

“Be Filled with the Spirit” //

John 14:12, 18; 15:5; 16:7 //

START # 6

Hello...

This is our last week of our START series... 6 weeks in which we have looked at the most essential things you need to master in order to thrive in the Christian life.

- It’s been awesome to hear the stories about how God has worked in your lives the last several weeks... I know of many of you who have told me you have **gotten the question answered** about knowing for sure you are saved;
- **Several hundred** of you who have made the decision to get baptized...
- Some of have started, for the first time in their lives, a regular time with God every day, **reading the Bible, praying...**
- Some of you have gotten over your **irrational fear of commitment** and actually joined the church
- And many of you have already started taking some other person through these 6 things as a way of discipling them...

This has been our biggest hope—not **one 6-week series** that we go through and are done with, but **providing you with a tool** you can use from this point forward to disciple others. You meet somebody that needs to go through the basics of Christian discipleship, and you take them through this.

Our last message in this series is on a very important topic... One that that is **absolutely essential** to thriving Christian life, but one very few Christians know anything about... **Being filled with the Spirit of God.**

- Bill Bright, who started Campus Crusade for Christ, said that if he

had the choice between sharing the gospel with a massive group of people who weren’t Christians or teaching the concept of the Spirit-filled life to a small group of people who were Christians he’d teach the small group of Christians, because the impact of that group of Christians filled with the Spirit would be far greater than his sharing with one large group.

(Even though this is our **last week** in our START series, we’re actually going to spend **two weeks** on this subject.)

Because... full disclosure... **I have a book coming out Nov 4** on this topic, called *Jesus, Continued... Why the Spirit Inside You is Better than Jesus Beside You*. **Zondervan**, the publisher, sent us a bunch of advance copies, which we have available for you today, if you are interested...

- As with everything I’ve written, the **book arises out of things** that God has taught me through my ministry here at this church.
- But I want you to know that **my commitment to you** is that I will never make a dime off of anything I ever sell to you here at the church. **Every penny from the sell of books** here goes back to the church and not to me.
- You guys **take GREAT care** of my family and me and when I write a book I am not trying to make money off of you.
- Plus, the Bible says that **every time you use a sermon** to self-promote in a sermon an angel loses his wings and a puppy dies in heaven and you lose 10,000 square feet in your mansion up there.

The **book title comes from Acts 1:1** (*Jesus, Continued...*). The Christian life is not about what you *for* God, but about what he does *through* you, by the Holy Spirit.

LISTEN: I believe it is time Christians like us had another serious discussion about the Holy Spirit. Most Christians fall into one of two extremes in discussions on the Holy Spirit:

Some seem **OBSESSED** with him... they relate to him in strange, mystical ways... their **experiences with him always seem to coincide with some emotionally ecstatic moment** that somehow coincides with the crash of the electric guitars, or the end of their pastor's sermon when he starts breathing real heavy and going on an alliterated roll and they stand up and yell and that's the Spirit.

- *I mean no disrespect to them... **some of them** are the godliest people I've met... but there are some things I just have a hard time getting my mind around. WORSHIP LEADER AT A COLLEGE CONF. Good guy—genuine. **Gold filling—ever thought about getting braces? Collapses** on stage: “Bro, that’s a really bad vantage point to listen to this sermon from.”*
- ***If you've ever been to a church** like that, it can be a really different experience. People bring **flags and tambourines and kites**... you notice people **stretching** before the service (because they don't want to pull a hammy during worship).*
 - *One of our **pastor's wives told me** a story... for the sake of her privacy I won't use her initials... that right after she'd become a Christian after college she went into one of these churches and the lady next to her just collapsed and started to flop around... She was a brand new Christian, no church background... she starts to freak out and scream. “Help! Someone call 9-1-1!” She actually got the service stopped. Someone said, “No, it's ok. She does that every week.”*

Other Christians seem to react to that by ignoring the Holy Spirit altogether.

