

Watch Where You Step (Part 3)

Ephesians 5:15-18

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Turn with me again to Ephesians 5 as we continue our journey through this magnificent epistle of Paul, or letter of Paul, to the church in Ephesus and to the churches in the surrounding area.

When you think about communication at any level, you can understand why word pictures, and metaphors, and similes are often very important to getting your message across. They use the common and the familiar in order to help explain the uncommon and the unfamiliar. Figures of speech are very important in human communication even though we have so much in common. Still, they help us get our point across to the person to whom we're speaking.

So, imagine how much more important figures of speech become when the infinite mind of God is trying to communicate some spiritual truth to us and our little pea brains. Word pictures really do help, and the Bible is filled with such word pictures - word pictures like God as our Father or the church as the body of Christ, with each person a member of that body and He the head. Those pictures give us some grasp of a spiritual reality that, if it weren't for those pictures, we really wouldn't be able to understand or comprehend.

But sometimes, even Biblical word pictures can be misunderstood and misinterpreted. One of those pictures that I think is the most abused, the most misunderstood in our day, has to do with the filling of the Spirit. Of course, the filling of the Spirit describes the constant influence of the Spirit in the life of a believer. But today, its message, the message of that image, that picture, that word picture, has become a little clouded - not because of any lack of clarity in the Spirit's mind or on the part of the Spirit's communication, but because it has been abused by well-intentioned Christians. But as we'll see, understanding this word, understanding this picture, and pursuing what this word picture teaches is absolutely crucial for our spiritual life and survival.

Let me remind you of where we find ourselves. We're studying this great letter of Paul to the church in Ephesus. And in the first three chapters, he taught us about our new position in Christ - the incredible realities, the blessings that are ours because of Christ. Beginning in chapter 4, verse 1 and running through the, the last three chapters of this marvelous letter, Paul teaches us the implications of our new position – how we should respond in light of it. And all of the commands of those three chapters flow out of one command. It's the command that appears in chapter 4, verse 1: “walk worthy of your calling.” Walk worthy of your calling; that is, walk in a way that's worthy of that new position you've been given in Christ. And he tells us how to do that in a series of paragraphs.

Several weeks ago, we began to look at one last way the apostle tells us to walk worthy of our calling. It's the longest section of the entire letter. It begins in chapter 5, verse 15 and runs down through chapter 6, verse 9. The theme of that long section appears in the command of verse 15. Look at verse 15: “walk (not as wise, or excuse me) not as unwise, but as wise...” Walk not as unwise, but as wise. If we're going to walk worthy of our calling, we must walk in Biblical wisdom. If you want to honor Christ and all that He's done in your life, then you are compelled to walk in Biblical wisdom.

Now let me remind you of how this section sort of unfolds. In verses 15 through 18, we have the command to walk in Biblical wisdom. And then beginning in verse 19 of chapter 5 and running all the way through chapter 6, verse 9 we have the consequences or results of walking in Biblical wisdom. What does a life look like where there's Biblical wisdom? We're looking at the foundation, the command itself, which is found in verses 15 through 18. Let me read it for you again. Ephesians 5:15: “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but rather be filled with the Spirit...”

In those verses, Paul gives us the command to walk in Biblical wisdom. Notice he tells us in verse 15 we are not to live our lives out like those God would see as unwise and

foolish, but rather, we are to consistently live like those whom God considers to be wise. That's the command. But in those four verses I just read for you, Paul not only gives us the command, he tells us how to carry that command out. He marks out the path to a life of Biblical wisdom.

Do you want to live wisely, Biblically wisely, in this world? Well, there are several crucial components of such a life, and we've been looking at them together. The first component, if you want to follow this command and live in Biblical wisdom, is to examine your ways. Examine your ways. Verse 15: "be careful how you walk..." 'Be careful' means to contemplate, to think about, to weigh carefully. If we want to live in Biblical wisdom, we have to examine our lives. The height of foolishness from God's perspective is an unexamined life - a life simply lived from day to day with no thought of the choices made or the direction and the end of that life.

