

# Filled to Overflowing

Sermon for Sunday, May 23, 2010  
by Bruce Fraser

**Scripture:** Acts 1:1-8; Ephesians 5:18

## 1) We need a personal experience of God

A scholarly bachelor wrote a paper on the theme, "What Is Love?" His research was extensive. He spent many months reviewing books and journals on the subject, and organizing the material he gathered. When the work was ready to be published, he took it to a public stenographer to be typed. When he walked into her office for the first time, something unusual and unexpected happened. Their eyes met. Their pulses quickened! A strange feeling swept over both of them. It was love at first sight!

The subject of the paper was no longer merely a theory to the writer; it became a reality. For the first time, he personally experienced the wonderful rewards of being in love. In the space of a few moments, he learned and understood more about his topic than he had gleaned through all his studies.

In the Bible we read about the Day of Pentecost. We read about how the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, and their lives were changed. We need to do more than just study this, preach about it, hear about it. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit ourselves.

## 2) How does the Holy Spirit work in us?

Before Jesus was crucified, he made a promise to his disciples that he would not leave them orphans. He would come back to be with them — but in a new way! He would actually be *in* them!

**John 14:16-17, The Message:**

"I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can't take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be *in* you!"

After Jesus rose from the dead, the time finally came when he was ready to return to his Father in heaven. This gift was so important that he repeated the promise, and ordered them to just wait and do nothing until they receive the gift:

**Acts 1:4-5, 8, Today's English Version:**

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, that I told you about. John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with

the Holy Spirit. ... You will be filled with power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

American Express brags about their piece of plastic, "Don't leave home without it." Jesus told them, "Don't go anywhere without the Holy Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit is absolutely vital to the Christian life.

Let's be absolutely clear on one thing: if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have been baptized by Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit lives in you, and will never leave you. This is God's promise for all those who are his children by faith in Jesus Christ.

**Acts 2:38, New International Version:**

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

## 3) Don't just have the Spirit — let the Spirit have you

All Christians have the Holy Spirit. The question is, does the Holy Spirit have you? Are you living by the Spirit? Listen to what Paul wrote to a group of Christians:

**Ephesians 5:18, New Living Translation:**

**Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.**

Paul uses the example of a drunk yielding control to alcohol. The alcohol comes in and takes power in that person's life. We are to yield to the Spirit. We ask the Holy Spirit to fill us, and take power in our lives.

Please note: this command is in the present tense, not the past tense. It is something we keep on doing, a continuous action. You don't eat a big Sunday dinner, and expect to stay full until next Sunday. Likewise you don't get filled with the Spirit today and expect that to do you for tomorrow as well.

The Holy Spirit is already in you, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ. What you need to do to unleash this power in your life is to pray something like this:

"Lord Jesus, I am yours. Fill me with your Spirit. I want to know you, to love you, to serve you. I want you in my life; not just a little bit, but all of you in all of me."

Every morning when you get up, start with a simple prayer like that. Add in a song and a few verses of Scripture, and after awhile you are going to start being late for work because the worship is so good!

We're going to take some time to do this right now!  
 We're going to sing and pray and sing some more.  
 While we're singing, we are inviting the Holy Spirit to  
 come in and fill us.

If you've never before asked Jesus Christ to come into  
 your life with power, you can make these songs your  
 prayer for new life.

*Theme for today:* Think of someone who would fit the  
 description of "the life of the party." Typically we think  
 of someone who is lively and fun-loving, someone who  
 enjoys life and enjoys other people, someone whose very  
 presence radiates that joy to others. That's a good  
 description of the Holy Spirit. This is the "abundant life"  
 that Jesus promised to those who follow him.

### **Pastoral Prayer introduction:**

Paul Stanley: "As an infantry company commander in Vietnam in 1967, I saw Viet Cong soldiers surrender many times. As they were placed in custody, marched away, and briefly interrogated, their body language and facial expressions always caught my attention. Most hung their heads in shame, staring at the ground, unwilling to look their captors in the eye. But some stood erect, staring defiantly at those around them, resisting any attempt by our men to control them. They had surrendered physically but not mentally. On one occasion after the enemy had withdrawn, I came upon several soldiers surrounding a wounded Viet Cong. Shot through the lower leg, he was hostile and frightened, yet helpless. He threw mud and kicked with his one good leg when anyone came near him. When I joined the circle around the wounded enemy, one soldier asked me, 'Sir, what do we do? He's losing blood fast and needs medical attention.' I looked down at the struggling Viet Cong and saw the face of a 16- or 17-year-old boy. I unbuckled my pistol belt and hand grenades so he could not grab them. Then, speaking gently, I moved toward him. He stared fearfully at me as I knelt down, but he allowed me to slide my arms under him and pick him up. As I walked with him toward a waiting helicopter, he began to cry and hold me tight. He kept looking at me and squeezing me tighter. We climbed into the helicopter and took off. During the ride, our young captive sat on the floor, clinging to my leg. Never having ridden in a helicopter, he looked out with panic as we gained altitude and flew over the trees. He fixed his eyes back on me, and I smiled reassuringly and put my hand on his shoulder. After landing, I picked him up and walked toward the medical tent. As we crossed the field, I felt the tenseness leave his body and his tight grasp loosen. His eyes softened, and his head leaned against my chest. The fear and resistance were gone — he had finally surrendered."

That is the way it is when we surrender to God isn't it? At first we see God as the enemy and we fight him, claiming our own territory and the right to our own lives. But in our woundedness, we finally see that we cannot conquer him, and the God to whom we surrender is not our enemy. He cares for us and heals us as he takes us captive.