

Three Primary Effects of the Spirit's Influence, Part 1

Ephesians 5:19-21

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We are nearing the time of year when, in some southern cities, they celebrate the carnival of Mardi Gras. Not many people know it, but Mardi Gras began in the U.S. in 1703 in my hometown, Mobile, Alabama. Even when I was growing up, Mardi Gras had become a celebration that there wasn't much for Christians to be involved in. It was not a celebration that Christians could be comfortable really being a part of even in those days. But my dad worked downtown Mobile on the square there in historic Mobile, and he decided one year when I was about ten years old, if I remember right, that I ought to see just a little of what Mardi Gras was about. And so, I guess it was to inoculate me I guess for the future, but he took me down with him one day to downtown Mobile, during Mardi Gras.

And many of the images from that day are still fixed permanently in my mind, but one in particular stands out. I think it was the first time I remember anyway seeing a grown man stone drunk. I remember this man vividly, staggering back and forth across one of the main streets there in downtown, obviously out of his mind and pausing from time to time to vomit again and again, and then, eventually falling in a heap there on the street, made quite an impression on my ten-year-old mind.

I tell that story, because once you have seen the dramatic effects of someone who is under the influence of alcohol, you always know what those effects are, and you recognize them when you see them. I think that's a very poignant reason that the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, uses being under the influence of alcohol as an illustration of what it means to be under the influence of the Spirit because the effects of being under the influence of the Spirit are equally clear in every life where He is present in power. And the apostle Paul here in Ephesians 5 is going to tell us exactly what those primary effects of being under the influence of the Spirit are. You can see them. You can recognize them. And once you understand them, you'll always recognize them. Let's turn to Ephesians 5 together.

Now, just to remind you, the theme of the section we're looking at, that begins in Ephesians 5:15, and runs all the way down through 6:9, is found in Ephesians 5:15, "walk, not as unwise but as wise ..." In this section, we have learned that if we're going to walk worthy of our calling,

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we must walk in biblical wisdom. And in verses 15 to 18, Paul gives us the command to walk in biblical wisdom, and he also explains how. And the last part of that explanation of how to walk, how to fulfill that command to walk in Biblical wisdom, we looked at last week. It's in verse 18, be filled with Christ's Spirit. Notice verse 18, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," [If you're going to walk in Biblical wisdom, you have to be filled by the Spirit.]

Now, last week, we examined what it means to be filled by the Spirit, and I'm not going to recapture all of that for you. If you weren't here, I encourage you to listen to sort of get up to speed, but let me just summarize what we learned for you. Basically, there are two different kinds of filling in the New Testament, two different Greek word groups, both of which are translated "filled with the Spirit" or "full of the Spirit." And one of them, we said, refers to special empowering; that is, an unexpected sovereign act of God's divine enablement enabling a person to fulfill a specific task for a specific time. It can happen once. It can happen several times in a lifetime. But it's an event that occurs, and we traced that through the book of Acts. God determines to whom He will do this and when, sovereignly, and we're never told to seek that kind of event filling.

Then there is the normal filling. The other Greek word group describes what we called normal filling; that is, a person is described as being characterized by being full of the Spirit. That is, it is their condition. It is their normal state. They are, as a normal pattern of life, full of the Spirit. And to be full of anything means to be characterized by that thing. If I say you're full of anger, that means you are characterized by anger. So, to be full of the Spirit means to be characterized by the presence of the Spirit.

What does that look like? Well in verse 18, Paul begins verse 18 with an illustration, someone under the influence of alcohol. And he puts it here in the middle of this paragraph to let us know that he's not talking about our being filled as if we were some cup and some people are a quarter-filled, and some people are half-filled, and some people are completely full. Instead, he means be filled with the Spirit in the sense of under the influence of the Spirit in the same way a person is under the influence of alcohol. Be under the influence of the Spirit.

So, who does the filling here? Well, the phrase "with the Spirit" as we saw last week means "by the Spirit." It means that the Spirit is the agency. He is the One who accomplishes this. He is the One who fills us. We're not told what He fills us with in this passage. So, what are we to do? If the Spirit's the One who does it, what are we to do? Well, notice, the second half of verse 18 is a

command. We discovered that that is best translated “permit or allow yourselves to be filled by the Spirit.” We can encourage this, or we can hinder it.