- They believe in him, but they relate to him kind of like I relate to my pituitary gland...
- I was like that for many years. **My** Trinity was basically **Father, Son, and Holy Bible.**

But think about it... **Something was so important** about the Holy Spirit that Jesus told his disciples that it was **to their advantage** that he go away if it meant they would receive the Holy Spirit. To me, it's

probably the most **astounding promises Jesus ever made**, and the promise I wrote the entire book off of:

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7 ESV)

- I've told you: Think about the **absurdity** of that statement on the surface: **How awesome** would it have been to have had Jesus beside you for 3 years? As your **counselor**, your **helper**? And now he's telling you it's too your advantage he go away?
 - Imagine if I **stood up here and announced my resignation** from the church... hopefully a **few of you would be sad**... but then I said, “But **good news**: we've already gotten some resumes for a new pastor, and guess what? One of them is from Jesus. He's going to be your new pastor.”
- ***I know that's kind of far-fetched**, but wouldn't you be excited about that?*
- ***Are you as excited that you have the Holy Spirit as you would be about that?***
- ***If not, doesn't that show you how far removed we are from grasping the reality of what Jesus offered to us?***

Or consider this: There was something so important about the HS Jesus told his disciples to not to so much as lift a finger toward the Great Commission until they had received him... Luke 24:49: “*Wait in Jerusalem until you receive the Holy Spirit.*”

- **Think about it: Millions of people dying and going to hell around the globe**, and you are the only ones who know about it, but I want you to sit in a room and do nothing until you receive the Holy Spirit...
- *What was so important about the Holy Spirit that even the Great Commission could wait?*

The New Testament gives the **repeated command, “Be filled with the Spirit”**—in Eph 5:18 and other places. But the best place to learn

what that means is in the promises Jesus gave his disciples about the Holy Spirit in John 14–16.

John 14–16 record Jesus' final words to his disciples before he died... which means he is surely telling them the **most important things** they need to remember and hold on to after he's gone. It's his "**final words.**" And so it **very significant** that in these **three short chapters** he brings up the Holy Spirit **more than 20** times.

1. The Holy Spirit makes the presence of God real to us (John 14:18)

In **John 14:18** Jesus said: "***I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***"

Throughout the Bible, we see that God has always wanted to be present with his people.

- In the **Garden of Eden**: he came down every evening and walked with them.
- **In the Exodus**, he came down to them to lead them with a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night... he **didn't have to do that**. He wanted his presence to be with them.
- **Eventually he had them construct** a temple, and the people said, "*Our God dwells in the midst of us.*"
- The Israelites even had a **name for God**: *Jehovah Shammah*, which means, "The God who is here."¹
- When the Messiah was born, the angel said to call his name "**Immanuel**," which meant, "God *with us*."
- And now, Jesus said, **by the Holy Spirit**, he will be closer than ever: **God in us**.

John 14:18, "***I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***" By the Holy Spirit, God himself would be present with us, as real and present with us as Jesus was with his disciples.

Stop and think about that for a moment: *His presence with us would be as real and present as Jesus was with his disciples.* **Question:** *Is your experience with Christianity an experience with the presence of a real PERSON, communing with you—moving in you, speaking to you?*

Because living in the presence of a personal God is absolutely essential to a thriving Christian life. Victorious Christianity is not found in knowing a bunch of stuff, or manufacturing all the right feelings... it's found by abiding in the presence of a Person.

- Dustin's story
- Navy Seal father: They hadn't lost all sexual desire. **What's changed?** The **largeness of the presence of the father** made all the difference.

What the Spirit of God does is magnifies the love of God and makes it personal to us...