The second crucial component of a life of Biblical wisdom, that we've already seen together, comes in verse 16: seize every opportunity. If you're going to walk in Biblical wisdom, you've got to be diligent to seize every opportunity - "making the most of your time because the days are evil." We often take that verse out of its context, but in context, Paul is saying, 'You and I have to seize every opportunity to pursue a life of Biblical wisdom.'

A third crucial component to a life of Biblical wisdom, that we have seen together, comes in verse 17: know and understand God's will. Know and understand God's will. Look at verse 17: "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." He's talking here, as we discovered together, not about some esoteric feeling or **some** mystical direction, but instead, he's talking about what is revealed between the covers of this book - that is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. And we are to know what God has revealed. So this understanding, then, of God's will comes, as we discovered, through an understanding of His Word, through prayer as we ask God to help us understand that word and, ultimately, through Christ, in whom is found wisdom itself. So then, a life of Biblical wisdom is a life that understands God's revealed will in His Word and does it.

So, we have God's will. It's revealed in His Word. How do we come to understand that word? The answer is through the work of the Spirit. But here's a more important question. We all know, if we've lived as a Christian any time at all, that there is a great gulf between knowing and understanding the Word of God and actually carrying it out on a day-to-day basis in our lives. You ever have that problem? Do you know more than you do? What is the bridge, if you will? What is the resource that allows us to begin to live out the word that we have come to understand? And the answer is: the work of the Spirit of God.

That's the message of verse 18. Verse 18 introduces us to the fourth and final crucial component for a life of Biblical wisdom. You want to live a life of wisdom? Here's the fourth key: be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit. Look again at verse 18: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit..." You know, that's really a surprising contrast, isn't it? I mean, why would Paul contrast being filled with God's Holy Spirit with being drunk with wine? It appears that he has simply put together two equally important but unrelated commands. What you have to understand here is this verse has context. The first half of that verse has context. Paul's focus is not on the first half of the verse. Instead, the first half of that verse and the command not to get drunk merely serve to help explain the second half. And it's in the second half of that verse that we get the primary command that fits into the flow of the context we're studying together. You see, in this verse...listen carefully. In this verse and in this positive command, we discover the means by which Biblical wisdom, that we have come to understand from the Word of God, becomes a part of us, becomes a part of our daily habits. Here's how you get from knowledge to life. Paul is telling us the means by which we can actually acquire Biblical wisdom from the Word of God and live it out. It is by being filled with the Spirit.

Now, today, as we just begin to unpack this pivotal verse in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we really have to step back. We have to step back and walk through a couple of foundational issues. We're going to be doing a little heavy sledding and I just want to

prepare you for that. Put on your thinking caps and stay with me. It's absolutely crucial that you understand what I'm going to cover today so that you understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit. But let me give you a little roadmap of where we're going this morning. We're going to start, first of all, by considering the New Testament role of the Holy Spirit. What role does the Spirit play in believers' lives in the New Testament? Number two: we're going to look at the current confusion about the Spirit. Why is there so much difference among professing Christians on this whole issue of what the Spirit is to do and not to do? And then, thirdly, we'll look at the true filling of the Spirit or we'll begin to look at the true filling of the Spirit. Alright?

With that roadmap in your minds, let's start by looking at the New Testament role of the Spirit. What role does the Spirit play in the lives of New Testament believers? Well, before we can really answer that question, we have to ask a question before it, which is, what role did He play in the lives of Old Testament believers? So, let's do that. Let's kind of start there as we look at the New Testament role of the Spirit. What did He do, what was the primary work of the Spirit in the lives of Old Testament believers?

Three key words – if you remember these words, you'll have the essence of His role in the lives of Old Testament believers. Number one is regeneration. Regeneration, that is, the imparting of new life, of spiritual life. This is always the work of the Spirit of God. Jesus essentially affirmed this to Nicodemus. You remember when He interacted with Nicodemus who was a teacher of the law, understood the law of God and the Old Testament? Jesus is talking to him on the terms of the Old Testament. And He says to him in John 3: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is (what?) spirit." It takes the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual results in someone. "Do not be amazed (therefore, Jesus said) that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" He's saying to this teacher of the law, 'Listen! Don't you understand this? **This is** there in the Old Testament. You should understand it.'