So, what actually is it the Spirit fills us with? Well, Ephesians 5, as I said, doesn’t tell us, but the parallel text gives us the key. In Colossians, the passage that was written at exactly the same time as Ephesians, written from the same jail cell, delivered at the same time to the church in Colossae, gives us a clue. If you look and compare the passage in Ephesians with the passage in Colossians, you discover that they are identical except for how they begin. They all deal with the same issues except how they begin. Ephesians 5 says be filled with the Spirit. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly....” Well, if they both issue in exactly the same results, that means they are equivalent. Those two concepts are the same thing. To be filled with the Spirit is the same as letting the Word of Christ richly dwell within you.

Let me teach you a simple math equation about this whole issue. If you go to Acts, and you look at those passages where the word group that describes a state or a condition occurs, “full,” a person like Stephen is full of the Spirit as a state or condition. That equals Ephesians 5 “be filled by the Spirit” which equals Colossians 3:16 “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” It’s all the same thing.

So, being filled by the Spirit means that the Spirit fills us with the Word of God, His own Word, the Spirit’s Word. He revealed the Word. He inspired the Word. He illumines our understanding to the Word. And so, it makes perfect sense that the Spirit would put the Word central in His activity in our hearts and minds.

Now that brings us, verse 18, between verses 18 and 19. We arrive at a turn in Paul’s thinking because he leaves the command to pursue Biblical wisdom, which at its heart is being filled by the Spirit with the Word. Now you see how all that connects. How are you going to be Biblically wise? How are you going to walk in Biblical wisdom? Well, the Spirit is going to fill you with the Word so you can then walk in Biblical wisdom. So, there’s the command, verses 15 to 18.

And now he begins to show us the consequences or results of walking in Biblical wisdom under the influence of the Spirit. Here are the effects. Being filled with the Spirit, being filled by the Spirit, I should say with the Word of God produces changes in our lives. You will see this morning that there are three primary consequences or results of being under the influence of the Spirit, three primary, and that’s the key word, results of being under the influence of the Spirit.

Just as you can look at a person who's drunk, and there are primary characteristics that distinguish that person as being under the influence of alcohol, there are three primary characteristics that distinguish a person who is under the influence of the Spirit. They're in verses 19 to 21. Notice verse 18 again. There's the command,

be filled with the Spirit, [or by the Spirit,] verse 19, speaking to one another 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 be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Now the New American Standard translation that we use reflects the Greek pretty well here as it usually does, but notice the main verb of the sentence is in verse 18, "be filled with the Spirit." There's the main verb. Then note that in verses 19 to 21 that I just read, there are a series of five participles, five "-ing" words to make it simple for those of you who don't remember your grammar, okay? Five participles that modify that main verb. So, you got the main verb "be filled" and then you have these participles.

Notice the first one in verse 19, "speaking;" and then again in verse 19, "singing;" the third one also in verse 19, "making melody;" in verse 20, "giving thanks." And then you'll notice in verse 21, there's a marginal reference note in your New American Standard Bible, and it says that what is translated, "and be subject to one another" is literally "being subject." There's your fifth "-ing" word, your fifth participle. That's in Greek as well as in English.

Here, these five participles are explaining the primary results or consequences of being filled by the Spirit. And these consequences are always present when a person is allowing the Spirit to fill him with the Word. Just as a person who is under the influence of alcohol, people who are under the influence of alcohol exhibit very similar effects, in differing degrees of course, but similar effects. In the same way, a person under the influence of the Spirit will see these effects in his or her life.

There are really three of them. There are five participles, but three of the participles sort of connect together in verse 19 around the issue of music. So, there are really three primary consequences that we see here in these five participles. Let me give them to you.

Number one, where you are filled by the Spirit with the Word, number one, there will be a love for God-centered music, a love for God-centered music. (That's in verse 19.) Number two is in verse 20. There will be a pattern of thankfulness, a pattern of thankfulness. And the third one is in verse 21. There will be a heart of submission.

Listen, folks. Wherever a person is under the influence of the Spirit, those things will be there. This is like a spiritual diagnostic you can run on yourself. Wherever a person is under the influence of the Spirit and the Word of God, there will be a love for God-centered music, there will be a pattern of thankfulness in the life, and there will be a heart that willingly submits to God-constituted authority, the authorities God has put in your life.

You can't consistently manifest those results from the heart without the Spirit. But where the Spirit's influence through the Word is truly present, these will be present. These participles represent both the inevitable results of being under the influence of the Spirit, and at the same time they are commands. They are expectations of every Christian. So, we should promote and encourage these results in ourselves as the power of the Spirit's influence in us grows. Just as the effects of being under the influence of alcohol grow with the amount you've imbibed, in the same way, the extent of the Spirit's influence increases in our lives, and we will manifest these results then to a greater extent.

