holy Spirit all decades before this day of Pentecost.

The difference that we find is that in the Old Testament, God selectively would fill people with His Spirit. Now, the prophetic word from Joel 2 has come to pass where God's salvation and His Holy Spirit are available to all people from all nations. Now, we can not only be saved, but also be baptized by and

filled with God's Holy Spirit!

**Joel 2:28-29**

28 I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams,

your young men will see visions.

29 Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Let's take a look at a few other places in scripture where people accepted salvation, and then were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 19:1-6**

1 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup> and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit after you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

<sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

<sup>4</sup> Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Though, we see that often the Holy Spirit is imparted to others by the laying on of hands, this is not necessary as we find in the next case. As a bit of background for the next testimony, there was confusion caused amongst believers about whether salvation was only for the Jews or if it was also available for the non-Jews, or Gentiles. Peter, even though he preached Joel 2 after being baptized in the Spirit himself, believed that it was only for the Jews. God gave Peter a vision challenging him to eat foods that are considered unclean and unlawful for him to eat and began to transform his understanding of God and to reveal to him that salvation is now available for all people and all nations. Following that vision, Peter was then sent to the Gentiles to share the gospel with them, the non-Jews which the law forbade him to do. God did something awesome while Peter was sharing with these people:

**Acts 10:44-46**

<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. <sup>45</sup> The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. <sup>46</sup> For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

We could go on and on from scripture of instances where people were filled with the Holy Spirit and of the awesome signs, wonders, and miracles that occurred through the Holy Spirit, but this morning, we want to focus on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and being filled ourselves.

Let’s take a look at this example to help us better understand.

\*\*\*\*\* **Plastic, hollow ball and clear bucket of water** \*\*\*\*\*

This ball represents us. This water represents the Holy Spirit.

You can come to church, be surrounded by the Holy Spirit (submerge ball in water) and feel awesome knowing that you are in the presence of God.

However, when you leave, you quickly start to become dry and feel empty inside. Although we felt so empowered during the service, we feel powerless against our struggles and find our lives unchanged. Although we were different in church, we are still the same as before we came once we left.

This symbolizes our lives without being filled with the Holy Spirit. We may be saved, but there is just something missing.

In order to carry God’s presence with us and be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to make a choice. In the same way that we received salvation by simply placing our faith in Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit by faith as well.

We make a choice to open up our lives (cut a hole in the ball) and ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit fills us, our sins are forgiven and forced out as the Holy Spirit cannot dwell together with sin. The bubbles symbolize this as well as speaking in other tongues as He enables us to do.

Now that we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we then carry the Holy Spirit with us wherever we go. We are changed from the inside out and it is evident to others as well. Now that we are carrying the Holy Spirit with us, we can also impart it to others and bring God’s kingdom and truth into other’s lives as well.

\*\*\*\*\* **Plastic, hollow ball and clear bucket of water** \*\*\*\*\*

We receive the Holy Spirit by simply asking for it in faith that we will receive it. We must fully expect to receive it without any doubts in our mind. James 1 says that if we doubt God, then we should not expect to receive anything from Him. Right now, we’re going to cast all doubt from our minds about receiving the Holy Spirit by standing on God’s truth spoken by Jesus Himself:

**Luke 11:9-13**

9 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

11 “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Now, to cover a few misconceptions about speaking in tongues when you receive the Holy Spirit to remove any hindrances this morning.

1 Corinthians 14 informs us that when we speak in tongues, we build ourselves up spiritually, but our minds do not understand what we are saying. It also informs us that in a corporate church setting when someone is speaking tongues to all who are gathered there, that there should be an interpretation so that everyone can understand what was spoken and be built up by it. If we are not addressing a group of people, however, there is no need for an interpretation. Good examples of this is what we just read earlier. When people were initially filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues, no interpretation was required. When God enables you to speak in tongues this morning, just let it come forth and let God handle it from there. If He desires to give us an interpretation, He will. If not, just speak it out and allow yourself to be built up spiritually.

Also, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues, God does not force our mouths to move and take full control of our bodies, He simply gives us the sounds to make as we open our mouths and begin to let the words come forth. Just as the bubbles rose up from the inside of the ball

earlier, God will give us an utterance that will rise up from within our spirits. However, it is up to us to let it come out of our mouths and to make the sounds that He gives. Just as with every other area of our lives, speaking in tongues is a cooperative matter between us and God. He will not force us to do anything, but will enable and equip us to do everything that He desires us to do. It's just up to us to do it.

Right now, we're going to step out in faith. God's desire isn't that we just know about being filled with the Holy Spirit, God's desire is that we get filled with the Holy Spirit! If you have not been filled with the Holy Spirit, or feel that you need filled up again, raise your hand. Don't be shy or afraid, show God that you are hungry for Him! Show Him that you are eagerly expecting Him to fill you up with His Holy Spirit, the very presence of God filling your life! We're going to pray together now and ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit.