

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Being Filled With The Holy Spirit

by Dan Trygg

“And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”

Acts 2:1-4

“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness”

Acts 4:31

“But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.”

Acts 6:3

“...do not get drunk with wine, for that is wastefulness, but be-being-filled with the Spirit...”

Ephesians 5:18

If you did a study on the “filling of the Holy Spirit”, you would find that this word picture is used **17 times in the NT**, and all but two of those occurrences happen in the writings of Luke. **There are two separate Greek verbs used**, and there is also an adjective derived from one of them. *Both verbs mean “to fill full, to fill up”*. **The adjective form is simply “full”**. It describes a state or ongoing condition of being “full” of the Spirit. Nine times the form of the verb describes a *point-in-time action*, a “filling” at a point in time (Lk. 1:15-16,41,67; Act 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9,10; Eph. 3:19,20). On two occasions a verb form is used that describes an *ongoing experience of filling* – (Acts 13:52; Eph. 5:18). Six times the adjective form is used of people who *are* full of the Holy Spirit. In most of these cases it appears to be an ongoing characteristic of their lives – (Lk. 4:1; Acts 6:3,5,8-10; 7:55-56; 11:24).

What else can we observe? **It seems that the momentary infillings of the Holy Spirit were mostly given to enable the people of God to speak about Him and what He is doing.** Zechariah and Elizabeth were **filled with the Spirit and prophesied** (Lk. 1:41,67). The people at Pentecost were **filled with the Spirit and began to speak in other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them to speak (Acts 2:4). What were they saying? There were people in the crowd of onlookers who were from virtually every civilized country of the ancient world, and they heard them speaking “the magnificent acts of God”, each in their own language (2:7,8). In Acts 4:8, Peter **was filled with the Spirit so he could speak intelligently and boldly** to the religious leaders of the Jews. After he was released, he shared what had happened with the other believers, and they prayed for courage to not back down in fear. As they prayed, the place they were in was shaken, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of the Lord with boldness** (4:31). In Acts 13:9, when confronted with the meddling of the Jewish false prophet, Elymas, Paul was **filled with the Spirit and confronted him with boldness and authority**, even declaring that God would blind him temporarily for his impertinence and interference. **This miracle happened immediately, and it caused onlookers to believe and be astonished at the teaching of the Lord.**

As I mentioned above, **some people were characteristically filled with the Spirit. It was something that could be recognized by others.** Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 4:1). The congregation in Acts were assigned to pick seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, to serve as deacons (6:3). In order to do this, **there must have been some recognizable indications of the Spirit’s fullness in their lives.** Stephen was one of these men. He was known as a man who was **full of faith and the Holy Spirit** (6:5). As a manifestation of that, he was “full of grace and of power, was **performing signs and wonders** among the people” (6:8). Obviously, this was more than a human thing, and people recognized that. **It gave his preaching credibility and made it effective.** When some men decided to dispute with him over theology, they were **unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking** (6:9,10). These men brought him before the Jewish authorities on false charges, and he boldly confronted them concerning their hardness of heart. Being full of the Spirit, he **saw a vision** of the glory of God, and of Jesus standing at the right hand of God (6:55). In Acts 11:24, Barnabus was described as a “**good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.**” The grace of God was already at work when he arrived at Antioch, but his ministry was “to encourage them all to remain true to the Lord with a resolute heart”(vs. 23). The result of what God was working in that city was that “large numbers of people were added to the Lord”. **The power of the Holy Spirit made his ministry effective.**