Now, in the rest of our time together this morning, I want to get a running start at just the first consequence of walking in Biblical wisdom, just the first one, a love for God-centered music. Look at verse 19 again. Remember now, this is a participle modifying the main verb "be filled." "... be filled [by] ... the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;"

Now, I don't know about you, but the first question that comes to my mind when I read that verse is, why. Why is it? Why would love for God-centered music both individually and corporately be the first result of being filled by the Spirit?

Well, remember. The Spirit fills us with (what?) a rich knowledge of His Word. And the Word is filled with God and His person and His acts. Those are at the center of Scripture. And over and over it again, the writers of Scripture call us to do what in response to God's person and acts? To sing! To express His praise in song. So, when the Spirit fills us with the Word, or when, as Colossians says, the Word dwells richly within us, our souls break out into song, songs of praise that celebrate our great God, and you can't help it.

Martin Luther, the great Reformer who really revolutionized the place of music in the life of the church, wrote this of music. I love this quote. Listen carefully.

The riches of music are so excellent and so precious that words fail me whenever I attempt to discuss and describe them. “In summa” (the Latin word, in the full summary), next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. This precious gift has been given to man alone that he might thereby remind himself that God has created man for the express purpose of praising and extolling God.

You know why you have music? It’s for one primary reason, to remind you why you were created and that was to issue forth in praise and worship of God.

Now, the next time we study this passage together, which won’t be next week because of course next week’s the Sola Conference, it’ll be the following week, we’re going to look in detail at verse 19. There is so much in verse 19. In fact, I hope I can cover it in a single message. But let me first give you, today, the big picture about the place and priority that God gives to music in His Word. Did you know the Bible contains more than six hundred references to music? So, we won’t exhaust them all, or I would exhaust you, but I think it’s right that we at least get an overview. Let’s fly across the top and see what priority God Himself gives to music.

Let’s start at the beginning. Music existed before the universe existed. Maybe you’ve never thought of that, but there was music before man was ever created. It was the spontaneous reaction of those powerful, intelligent beings the Bible calls angels. It was their reaction to God and to His creation of the universe. It’s recorded for us in Job. Turn back to Job 38. And if you wonder whether or not it’s true, the words come from the mouth of God Himself. He was there. He knows. And He says here’s what happened. This is when God begins to speak. Job’s friends are done.

God starts speaking to Job, and listen to what He says in Job 38:1,

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, “Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge?” [Now there’s a confrontation.].
“Now gird up your loins like a man and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!”
[You think you know so much about how your life ought to be run? Okay, let me ask you a few questions.]. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the

earth? Tell *Me* if you have understanding.” [God now takes Job back to the creation, to the foundation of the universe itself and the earth.] Verse 5, “Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone?”

God is using language of, of ancient building and He’s saying, “Listen. You know how to build a building. You do all of this. I didn’t do any of that. So how did I do it? Who laid its cornerstone?” Now notice verse 7. At that time, at the creation of the universe, the forming of the earth, notice what God says happened. “That’s when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” He said, “Were you there when that happened?” God says it happened.

Now if I had time, I’d take you back to Job 1, show you that “sons of God” here is clearly a reference to angelic beings. God is saying, “Listen, Job. When I made all of this, the angels surrounded me, and they sang. And where were you?” The point is music was a part of the expression of the angels’ worship of God when God was still making the universe. He had made the angels sometime before that, and they can’t help themselves, but when they see what God is doing, they burst out into song.

It wasn’t long before music left the angelic realm and invaded human history. Moses describes the beginning of human music back in the first book of the Bible. Turn back to Genesis 4. Genesis 4 is a fascinating passage that describes two civilizations or two societies, the origin of human society. And there were two of them, one from the godly line of Seth at the very end of Genesis 5, the other from the ungodly line of Cain.

But even in that wicked family of Cain who killed his brother, you see God’s common grace because God begins to allow them to utilize certain gifts, the gifts of metalworking, and in verse 21, the gift of music. One of Cain’s descendants was named Jubal, verse 21, and “he was the father of all those who play the lyre and the pipe.” Here is the human father of music. One of Cain’s descendants was enabled to put music together, to make instruments, to express music as an expression of God’s common grace to all of us. The reason we have music is because God allowed it to be discovered in this wicked, ungodly family of Cain.