And so, in the Old Testament, people were redeemed - they were saved, they were regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can impart that kind of life.

That's what Jesus said. So, they were saved, in that sense, in the same way we are. The Spirit made them alive just as at a moment in time. For those of us who are in Christ, He makes us alive; they in anticipation of the cross, we in looking back to what Christ accomplished at the cross. But they were regenerated. They were made a life with spiritual life by the Spirit of God.

Word number two: sanctification. Sanctification, that is, the Spirit progressively made Old Testament saints more holy. Remember, they are called in a number of places in both Old and New Testaments "holy men". In fact, even Peter refers to them as "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" - speaking of the prophets in the Old Testament. How do you get to be holy? How does an unregenerate sinner get to be holy, get to be a saint, get to be practically holy and held up as they are in the New Testament, as these models of virtue? How does that happen? Well, it doesn't happen by the flesh. We know that, right? I mean, in Galatians 3, Paul is dealing with that very thing and he says, 'Listen, you Galatian believers. You have begun by the work of the Spirit. You were regenerated by the Spirit. You were given new life by the Spirit. Will you now be perfected by (what?) the flesh?' What's the answer? No! Of course, not. It's impossible! You can't begin by the work of the flesh, by your own efforts, and you can't continue or be perfected, be sanctified, by your own efforts. It's the work of the Spirit of God. So, if there are any believers in the Old Testament who were sanctified, and there were, it had to have been the work of the Spirit of God. And so, while there are a couple of differences, we'll talk about in a moment, there were a lot of similarities between what God did in their lives and what He does in ours – regenerated by the Spirit, sanctified by the Spirit.

Number three: empowered – special empowering for a specific task. This wasn't for every Old Testament believer, but it was for some. They were especially empowered for either a long time or a short time, but for a specific task. Let me give you a couple of examples. Turn back to Exodus 35. This is a bit of an unusual one. It's not for something you would expect. Exodus 35, notice verse 30. They're building the tabernacle, that tent that was going to be the representative of God's throne room, the

Holy of Holies being His throne room there above the ark of the covenant. And so, this was like His portable throne room that went around in the middle of Israel. And so, they're building it and they want it to be built right. Verse 30: "Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, 'See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah (verse 31). And He has filled him with the Spirit of God (for what end?) in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, and the cutting of stones for settings, the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. He has also put in his heart the ability to teach (this to others), both he and Oholiab.'" Verse 35: "He's filled them with skill to perform every work of the engraver, designer, embroiderer, in blue and purple and scarlet, in fine linen, as of a weaver, performers of every work and makers of designs." Apparently when the children of Israel came out of, out of Egypt, there was nobody in their midst who had this capacity, who had these skills, this ability. And so, God **in** the person of His Spirit, moves on these two men and especially equips them to do this task.

You see it with the leaders of the country as well. Joshua, we're told, the Spirit of the Lord came on him in this way in Numbers 27:18. You read it with the judges as you work through the book of Judges - those regional leaders in the nation of Israel during the darkest time of their history. Othniel, and Gideon, and Jephthah, and Samson are all said to have the Spirit come upon them to prepare them to lead, to serve in that role that they were given. Saul, the first king of Israel, we're told, the Spirit came upon him to equip and prepare him to fulfill his role.

Let me show you one other. Look at David - 1 Samuel, 1 Samuel 16. Right after he's anointed king - by the way, he's not going to become king for more than a decade, probably about thirteen to fifteen years at this point, but he's anointed king privately by Samuel here. Verse 13, 1 Samuel 16: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and (watch what happens - at that moment) the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward." In other words, at that moment, he was already a true believer. You see that in the context of 1 Samuel. He

already was a true believer in God but, when he was anointed to be the king of Israel, the Spirit of God came on him and specially empowered him to fulfill that unique role, that unique function. Theologians sometimes call this special empowering of the kings the “theocratic anointing”. Maybe you’ve heard that term; maybe you haven’t. But that was primarily the role of the Spirit in the Old Testament, those three things – regeneration, sanctification, and empowering.