- **D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** said that the best picture of what it means to be filled by the Spirit of God is given to us by Moses in Exodus 34 when Moses asks God to show him his glory. God puts Moses in the cleft of the rock and passes in front of him. As he does, he declares his name to him, his covenant love. The Spirit of God, Lloyd-Jones said, does that to us. He puts us into Christ and magnifies the name of God to us; makes our sonship come alive.
- **DMLJ**: uses an illustration I repeat a lot... **father with son**

Think about this: *How would your relationship with God change if you saw his presence with you as a real person?*

- If you **understood that feeling of conviction** when you are about to sin was actually **his voice**? If you saw that **sin was not so much** breaking a law but **grieving a person**? (**Gal 5**: Spirit strives in us against sin. *IOW*, that's his voice!)

¹ Ezekiel 48:35. Through the **prophet Jeremiah** God said: "*Am I not a God who is near to you and not a God far away?*" Jer. 23:23

- How would your Christianity change if you understood that when you walk through the valley of darkness **he was the one bringing the promises** of Scripture to mind to comfort to your heart?
 - That these **weren't merely truths** you were remembering, but a Person who was speaking to you?

*Listen: "Those who have received the Holy Spirit are aware of a power dealing with them and working in them. A disturbance, something—SOMEONE—interfering in our lives. We are going along, and suddenly we are arrested and pulled up, and we find ourselves different... I cannot put it better; that is the essence of the Holy Spirit dealing with us."*² DMLJ

One of the most surprising things as I've studied the Holy Spirit... how often fullness of the Spirit and depth in the gospel are equated...

- **Eph 3:18–19:** Knowing the height, width, depth and breadth of God's love leads to being filled with "all the fullness of God."

I think there's something in that for both "types" of Christians to learn:

- Most **Reformed/Baptist people think of going deep in the gospel** as developing feelings of gratitude and holiness... which it is... But **those feelings represent the presence** of a Person.
- And to those of you lean a little bit more toward the charismatic, sensational side: You need to see that **the main thing** the Holy Spirit does is make the love of God known to us, and affirm us as the sons of God.
 - *That's the main thing the Spirit does, Paul says. Romans 5:5, he sheds abroad (Gr. 'floods') our hearts with the love of God. He give us assurance of our sonship, crying up from our hearts, "Abba, father!" (Rom 8:15).*

² Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Life in Christ: Studies in 1 John* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002), 386.

Both sides get something wrong here... the more **Baptist/Reformed side** is all into the gospel and doctrine, but have little to know awareness of the presence of the Spirit; the **more charismatic** side is all into the Holy Spirit, but seem to forget that he is tied to the gospel.

Both sides need to learn that there is a **profound and inseparable unity** between the two. By going deep into the gospel you become alive in the Spirit.

Gal 3: how do you grow in the Spirit?

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "I spend half my time telling Christians to study doctrine; and the other half telling them doctrine is not enough!"

The Spirit of God makes the presence of God come alive to us.

And let me deal with one objection, real quick, before I go on to our 2nd point: A lot of people assume that you can't have that kind of assurance that you are God's child, or that he would not want you to know... almost that it would be arrogant to presume that you could know it, or they assume that God wants you to be unsure because that's how he gets you to behave.

- He **dangles heaven and hell like a carrot...**
- **But do you see the kind of relationship Jesus is pointing to in John 14:18?** I don't want you feel like an orphan...
 - I've told you before that no father and he loves us and no father ever wants his children... When I go away on a trip... That might scare them into behaving, but they'll never love me.
 - **True love for God can only grow only in the soil** of security. Love for God in us grows only in the soil of the assurance of the love of God in us.
 - The Spirit **creates that intimacy:** He **sheds abroad** God's love in our hearts and **cries up from within us** "Abba Father," bearing witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God.

