

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 18

Introduction: Two weeks ago, we looked at a message on redeeming the time.

Notice Ephesians 5:15-16

Paul was telling his readers to seize the opportunities that come before you to glorify God. Then last week we connected to that message another message from the following verses.

Notice Ephesians 5:17

We are to understand what the will of God is and then walk in His will. When we connect the two messages together as we did last week then we can understand that we are to seize the opportunities that are before us BUT only if they are the will of God for our lives.

Many have stepped out and seized the moment only to find later that what they laid hold of was not of God.

Genesis 16:1-3

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

³ And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

Let me give you another example.

Joshua 9:3-6, 8-9, 12-15

³ And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

⁴ They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

⁵ *And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.*

⁶ *And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.*

⁸ *And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?*

⁹ *And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,*

¹² *This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:*

¹³ *And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.*

¹⁴ *And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.*

¹⁵ *And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.*

This was NOT the will of God. Four hundred years later 7 innocent men would die because of the league that was made on this day.

How can we know the will of God?

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

I expressed last week the need to be cautious of feelings.

Now let us get to where we are in our study today. As Paul continues on, he will explain the will of God for each of our lives.

➤ **Be Filled with the Spirit**

Notice Ephesians 5:18

Paul uses something here to help his readers to understand. They knew what it meant to be drunk with wine. That means that the person who is drunk has flooded their blood stream with alcohol and the alcohol then controls the individual. Just as the drunkard is filled and controlled by alcohol we are to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. As believers we have two options as to who controls us. It is either the sin nature/flesh or the Divine nature/the Holy Spirit. There is within each believer a battle for the throne in our heart.

Genesis 25:20-23

²⁰ And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.

²¹ And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

²² And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

²³ And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

This is a picture of the two natures in the believer. Now it is important to notice that God says the older shall serve the younger. This is what it means to be controlled by the Spirit. The Divine nature is the younger and the sin nature is the older. It is our responsibility to be sure we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. He is to be the Captain of our lives. But it is a battle.

Romans 7:15, 16-21

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

This is the battle. But we who are believers NOW how the ability to be controlled by the Spirit and no longer by the flesh.

Let me raise a question, "What is life like when we are filled with the Spirit?"

Let me first of all say two things about being filled with the Spirit.

1. It is not an emotional experience.
2. It is not just for certain believers.

To be filled with the Spirit is a lifestyle that is commanded for every believer. It is a lifestyle of denying the desires of the sin nature/old nature and submitting to the desires of the Holy Spirit. It is living a life in which the Holy Spirit is permitted to live the life of Jesus Christ in us so that others can see Jesus in us.

Before we were saved, we could not by any means overcome the sin nature. But when we were saved the sin nature was stripped of his power to control us. Now we have a choice. We can be controlled by the Spirit, or we can be controlled by the flesh or sin nature.

Romans 6:6, 11-13, 20, 22

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

¹¹ Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

¹³ Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

²⁰ For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

²² But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be yielded to Him.

Listen to the words of Woodrow Kroll:

"When we fail to yield ourselves completely to Him, we quench the Holy Spirit... Now, do you know what it means to quench the Spirit of God? It doesn't mean that we extinguish Him as you would quench or extinguish a fire. It means that we stifle Him. We stifle His influence in our lives. And it's very possible for us to be cleansed of every sin except unyieldedness. And if this is so, we cannot be filled with the Spirit of God. So, make sure that you unreservedly yield yourself to God for whatever He wants from you. Just be transparent and open before Him."

As we move on Paul is going to describe what being filled with the Spirit looks like practically.

A. A Joyful Heart

Notice Ephesians 5:19

The person who is filled with the Spirit will have a desire to talk with others about what they learn from the Word of God. Then there is the singing and making melody in the heart. I want to take all of this and help you to see the overall picture here. The person who is filled with the Spirit will have a heart full of joy. This will be a joy that will come from deep within the heart and will not be able to be contained.

John 15:5-11

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

⁶ *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

⁷ *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

⁸ *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

⁹ *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

¹⁰ *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

¹¹ *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

The believer who is filled with the Spirit does not get their joy from the circumstances of life for they always change. But their joy comes from the Lord and from walking in fellowship with Him and bearing fruit for Him.

B. A Thankful Heart

Notice Ephesians 5:20

The believer who is filled with the Spirit will be a person who is very thankful for the blessings which they have. They will not be constantly complaining and grumbling. They know how to count their blessings and they will go about their day praising God for His goodness and His grace.

Psalm 34:1-3

I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

² *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*

³ *O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

Psalm 100:1-5

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

² *Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

³ *Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

⁴ *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

⁵ *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

C. A Submissive Spirit

Notice Ephesians 5:21

To help us to understand what Paul is saying here let us consider something he had recorded in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

²⁵ *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

²⁶ *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

² *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

³ *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

To have healthy relationships there must be submission. Listen to the words of John Phillips:

"The key to each relationship is submission, the kind of submission the Son yielded to the Father when He lived on earth as a man. That kind of submission, so often contrary to human nature, is an evidence of the filling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will drill us in submission by the pressure of human relationships. It may take time, but eventually we learn that the path of submission is best; we learn to fall in line with the will of the Holy Spirit."

Conclusion:

We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. This is essential if God is to be glorified in our lives. Therefore, we **MUST** allow the Holy Spirit to sit upon the throne in our hearts.