Now let’s ask the question then, how did the Spirit’s role change after Christ, after specifically that unique manifestation of His presence at Pentecost in Acts 2? How did His role change after that? Primarily two ways – He was still regenerating; He was still sanctifying and from time to time still specially empowering people as we’ll see next week. But there were two things that changed, that weren’t true in the Old Testament, that become true in the New Testament. Number one: the indwelling of the Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit. If you read the Old Testament carefully, there are a few people in whom the Spirit is said to dwell - Joshua, for example, in Numbers 27:18, Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:2, Daniel in Daniel 4:8-9, Micah the prophet in his prophecy chapter 3, verse 8. All of those are said to have the Spirit in them.

But, by and large, when you look at the Old Testament, that was not a common way to refer to true believers in the Old Testament. There’s no indication that that was a common reality in the time of the Old Testament. In fact, Jesus tells us that the Spirit now permanently indwells the believer in the New Testament time in some way that’s distinct from what He did in the Old Testament time. Let me show you this. Turn to John 14. John 14 – this is the night, of course, before His crucifixion. It’s in the upper room discourse. And notice what He says to His disciples in verse 16. John 14:16 - **look** back at verse 15: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (how’s that going to happen, verse 16). I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

Now **there** are a couple of expressions you need to notice here. Verse 16: “that He may be with you...” Notice this is poised as the future. This has not yet happened - that He may be. **And** the Greek word for ‘with’, here, is a word which means ‘in your midst’, ‘in the middle of you’, ‘in the middle of a group’, ‘amongst you’ - however you want to say it - ‘in the middle’.

Verse 17, there’s another interesting expression. Notice He says: “He abides (end of the verse, He abides) with you...” Notice that’s present tense. Already that’s a reality, Jesus says. He currently abides and here He uses a different Greek word for ‘with’. It’s the word ‘para’ which means ‘by your side’. He currently abides by your side. And then in verse 17, He ends it with “and He will be (in the future) in you”, that is, within you, inside of you. Now this clearly implies that in the Old Testament, before the new covenant ministry of the Spirit really came and began at Pentecost in Acts 2, the Spirit was with them in the sense that He was by their side. But Jesus tells His disciples here, on the night before the crucifixion, that when He leaves, there’s going to be a change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and it’s going to be to their advantage.

In fact, keep your thumb there and turn over a page to John 16:7. This is shocking, really. How many of us would love to have lived in the time of Christ, to have accompanied Him as His disciple, and would see that as far superior to what we enjoy today? Is that not true? Well, listen to Jesus. 16:7: “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 away, I will send Him to you.” So, something the Spirit is going to do and to be, is an advantage to us over the personal presence of Christ.

Now, notice what He promises here. Verse 16: the Spirit will be among them (that is, in the middle of them) forever (it’s not going to come and go) and (verse 17) He will specially manifest His presence inside you (in you, inside every believer’s mind and heart in some new and more powerful way than in the old covenant). Certainly, He was with them in the old covenant. Certainly, He was sanctifying, regenerating in the Old

Testament times. But there's something more powerful and different about His ministry in this indwelling.