But soon, music becomes a part of the godly line as well. Although there’s no direct mention in Genesis of music being sung to the praise of God, the events of Job occur during the patriarchal period, during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Job tells us there was music going on;

in fact, it comes from the mouth of a man name Elihu. Turn to Job, Job 36 again, just a little bit ahead of where we were last time. Job 36, and look at verse 22. Elihu, the only one of Job's friends that God doesn't censure, he says this to Job. Verse 22, Job 36,

“Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him? Who has appointed Him His way, and who has said, You have done wrong [Now watch verse 24.] Remember that you should exalt ... [God's] work, Of which men have sung.”

So, already during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, people were using music as an expression of their praise back to God.

When you come to the time of Moses, music begins to take an integral role in the life of God's people. You have that wonderful song of Moses in Exodus 15, commemorating God's great deliverance at the Red Sea. By the way, I'm not going to turn to all these, but let me encourage you to read them, magnificent songs about God inspired in the text of Scripture, Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32 is the song of Moses. This was commanded by God. Moses was to teach the people this song, and he did before his death.

Even during the most difficult period of the Old Testament, the period of the Judges when there was no central government, and, as the text says, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes,” there was still music being created, addressed to the praise of God, Deborah, the judge in Judges 5, and her song of praise; 1 Samuel 2, Hannah being told that she would have a son named Samuel, writes a great song of praise.

Then you come, after the period of Judges, to the richest time in Old Testament hymnody and songs of worship, and that's the period of the monarchy, the period of the kings of Israel and especially David. In 1 Samuel 16:18 we're told that while he was still a teenager, he was very skilled in music, both in playing the harp, and, as we later learn, in writing songs as well. Many years later when David actually became king, he appointed four thousand of the tribe of Levi whose responsibility at the tabernacle and later at the temple would be to lead in music, to be involved in the music of the worship of God. We'll come back to that in a couple of weeks. David wrote seventy-four of the songs or psalms as we call them in the collection of Israel's songbook. And many of the Psalms, whether they were written by God or not, call us, God's people, to sing. More than a hundred times in the Psalms we are commanded to sing to God.

Now I want you to feel the weight of this so let me just show you a few passages. Look at Psalm 5. And again, I'm just going to kind of fly across, but I want you to feel how much a theme this is. Remember now, the book of Psalms was written as an expression of a pattern of worship. You want to know how to relate to God? Here's how you relate to God. And notice how often we're told to do it in song. Psalm 5:11, "But let all who take refuge in You [O God] be glad, Let them [always] ... sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You,

Psalm 33, Psalm 33:1, "Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright. Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre [an instrument]; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy. For the word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is *done* in faithfulness." [Sing your praise to God.]

Psalm 69 is a very interesting one because it shows just how important this issue of singing is. Psalm 69, notice verse 30,

"I will praise the name of God with song And magnify Him with thanksgiving. [and watch verse 31] And it will please the LORD better than an ox *Or* a young bull with horns and hoofs."

In other words, God will be more pleased with the sacrifice of my praise in song than with my taking and offering a sacrificial animal.

Psalm 92:1, It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your [unfailing love] ... in the morning And Your faithfulness by night, With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, With resounding music upon the lyre. For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what [You've] ... done, I will sing for joy at the work of Your hands.

Psalm 96:1, "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day."

Psalm 98, and again, I hope you're beginning to feel the weight of this. These are just a few examples of more than a hundred.

Psalm 98:1, “O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him. [He’s] ... made known His salvation....”

The familiar Psalm 100:2 says when you come before the Lord, “come before Him with joyful singing.” Psalm 135, just a couple more references. Psalm 135:3,

Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely.
[And then he says why, verse 4, because of His sovereign election.] For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession. [Sing to God because He’s sovereignly chosen you.]

Psalm 147 we read this morning, verse 1, “Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant and praise is becoming.” This is how it ought to be. This is how God’s people ought to express themselves. Psalm 149:1, “Praise the Lord! Sing to the LORD a new song, *And* His praise in the congregation of the godly ones.” Verse 5, “Let the godly ones exult in glory; let them sing for joy [not only publicly in the congregation but for joy] on their beds.” [Privately, let music be an expression of your praise to God.]

And that same thread of spiritual songs sung to God can be traced from the monarchy, from the time of David and Solomon, throughout the rest of the Old Testament.

And then when you come to the New Testament, you find that worship music had a constant presence in the life of our Lord. At the synagogue, Jesus worshiped at the synagogue every Sabbath day, and the synagogue worship included singing and music. At the temple, daily, both morning and evening, there was a choir and an orchestra and music. And when our Lord was in Jerusalem worshiping, He worshipped with music and instruments. At the celebration of the feasts, including the Last Supper, you remember Matthew tells us as does Mark that after they had completed the Lord’s, the Last Supper, what we call the Lord’s Table, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And those are just examples from the life of our Lord. Remember, our Lord perfectly obeyed the Old Testament, but we just read dozens of commands to sing, more than a hundred in the Psalms alone. So, you can be sure that since our Lord perfectly kept the commands of Scripture, music was a constant part of His life at other times as well as those that are recorded.