These manifestations were all things Jesus had spoken of. He said that they should not worry about what they would say, if they had to give a testimony before authorities, for the Holy Spirit would give them what to say in that hour (Matt. 10:18-20). He said that the Holy Spirit would testify about Him, and that they would also,

describing a cooperative partnership between the Spirit and His disciples (Jn. 15:26,27). The Spirit would teach us all things, and bring to our remembrance what Jesus had said (Jn. 14:26). He said we would receive power when the Spirit came (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8). **The Greek word for power is *dunamis*. The word means “inner power or strength; the ability to act to accomplish something; and also miracle or a supernatural act”.** The “inner power or strength” has to do with the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, the ability to live a life of Christlike character by the power of the Spirit in us (Gal. 5:22,23; Eph. 4:13). The “ability to act” is the power that motivates and supports our actions of obedience, especially our ability to speak up for Christ. Even “miracle” is covered by this word, for Jesus had said that the ones believing in Him would do the works He did, and even greater works (Jn. 14:12). *These* are signs or indicators of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

It is important for us to realize that **the fullness of the Spirit is purposeful.** It is given not just for us to enjoy, although it *is* enjoyable. ***It is given to enable us to effectively glorify Jesus by our works and our words.*** The Holy Spirit’s agenda is to magnify Jesus (Jn. 16:14). The Father’s agenda is to magnify Jesus (Eph. 1:9,10; I Cor. 15:27,28; Phil. 2:9-11). **The fullness of the Holy Spirit is given to those who love Jesus, and want to magnify Him before others.** Those who really understand and appreciate the grace of God, and the great sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf, cannot *help* but love Him. We love because He first loved us, and now the love of God compels us to want to share the message of God’s love to others (II Cor. 5:14-21). **The Holy Spirit has come to drive us to action.** He is always on mission, and those who are filled with His heart will also be people of purpose, people on mission for God. Do you say, “Oh, I don’t think I could ever share my faith. I’m too timid or afraid”, or “I wouldn’t know what to say.” Go back and read about what the Spirit does. If you are filled with Him, you *will have boldness*, and He *will give you what to say*. **What you need is to be filled with the Spirit!**

All those who were filled with the Spirit were active in service or in giving expression to their faith. The apostle Peter said that **the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Him** (Acts 5:32). Note the context, and the fuller quotation of the verse. This is the end of Peter’s defense before the Council. He and the other apostles had violated their order to no longer preach about Jesus, and they were called before them to answer for this disregard of their censure. **Peter said, “We must obey God rather than men.** The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And *we are witnesses* of these things; and *so is the Holy Spirit*, whom God gave to the ones obeying Him” (Acts 5:29-32). Note that **Peter recognized the partnership between the apostles and the Holy Spirit in their task of declaring the message.** The other important insight that comes from this passage is dedication to obediently following God above all else. We must obey God rather than men not only covers the restrictions or limitations that others might put upon us but also our own self-limitations or fleshly way of living. **Do you want the fullness of the Holy Spirit? You must make God the center and focus of your heart’s goal and manner of living.**

Jesus, the apostles, and the believers in the early church dedicated themselves to God by engaging in spiritual disciplines. We know Jesus had studied the Scriptures, because He quotes from them word for word repeatedly in His teachings. We know also that He dedicated Himself to times of private prayer, often getting up while others were still asleep (Mk. 1:35; Lk. 6:12). He also customarily attended religious meetings for instruction and worship (Lk. 4:16). The apostles introduced these same disciplines to the first converts at Pentecost. “They continually devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, the sharing, the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42), meeting daily in the Temple as well as in people’s homes (Acts 2:46). **Study of the Scriptures, prayer, fellowship were key basic disciplines of early church Christians.** Jesus’ brother James stated the principle quite succinctly: **“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you”** (4:8). After the resurrection, Jesus told his followers to *wait* for the promise of the Father. What did that mean to them? They gathered to pray for the Holy Spirit. **Jesus had taught them about the need for persistence in prayer in Luke 11. He ended His teaching with the assurance that God will give the Holy Spirit to the ones ongoingly asking Him** (vs. 13).

Finally, **we are commanded to be-being-filled with the Holy Spirit.** Paul gives us some practical instruction for keeping the flow going. He says, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is wastefulness, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and being subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Eph. 5:18-21). **Keeping our hearts joyful and thankful, singing praises and making melody in ourselves and with each other, and choosing to yield to and serve others creates a mind and heart open to God and conducive to the ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit.**