What is it? Well, I can't give you all the ins and outs of it, but I can give you a little hint. Turn back to Ezekiel, because in Ezekiel, you have the promise of the new covenant that's ours in Christ. This is the covenant under which we live, the New Testament tells us, which Christ died to seal with His own blood. Look at Ezekiel 36, because in Ezekiel 36, he explains this new covenant and what it's going to look like. In Jeremiah, it's called the new covenant; here it's not called by that name but it's exactly the same promise. But notice what he says. Verse 24, Jeremiah 36 [Tom meant Ezekiel 36]: "I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, bring you into your own land." There's definitely a Jewish element of the new covenant, as well as Gentiles as we learn from the New Testament. But notice what He does spiritually to everyone who's under the new covenant. Verse 25: "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean (so I'm going to cleanse you, I'm going to forgive you, I'm going to wash away your sin and its guilt); I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit (or attitude) within you; and I will remove the heart of stone that you have and (I'm going to) give you a (true living, breathing, beating) heart of flesh." I'm going to give you a heart transplant, God says. I'm going to give you a new heart – different motives, different desires, different loves. Now watch verse 27: "I will put My Spirit within you (here it is, why? Notice the rest of the verse) and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." Now we have the Spirit within us causing us, teaching us, causing us to walk in the Word of God. There is a new force and a new power to the work of the Spirit under the new covenant. He indwells us permanently.

Now don't think when you hear that – you know, the Spirit can't be, it's not like the Spirit just sort of fills up your body and that's the only place He is. The Spirit, by nature, is God and God by nature is infinite. He can't be contained to a single space. He can't be contained to the creation. He transcends all of that. What it means – when we talk about the Spirit indwelling you, what we mean by that is the Spirit specially manifests

His presence in your mind and heart for your spiritual growth and advantage. That's what we mean.

Now there's a second change in the ministry of the Spirit from the old covenant to the new covenant – not only the indwelling of the Spirit, but secondly, the baptism of the Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit. Prior to Pentecost, there was no baptism with the Spirit. John prophesied, you remember, that it would come. In Matthew 3, he says: "There's someone coming whose shoes I'm not worthy to untie, and He will baptize you (what?) with the Holy Spirit." Jesus will initiate this. Well, you fast forward through Jesus' ministry and it still hasn't happened. In fact, after His resurrection, forty days after His resurrection on the day of His ascension in Acts 1:5, He says this to His apostles. Acts 1:5: "for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So, John said it would happen. Jesus is going to fulfill it, but He's going to fulfill it ten days after He ascends at Pentecost, when the Spirit comes and baptizes them.

Now, what does that mean? It simply means to immerse us into Christ, into the body of Christ, to connect us to Christ inseparably, and to connect us to one another inseparably. When you read through the book of Acts, there's a transition time when there are some oddities going on. But by the time you get to Paul's letter **to** Corinth, every believer is baptized into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation. Let me show you this. Turn to 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit (mark these words) we all (we all, no exceptions, believers) were baptized (past tense, already happened) into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." So, at the moment of salvation, we are immersed into Christ, we are connected to Christ and to everyone else who is a part of His family, a part of His kingdom. We're baptized into the body of Christ. That was a new thing with the new covenant.

Now it's important to note that both of these new actions of the Spirit – indwelling of believers, the baptism of the Spirit – are events that occur at the moment of salvation.

You see that here in 1 Corinthians 12: “we were all baptized...” It happened in the past as an event, obviously at the moment of salvation. Romans 8:9 says, “...the Spirit of God dwells in you...” And if the Spirit doesn’t dwell in you, you don’t belong to Christ. So, when you come to belong to Christ, you get the Spirit. Both of those things have already happened. If you’re a Christian, you have already been immersed, connected to Christ through what’s called the baptism of the Spirit, at the moment of salvation, and you now have His special, abiding presence in your heart and mind.

Now, that’s the unique role of the Spirit in the New Testament. That all seems pretty clear. So why is there so much confusion surrounding the ministry of the Holy Spirit? I want us just briefly to consider a second issue – the current confusion about the Spirit. Why is there so much confusion about the work of the Spirit? Well, over the last hundred years, there have been three movements that have badly skewed popular Christian understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Let me give them to you briefly. The first movement was the Pentecostal movement. It began in the US in the early 1900’s. There’s disagreement whether it was 1901, 1906, but the Pentecostal Movement. Its primary emphasis was the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not come at salvation. Instead, it comes later in the life and it’s usually accompanied by speaking in tongues. And all of the spiritual gifts, including the miraculous gifts in the New Testament, are to be sought and used today. The Pentecostal movement was mostly tied to the Assemblies of God, as we know them today.