2. The Holy Spirit makes the power of God come alive in us (John 15:5)

A few verses after his promise in John 14:18, Jesus goes on to say, [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

- The analogy he uses describes **organic growth**. Organic growth is different than mechanical growth.
 - **Mechanical growth: building.** You don't plant a **brick** and come back later and find a building.
 - Organic growth is different... you plant a seed...
- The **kind of change God works in us**, by the Spirit, is organic growth. **God plants the seed of the gospel and it grows by the water and light of the Spirit until it produces all kinds of luscious spiritual fruit.**
- **Most Christians don't get that.** So they try to build their Christian lives mechanically: ADD all these things.
 - That's a terrible substitute. Say I have a **dead rose bush**...
 - Analogy I've used: **Rose bush**
- Religious rituals are often mechanical substitutes for genuine organic growth:
 - Or, to use the words of, get ready for this, Bono: "Religion is what happens when the Spirit has left the building." – Bono. (That's not on U2's latest CD, but he really said it.)

Do you want to know how to live the victorious Christian life? It's learning the secret of Christ in you.

I love how Paul said it in **Col 1:27** (Eph 3), "Christ *in us*, the hope of glory."

- *In us*. Most Christians see the Christian life is something they are doing *for* God. But eventually then they get tired and they give up. It's not Christ in me; it's just me.
- Others feel like it is, "Christ *and me*."

- Analogy: **Like wrestling**. You in ring with the flesh and the devil. Jesus comes off the top rope with the Romans Road...
- That's not Christ *in* me; that's Christ *and me*.
- What Paul pointed to is Christ *in* me.

Jesus' **one word prescription** in John 15: ABIDE. Abide in me, in my love, like a branch in a tree, and let my life flood through you.

In Romans 8, Paul's great chapter on how to live the victorious life, **he refers to the Spirit 22 times**. (To put that in perspective, he mentions the Holy Spirit only 10 other times throughout in the entire other 15 chapters of *Romans*!) The implication is clear: If you want victory over our sinful flesh, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit!

- **Chocolate milk.**

What do you do? Abide. Yield. What does the mean?

- **Believe the gospel.**
 - **Saturate yourself** in the news of how high, wide, deep and long. *The Spirit of God surges in you as you are saturated with the love of God for you.*
 - ~~Gal 3: Paul says you grow more full of the Spirit in the same way you received him: by faith in the gospel.~~
- **Confess your need of him.** The main enemy of the Spirit's power in our life is your confidence in your own flesh.
 - My pastor growing up used to say: **God will only fill empty hands.**
- Then, **yield (surrender) to his power.**
 - Are you **right now fully surrendered** to the Holy Spirit?
 - **If Christianity is not a theory to master, but a Person to walk with**, then there are **really only two categories**: fully surrendered and *in rebellion*. **WHICH ARE YOU?**
 - You **can know a lot**—be in seminary—and have perfected a lot of Christian discipline, and not be fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit makes the mission of God personal to us (John 14:12)

One more promise. In John 14:12, Jesus would say this, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12)

- Another staggering promise. Greater works than Jesus? Anyone here ever heal the sick, raise the dead? Preach with greater clarity?

How? Quick theology lesson. **Our works are greater in two ways:**

- **They are greater in the sense that every one of Jesus’ earthly miracles merely pointed to his ability to save us from sin.**
- **But the 2nd way they are greater: They are greater in their range.**
 - **When Jesus was on earth**, the Holy Spirit focused his ministry on one individual.
 - Now, he is on **every believer**. And the **collective impact**, he said, of ordinary Christians filled with the Spirit would be greater than if even if he himself stayed.

Christian service—your ministry—is about **figuring out what Jesus wants to do through you**.

You see, **not everything that comes from heaven** has your name on it. The whole mission is too much for any of you. **Your responsibility** is to figure out what the Holy Spirit has put your name on, and let him do it through you.

- Baptists vs. Pentecostals

Service for Jesus is not about doing a bunch of stuff for God, but yielding yourself to Jesus to let him continue his work through you!

Service for Jesus is not supposed to be about good ideas, but God-ideas.... Ideas God puts in you, by his Spirit, that he **wants to do through you**.

- You say, “Well, how do I know when I have a **God-idea**?” “How do I know when the Holy Spirit is **speaking to me**? How can I **distinguish his voice** from... indigestion?”

Great questions. That’s next week. And if you **can’t wait**, buy the book and it will tell you.

