

Ephesians 3:14-21

Spirit Filled: Jesus

Introduction: If it's your first time joining us - Welcome. We are starting a mini series this morning on the Holy Spirit. Specifically the work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Christian and the Church.

Now of course the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is not just God's will, or his active force in the world but is in fact God himself - he shares all the Divine attributes of the Father and the Son, and yet he plays a unique role in all the works of God - in creation, in sustaining the world, in redemption, in restoration and so forth. We don't have time to do an extensive study on the Holy Spirit. I am more interested at this moment, and for our community of asking and answering the question -What is the work or ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian? Or another way people often put it - What does it mean to be Spirit Filled?

I've often wondered myself - I've read many books on the subject from authors like Jim Cymbala - *Fresh Wind Fresh Fire*, to Samuel Chadwick's - *The Way to Pentecost*. I've read the accounts of Jonathan Edwards, The Wesley brothers - who's hearts were "strangely warmed by the Holy Spirit and felt for the first time - the love of God poured into their hearts". I've read the account of D.L. Moody being moved by the Spirit so heavily that he had to duck into a shop doorway until the moment passed. I've listened to preachers and spiritual leaders talk about revivals that they were a part of, "Movings of the Spirit" that they have seen and experienced that left me feeling that I did not have the Spirit or that I was missing this secret power of the Spirit. So I sought it. I attended prayer meetings and worship services, "afterglow's" - times of waiting on the Spirit and setting aside time to practice spiritual gifts - I've been prayed for, anointed with oil, prophesied over, I've been prayed for in tongues and the list goes on. I wanted this experience so badly - If God had more for me - I wanted it, and still do - I want to be Spirit Filled. Finally I think I just burned out on the whole idea and relegated it to spiritual hype and emotionalism.

From there I spent a number of years looking more at the person and character of the Holy Spirit - I wanted to know Doctrine. I studied about regeneration - new birth and what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit and his work in the life of the Christian - I came to believe that there isn't a second blessing, a secret baptism or pentecostal moment for the Christian

per-se. I came to believe more in the development of the fruit of the Spirit rather than the gifts of the Spirit. The development of Christ like character and the spiritual disciplines. The Spirit's work was to bring about a life of holiness and victory over sin. One of my favorite quotes during this time was Martin Luther's - "*I would rather be obedient than do miracles*" - which I still think is correct - the primary purpose of God's Spirit in the life of the believer is conformity to the image of Jesus - a life marked by holiness, kindness and obedience.. But at the time I used this quote more as a way to look down on and dismiss what I considered Spiritual hype, emotionalism and ecstatic experiences. But secretly I still felt that I was missing out.

But then I read through the book of Acts and I see Peter and the early church filled again and again with the Spirit. Not just once, or twice, but it is an ongoing thing; and I wonder...

I read passages in the Bible like Ephesians 3 about God granting us to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, that Christ would dwell in us, that we would be rooted and grounded in love, comprehending to an even greater degree the love of Christ - being filled with all the fulness of God... and I wonder.

I read about the church in Corinth, though it had many problems, when gathered together - each person had a word of encouragement, a prophecy, a tongue - a spiritual gifting to impart in order to encourage the church....(1 corinthians 14:26).. and I wonder.

These passages make me wonder - Am I missing something? Am I, are we, following Jesus, fighting sin and temptation, seeking to build up and strengthen the church and spread the glorious gospel - with our spiritual hands tied behind our backs? Is there more? I think most Christians believe in the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts yet live as though there is no Holy Spirit and there is no such thing as spiritual gifting and Power from the Spirit. But the Bible talks again and again about the Spirit of God and his work in the life of the Christian - his empowering, his leading, his conviction, his speaking and using and sometimes that is done in a very dramatic way, while other times it happens in the most mundane and normal of circumstances. But since that bible speaks this way, we should seek to practice that life of the Spirit - to make sure that we are taking full advantage of the work of the Cross of Jesus and life giving Holy spirit that we have been gifted and sons and daughters of God - Filled with all the fulness as Paul says.

Are you open to that Refuge? Are you open to the fact that you are not fully developed, and are still in process, that there might in fact be more to the Christian life??