A second movement came in the 60’s and 70’s. We call it the Charismatic Movement. It was connected to the Renewal Movement of the 60’s and the 70’s. It was not tied to any particular denomination. In fact, there are Charismatic Catholics, Charismatic Protestants of all shapes and sizes **and** backgrounds. But the Charismatic Movement has this in common: there ought to be a practice of all the spiritual gifts, including the miraculous, often with an emphasis on speaking in tongues. That was one of their major foci.

Now, the third movement is called the Third Wave. This began in the 1980’s – very similar emphasis to the first two. It was named the Third Wave because of a seminary

professor at Fuller named Peter Wagner who was instrumental in beginning this movement. And he said, 'The Pentecostal movement was the first wave. The Charismatic movement was the second wave. We're the Third Wave.' And they believe in practicing all of the New Testament gifts including the miraculous, but they stress that the preaching of the gospel should be accompanied by signs and wonders. That's how people are going to believe - if there are signs and wonders like there were in the New Testament times. They do teach that the baptism of the Spirit occurs with every believer, at the moment of salvation, but they think after that we all ought to seek other experiences and they call those experiences 'the filling with the Spirit'. Their primary association is with the Vineyard Churches based originally out of California and now they've spread around.

Now, when it comes to those three movements and the work of the Spirit, their emphasis was on the subjective, the experiential, and the miraculous. So, the teaching about the Spirit is, in many cases, badly skewed from what the Scriptures teach. And their influence has spread far beyond those movements. There are Christians sitting here today, sitting in churches that wouldn't even begin to embrace or say they're connected with any of these movements, that have been influenced by their teaching.

So, before we can come to a full understanding of what Paul means by being filled with the Spirit, we need to tear down a couple of misunderstandings that most people carry with them. Let me briefly give you the common flawed views of the filling of the Spirit. Here's what it's not, okay? Here's the confusion. Larry Pettegrew, in his helpful book 'The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit', identifies several misunderstandings about the filling of the Spirit that have grown out of those movements and been influenced by those movements. Let me give them to you briefly.

Misunderstanding number one: the filling with the Spirit is a second crisis experience after salvation that is identical to the baptism of the Spirit. So, in other words, you're looking for something after salvation that is both, at the same time, the filling of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit. People who are non-Pentecostals like Charles Finney,

Dwight Moody, R.A. Torrey taught that that kind of filling and baptism of the Spirit gave you special power for service. You'd be zapped by God and suddenly you would be much more capable to do whatever it was you needed to do. Pentecostals say that it gives you the ability to speak in tongues. But there's this second crisis experience that is both the filling of the Spirit and baptism of the Spirit – two names for the same thing.

A second flawed view is also a second crisis experience, but this one says it's distinct from Spirit baptism. When you become a Christian, you're baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. But after salvation at some point, there ought to be another experience that is the filling of the Spirit. It's an experience, a crisis experience. There are many people in the Deeper Life Movement, if you're familiar with that name, who take this view. There's even a man, whom I respect greatly and admire his writings, who takes this view named A.W. Tozer. A.W. Tozer taught that the filling with the Spirit was an experience at some point after salvation. And he said you ought to seek it because if you get it, it'll produce victory over sin, it'll give you new power for service, it'll give you the fruit of the Spirit in greater measure. So, you better meet the conditions. And **he** said there were four conditions to be filled with the Spirit, and it was an experience that you had.

A third flawed view is one baptism at salvation - one baptism of the Spirit - but many fillings throughout your life. This view still sees the filling of the Spirit as an event; it just says there are many of these events. It could happen today, and next week, and a month from now, and a year from now. There are going to be these events in your life. This is what most classic dispensationalists teach - John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, C.I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer all take this view. Listen to John Walvoord. He says: "The filling of the Spirit may occur many times and is an important aspect of spiritual experience."