Conclusion/Application

Every week in this series... I’ve had something for you to do. **What is this week?** Very simply, be filled with the Spirit!

- **When you meet with God every day, realize you are dealing with a PERSON.**
 - A friend of mine says that when he finds a promise or command of God in Scripture, he tries to picture Jesus sitting across the table from him speaking it directly to him...
- **In your time of adoration**, be open to his presence speaking the promises...
- **In your time of confession...** his voice.
- **In your time of supplication...** what is he commanding you to do?
- Practice **listening prayer**.
 - 1 Samuel 3: “Speak, Lord, your servant hears!”
 - Maybe, like Samuel, you haven’t even known it is him!
- **Posture yourself to listen to him!** Let prayer be a two-way dialogue with a Person, not a one-way presentation of a catalogue of needs to a distant, non-speaking deity.

Jesus has left us on earth, and we all want him to come back. But he left us something he said was to our advantage, the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- *It’s time we quit complaining that Jesus has left us alone and start looking to, and rejoicing in, and walking with the Spirit he’s put to live within us.*

Bullpen:

Whenever I start to talk this way, somebody says, “Well, you know, we can’t use Acts as a pattern for our time... things are so much different now.” And yes, there are some unique things happening with the Apostles. I get that. But you can’t convince me that the only book God gave us with examples of how the church operates is filled with experiences of people that have nothing in common with our own.

- ~~—Did you know that of the 59x that the HS shows up in Acts, in 36 of those he is speaking?~~
- —Are you hearing from the Holy Spirit about what you are to be doing in ministry?
- ~~—John Newton said, “Is it really true that that which the early church so depended on—the leadership of the Spirit—has become irrelevant to us today?”~~

• Something **really interesting I learned** in the course of writing the book... Pentecostals are better mobilizers, per capita, for getting people to the field.

- Odd to me: Most of the great mission speakers are usually Baptist and Reformed speakers... But what they do is paint for you the enormity of the task, GET RADICAL; FULL OF CRAZY LOVE... which needs to be heard... but that can start to **feel overwhelming**. *How Radical is Radical enough?* That can lead to burnout.
- **Pentecostals, by contrast**, tend to focus on the fact that the Spirit of God has put something into you; something he’s calling you specifically to do... which is empowering. I may not be able to do it all, but I can follow Jesus as he does this through me.
- **You might say, “Whereas Baptists tend to be ‘guilt-driven’”** (*there’s so much to do. You’re not doing enough*), **“Pentecostals are ‘gift driven.’”** (*This is what Spirit of God has given you to do—to do through you.*)

- **Nik Ripken: miracles:** only use the word “miraculous” to refer to someone’s conversion and never to the amazing acts of deliverance.³ All other “miracles,” they say, merely assist in the greatest miracle of all: conversion from death to life.

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- *“With a perversity as pathetic as it is impoverishing, we have become preoccupied today with the extraordinary, sporadic, non-universal ministries of the Spirit to the neglect of the ordinary ones... the ordinary work of spreading abroad in our hearts the knowledge of the love of God.”* **Knowing God, J.I. Packer**⁴
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- **Christianity becomes explosive when it becomes a relationship with a Person.** A Person you encounter, interact with, stand in the presence of, are possessed by; a Person that you can grieve; a Person who loves you; is so in touch with you that he knows at any points the numbers of hairs on your head; who grieves when you grieve; a Person to whom you surrender to, whom you follow.
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- **Here’s a challenge:** 1 Samuel 3: “Speak, Lord, your servant hears!”
 - Maybe, like Samuel, you haven’t even known it is him. Your conscience. My annoying voice. It’s him!
 - Be ready to encounter him; to respond, and yield yourself to be used by him!
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 - The Spirit of God comes upon each of you, in a special way, to use you in the mission.
 - Hard to grasp: He opened blind eyes to show he gives light and life to the spiritually blind; he multiplied loaves and fishes to show he was the bread of life to feed hungry souls; he raised the dead to show he could speak to dead sinners in their graves and give life to the dead.