Some people might see this desire for more as an under appreciation of the work of the cross, but rather this is to fully excavate, appreciate, and assimilate the work of the cross... It seems to me that Scripture fully supports God's people living with a holy discontent (Phil 3:7-11). A desire to see God do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think (Eph 3:20). William Carey, Called - the father of modern missions - is known for saying - *"Expect great things from God and attempt great things for him."* In talking about "More", we are not saying God has to do anything, we are simply looking at scripture and saying, 'God do all that you want to do in and through us'.

Now for those of you like me - whenever language like "more", or not enough" starts being used in reference to the Spirit and spiritual gifts I start pulling out my discernment card and looking for the nearest exit. I know the conversation can quickly spiral and get out of control - Let me set your hearts and minds at ease - Maybe you've heard of weird things being done in the name of the Holy Spirit - barking, uncontrollable laughter, wetting yourself, doing laps around the auditorium, gold dust falling and seeing angels peek out from behind the pulpit - if that's what you are expecting rest assured That is not where Refuge is headed - this pastor is more like a reformed Baptist or a Charismatic with two seatbelts, a shoulder harness, and an air bag.. And yet I do think Refuge needs to be pushed into a greater experience and practice of life in the Spirit.

It seems to me the best place to start is with Jesus himself

1. Spirit Filled Jesus

1. We are told in the John's gospel that Jesus was given the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). In other words Jesus was completely Spirit filled. The Holy Spirit is all over the Life of Jesus. This is quite incredible because at this point in the nation of Israel's history there had been 400 years of silence from YHWH - no prophecy, no prophet, no miracles (that we know of). Just silence. And then suddenly there is a flood of activity of the Holy Spirit.
 1. First there is an appearance of the angel Gabriel to a righteous and faithful old couple named Zechariah and Elizabeth - even though she is old they are going to have a baby - this baby will grow to be "great before the Lord.. he will be filled with the Holy

Spirit, even from his mother's womb - we call him John the Baptist. Next Mary, a young virgin girl from Nazareth is told that she is going to give birth to God's anointed savior. When she asks how that can be since she is a virgin, the Angel replies, **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."** (Luke 1:35)

2. Then from there, the Holy Spirit is filling all sorts of people - Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit + her baby in her womb, (Luke 1:41), Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke :67), Simeon is spoken to by the Spirit and then led by the Spirit into the temple to behold the Christ child..
3. Then of course we come to Jesus himself. His conception and birth is a work of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). At thirty years old he goes out to the Jordan river to be baptized by John, and instead of a normal baptism we are told that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in bodily form, like a dove, and the Spirit remained on him (John 1:32), and voice came from heaven saying - **"You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"**. In chapter 4:1 of Luke it says, **"And Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the Devil.."** Jesus, under the power of the Holy Spirit, not the power of food, or human strength on any sort - overcomes the devil; and we are told that he returns to Galilee "In the power of the Spirit". Then in the very next section Jesus walks into a synagogue on the sabbath, is given the scroll of Isaiah and reads this passage, telling everybody that it is written about him - **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, **"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."**
4. We are also told that Jesus rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21); Performed his ministry in the power of the Spirit

(Acts 2:22); was anointed with the Spirit (Acts 10:28); offered himself to God - his sacrificial death - by the Spirit (Hebrews 9:28); and was Resurrected to life by the Spirit (Romans 8:11; 1 Peter 3:18).

1. Jesus life is the Spirit filled life - Par Excellence

2. Excusing Jesus

1. Now in talking about Jesus it does seem a little unfair right? I mean, Jesus is God incarnate, so being Spirit filled is just kind of a bonus, add on or appendices - like, not only can he walk on water, but he's also SPIRIT FILLED!
2. But this thinking is incorrect - Paul tells us in Philippians 2:5-11 that when Jesus came to earth he emptied himself. But of what? *"The pre-existent divine son of his own volition 'emptied himself' (the greek word meaning strip, empty, deprive, render to no effect,) and took to himself the form of a servant. His divinity was not lost but it was also not exercised. Jesus took upon himself the form of fallen human nature - mortal and corruptible (Romans 8:3) and lived directed and dependent on the Spirit. The word became flesh and exercised power through the Spirit, not on his own. The Son's self-emptying meant that Jesus was compelled to rely on the Spirit.. the Son decided not to make use of divine attributes independently but experience what it would mean to be truly human"* - Simon Ponsonby, *God Inside Out*
3. But what about all the crazy miracles of Jesus? Isn't that him showing that he is God - Yes and No - it is Jesus showing that he is God in the sense of that all the works line up with YHWH's works, but I believe scripture supports that the power behind the miracles come from Jesus being the true and perfect humanity, rather than his Divinity. - (for a spiritual exercise read Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 and think through the life and Miracles of Jesus)
4. I think we blow Jesus' divinity out of proportion. Jesus is fully divine and yet fully human. Jesus experienced every aspect of what it means to be human, yet without sin. He was tired, thirsty, hungry, sad, and tempted. He was subject to it all, in order to be our example of what it looks like to live a life in the Spirit - the true human.
5. We often overemphasize the divinity of Jesus to the point that he isn't human at all - but that's the opposite of what the Gospels tell us. It is Jesus' Spirit filled humanity that works signs and wonders, that speaks with an authority like no other living