Now as you will see, the next time we come to Ephesians 5, music also played a role after the life of Christ in the life of the New Testament church, and we'll look at that our next time of study together. But if we fast forward past us and into eternity, we discover that music will be an essential part of the worship of eternity. Turn to Revelation 5, Revelation 5. John the apostle is allowed a glimpse into the future and into heaven itself, and notice what he sees. The events of chapter 5 are clearly in the future and clearly in heaven. And notice what happens in verse 8,

... when ... [the Lamb] had taken the book, [that's the title deed to the earth, Christ takes the title deed of the earth from the hands of the Father, when He had done that] the four living creatures [those are the cherubim that are described in the Old Testament] and the twenty-four elders [representatives of the church] [all] fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain and [You] purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Notice in heaven, in the future, there will be both instruments and singing to God.

Now look back at Ephesians 5:19, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;" Now let me ask you. Having taken that little journey through the Scripture and into eternity, from eternity past to eternity future, let me ask you. Is it any surprise that where the Spirit is filling the heart with the Word that that heart loves God-centered music? That is the very first result of a heart that the Spirit has filled with the Word in all its richness.

You know, it's been my experience. I've travelled now by God's goodness to many of the continents of the world and been in worship services like this one with people of different nations and languages, all different kinds of backgrounds from the Maoris down in New Zealand, the tiny little gathering, to a large church in Samara, Russia, and everything in-between. And I can tell you that wherever I have travelled, whatever the conditions, however large or small the congregation, Christians who are under the influence of the Spirit love music that focuses on their God. They love to sing His praises.

Let me just ask you very personally and directly. Do you love God-centered music? Do you find yourself singing praise to God privately and personally when you're alone? Do you enjoy singing with the people of God? Is music that expresses praise to God a crucial part of your life? If not, this is a spiritual diagnostic. This is like a warning light on the dashboard of your soul. If you're not experiencing that love of God-centered music in your life privately and corporately when we join together, then you are not permitting or allowing the Spirit to fill you with the Word in all wisdom because where that happens, this is the first effect. The very first result of being filled by the Spirit is a love for God-centered music.

But the question comes to my mind – why? Why does music occupy such a crucial role in the universe? The simple answer is because it is a huge priority to God Himself. You see, the angels didn't originate music, God did. I won't have you turn there, but listen to Zephaniah 3:17. God is said to rejoice over His people, over those whom He has chosen to Himself, and listen to how He rejoices, “The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, [and then the Hebrew text actually says this] He will rejoice over you with ... [loud singing].” God sings.

But let's make it very personal. Turn to Hebrews as we finish our time together, Hebrews 2. As the writer of Hebrews describes what Christ has done for us, he says this in verse 11, Hebrews 2:11, “For both He who sanctifies [that's Christ, the One who sets us apart, who makes us acceptable to God] and those who are sanctified [that's us] are all from [one] one *Father*; for which reason He [that is, Christ] is not ashamed to call ... [us] brethren [brothers and sisters] ...” And then he quotes verse 12 from Psalm 22. Psalm 22 is a Messianic Psalm. It is quoted often in the gospels of Christ. And notice what Christ said. This is Christ talking now to the Father, verse 12,

“I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY ... [BROTHERS] [that's us], IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I [Christ] WILL SING YOUR [Father] PRAISE.” You know what's going on here? Jesus Himself will lead us in praise of the Father in eternity. Verse 13 explains the reason for His praise, “BEHOLD, THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN [TO] ME.”

Jesus Christ our Lord will stand in the middle of a redeemed humanity in heaven and He will sing praise to God the Father that the Father has given us to Him. And then we will join Him in the song of praise. That's the reason for our praise as well, isn't it? Because we have been given

to Christ as an expression of the Father's love. No wonder the songwriter said, "Tune my heart to sing Your praise."

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank You for the amazing life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for Your great love toward us in Him.

Father, we do fall and acknowledge that He died in our place, a death we should have died, so that His perfect righteousness could become ours.

Father, even as we've studied this morning, tune our hearts to sing His praise. May we be filled to overflowing by the knowledge of what He has done for us so that our hearts just erupt in song, in praising Him.

Remind us, O God, that this is why we were created, and this is what we will do forever. Help us to practice even while we're here.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.