³ Nik Ripken, *The Insanity of Obedience* (Nashville: Broadman, 2013), 19.

⁴ Packer, 118.

- All these miracles merely illustrated, or pointed to, his power to save from sin.
- Well, the thing being signified is always greater than thing that signifies it—right? So preaching the gospel is greater than all the things that pointed to it.
- So when we preach the gospel and sinners believe, we are doing the greater work—we're doing the thing that all Jesus' miracles pointed to!
- ~~You see, the Great Commission is so large that none of us can bear the weight of it,~~ and if we take upon ourselves the weight of it, it will crush us.
- I think that was what Jesus was trying to teach his disciples when he had them wait... don't do anything until I give you the Holy Spirit
 - ~~You know some of them were type-A. Wait, Jesus? Peter, you... John... Thomas, apologetics manual.~~
 - He said, "**No, wait...** Because there's **nothing you can do** about the Great Commission.
 - **This is not something you are going to do for me,** but something I will do through you."
 - So he had them **wait for 10 days, doing nothing but thinking** about their inability to accomplish anything.

~~Now, we are no longer waiting on the HS the same way the Apostles were on the Mt. of Olives, but our posture of dependence has to be the same.~~

- ~~You need to follow the Holy Spirit...~~

Paul says that when that happens, we will live an incredibly victorious Christian life: "**But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**" (Galatians 5:16)

- How do you escape the lusts of the flesh? Walk in the Spirit.
- It's not if you escape the lusts of the flesh, God will reward you with his Spirit. That's how most Christians see it, but they have it

backwards. Fullness of the Spirit comes first; escaping the lusts of the flesh comes second.

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- ~~Martin Luther called the idea that God dangles damnation like a carrot in front of us as a motive to obey "**damnable doctrine of doubt.**"~~ Sure, he said, it may produce a surface level of obedience, but it will never produce love. But underneath a veneer of obedience rushes a river of fear, pride, and self-interest.

church vans have flames roaring down the side... and they always have 9 names: The New Tabernacle Holy Ghost Pentecostal Full Gospel Church of the Nazarene and the Anointed. Churches that have running lanes built around the sanctuary, where people stretch before church.

"The clearest marks of the Spirit's work is when your greatest love is for Someone you have never seen." Donald Whitney

2 things that keep you from it:

- Disconnection from the Spirit
 - Disinterested in his agenda
 - Sin
- Confidence in the flesh.
 - Poor in the Spirit.
- **George:** I got a letter last year from a guy I haven't seen in 20 years...
 - **Moved in...** Psychology major; 2 weeks from graduating; had moved in next to me... probation.
 - Drinking. Every other word out of his mouth was a curse word.
 - We stayed up late every night that first week arguing about Jesus.

- “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- What is greater? Jesus multiplying loaves and fishes or watching the Spirit of God pursue a man and save his soul.
- SAME SPIRIT AND POWER AT WORK! ACTS 1:1...

Week 2: Jesus, Continued...

- Start with Samuel/Eli story
- Review title thought
- We need his direction!
- 5 ways we experience
- Pours out power of God on earth (point 4)
 - *Did you know that of the 59 times that the HS shows up in Acts, in 36 of those he is speaking?*
 - Are your people hearing from the Holy Spirit about what they are to be doing in ministry?
 - Are they thinking about ministry as something they do for God, or something that they yield themselves to the Holy Spirit to do through them?
- *(Whenever I start to talk this way, somebody says, “Well, you know, we can’t use Acts as a pattern for our time... things are so much different now.” There are some unique things happening with the Apostles. I get that. But you can’t convince me that the only book God gave us with examples of how the church operates is filled with experiences that have nothing in common with our own.)*
 - *John Newton said, “Is it really true that that which the early church so depended on—the leadership of the Spirit—is irrelevant to us today?”*