person, it is by the power of the Spirit that Jesus over comes the devil and the temptations in the wilderness.

1. Everything that Jesus does in his life and ministry is in the Spirit and by the Spirit.

3. Spirit Filled Christian

1. This is a vital point for us to get and understand for two reasons:
 1. For our comfort, our protecting and safety.
 1. This is comforting to me, because though I don't think Jesus was normal by any means - he wasn't weird. He didn't go around barking, he didn't walk up to people and pray in tongues over them, he didn't prophecy and speak words that were unrelated and disconnected from people's needs. Everything he does is relational and purposeful, intentional and powerful. Why do I bring this up? Because this fact has grounded me many times. Christianity goes though these spiritual trends - when I was younger it was the Toronto blessing, being slain in the spirit, etc. Now there is an emphasis on things like interpreting dreams, prophesying over non-Christians, grave soaking - going to the graves of Christian leaders and trying to soak up their anointing, punching demons out of people and the list goes on....
 2. How do we know what is the genuine work of the Spirit and what is emotionalism and hype? It seems to me that this is where Jesus and the scripture must be our guide - we never see Jesus or the Apostles doing anything like this, it is never modeled or taught to soak the grave of a spiritual leader or to punch a demon out of someone, or to bark like dog, etc. In fact the moving of the Holy Spirit is always in concert with bringing glory to God, drawing people to salvation, helping, serving, healing and encouraging others.... And that is the same Spirit that God has given to us, that is the Spirit that we should be pursuing, and surrendering to.
 2. Secondly, to see the absolute necessity of the Spirit in the Life of the Follower of Jesus.
 1. As I mentioned, Jesus has the Spirit without measure, it remains on him, anointing him for his life and ministry and at the cross he gives up/ releases the Spirit. John 19:30 Jesus gives up not his spirit, or the ghost as other Gospels

say, but he gives up The Spirit - the greek word Pneuma. Paul the Apostle picks up on this idea in Galatians 3:13-14 - **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith...**When Jesus meets the Disciples again after his resurrection it says, **“Peace be with you. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:19-20)**

3. One of the main purposes in Jesus' coming to earth, was to be our example of a life lived - in the Spirit and by the Holy Spirit and then to give his life in order to give us the Spirit... That we might be his Spirit filled people.
4. How much thought have you given to the person of the Holy Spirit? or to the Holy Spirit's work and his leading in your life? You are a follower of Jesus, correct? Have you ever realized that everything Jesus did in his earthly life and ministry was under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit?? Maybe you're not interested in the Holy Spirit - but I would be curious to know in what ways you are exchanging or substituting the Holy Spirit in your life? Jesus remained faithful to the Father, and faithful to the mission he was sent on - he did not compromise with the Devil and his offer of greatness, he did not compromise with his own desires, to fulfill them instead of God the Father's. He did not compromise with the world to give into the narrative of self-fulfillment, self-sufficiency and self -promotion. But in every point he was tempted he submitted to the father and relied upon the Holy Spirit. So I ask again, in what ways are you compromising - and substituting the power of the Spirit, for your own power or smoother power - power to deal with the hardships of life, in what ways are you substituting the life of the Spirit for the life

of the world, no longer seeking fulfillment by the Spirit but looking for it to be fulfilled by something or someone else? This was not the way of Jesus, and it is not the way of his followers, the way of Jesus is to cultivate a life in the Spirit.