Now, I think you will see next week that those are all flawed views of the filling of the Spirit that simply don't measure up to the scrutiny of the Word of God. But why have I taken all this time? Why is this even so important? I want to finish our time together,

stay with me just for a moment, as to why this even matters. Well, I want you to see this. Why is it so important? Notice the flow of Paul's argument back in Ephesians 5. Stick with me. I'm almost done. Ephesians 5, I want you to see this. In verse 18, Paul gives us the command: "be filled with the Spirit." Then in verses 19 to 21, there are these four participles that are all results of being filled with the Spirit. If you're filled with the Spirit, verse 19, you're gonna "speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." You're going to "sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord." You're going to "give thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." You're going to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." And then, beginning there and running all the way through the rest of this section, the next twenty verses – all of those practical commands about marriage and family and work all flow out of the command to be filled with the Spirit. In other words, folks, listen carefully, without the filling of the Spirit, none of those commands is possible. If you're not filled with the Spirit, as a wife, you will not be able to overcome your natural propensity and submit your will to your husband. If you're not filled with the Spirit, as a husband, you will not be able to overcome your innate selfishness and sacrificially love your wife. If you're a child, you will not be able to overcome your rebellious heart and, with your heart, obey and honor your parents. If you're a parent, if you're not filled with the Spirit, you are going to be constantly provoking your children to anger. If you're a worker and you're not filled with the Spirit, you're going to be struggling to serve with your whole heart sincerely as if you were serving Christ. If you're a boss, you're going to be tempted to be domineering, and controlling, and threatening.

So, listen carefully. For every spiritual bit of progress, for all spiritual growth, for true worship, for healthy relationships in every area of life, nothing is more important than being filled with the Spirit. You know what this is teaching us? This is teaching us an absolutely crucial truth and I want you to get this in your mind. You and I do not have the ability to live the Christian life. You understand that? You don't have that ability and nor do I. If we're on our own to worship, if we're on our own to give thanks, if we're on our own to be the right kinds of husbands and wives and parents and children and bosses and employees, we are facing an impossible task. But what do we do as

Christians? We jump right past the ‘being filled with the Spirit’ to the practical commands: ‘Well, let me see what I’m supposed to do. I can do this. Just tell me. Let me get my pencil and paper ready. Give me a checklist. I can make up my mind and I can resolve, and I can do these things.’ The Biblical answer from Paul is: ‘No, you can’t!’ What did Christ say? “Without Me you can do (something?) nothing.” And then He says, ‘I’m going to leave, but I’m going to send the Spirit.’ In other words, the Spirit is now going to be to you what I am. So, without the Spirit, you can do (what?) nothing. This was the very truth that gripped the mind of Augustine when, in his ‘Confessions’, he wrote this: “Give me the grace, O Lord, to do as You command and then command me to do what You will. O Holy God, when Your commands are obeyed, it is from You that we receive the power to obey them.” John Calvin wrote: “What God demands from us by His Word, He likewise bestows by His Spirit.” In another place, he adds: “The increase as well as the commencement of every good in us comes from the Holy Spirit.”

Listen, Christian. Leave here this morning with this in your head. As a Christian, my only hope, your only hope of obeying God’s commands to us, is if God gives us the power to obey them and that power comes to us through the work of the Holy Spirit, a work we can either encourage or we can hinder. Next week, we’ll see how, and we’ll see what it means to really be filled with the Spirit.

Let’s pray together.

Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for how it instructs our minds. Thank You for Your Spirit given to us, indwelling us, teaching us, admonishing us, directing us. Thank You, O God, for the gifts You’ve given us. Remind us that, of ourselves, we can do absolutely nothing but fail. Help us to see, O God, that our only hope of living out the rest of what’s commanded in this wonderful epistle, is if we are filled with Your Spirit. Lord, help us to think about that this week, to think about our utter inability to obey You apart from the work of Your Spirit in and through us. And may we come back prepared next week to see what You have for us in the filling of the Spirit. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen!