

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

by H. C. G. Moule

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. 5:18–20 NLT

The filling of the Holy Spirit is a state of being totally overwhelmed in the presence of Jesus Christ both within and without. To be “filled” for the believer means that he or she is under the controlling influence of the Spirit: the believer is motivated, encouraged, and directed by God.

“Being filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18) refers to God’s presence fully saturating the believer’s heart, soul, mind, and spirit. A “filled” Christian walks in union and communion with God. An individual who is filled with the Spirit is dominated in their person by the Spirit’s presence being a description how they live and love (Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3-5, 7:55, 11:24). The filling of the Spirit is to be a life lived in God’s presence.

The infilling of the Holy Spirit is not confined to a one time experience at conversion or just a singular dramatic encounter occurring later in the Christian life. The infilling of the Spirit is a crisis, a one-time encounter, and a process, an on-going experience: sometimes described as one baptism and many fillings.

The filling of the Spirit should be a moment by moment experience of the constant, conscious presence of Christ. “Being constantly filled,” with the Holy Spirit is freedom to enjoy Christ and his presence on a daily, if not, hourly, and even possibly, minute-by-minute basis. The filling of the Spirit is described by the Apostle Paul as a daily “walking in the Spirit” or a “keeping in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). The Lord desires something better for us; a continual abiding in the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) as we perform the daily tasks of life.

The promise of the Spirit is not for great or exceptional Christians, but for any Christian who yields himself to God. Paul addressed everyday Christian believers at Ephesus:

husband, wife, parent, child, master, slave. He encouraged all to live lives full of the divine Holy Spirit, full from within.

What this command to be filled with the Spirit meant in Ephesus, it means in England, it means to the one who is writing these words in his study at Cambridge, and to his brother in Christ who reads them, wherever and whenever God has bid him dwell.

H. C. G. Moule quoted in *His Victorious Indwelling*, ed., Nick Harrison (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 158.