

## The Spirit-Filled Life By Ruth Paxson (1876-1949)

### ~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

In the divine plan there is as definite a purpose in the gift of the Holy Spirit as in the gift of the Son. Through the Son the sinner has life; through the Spirit the believer has life more abundant. Through the Son the sinner leaves the sphere of the natural and enters the sphere of the spiritual; through the Spirit the believer is lifted to the highest heights of life on the spiritual plane.

It is God's purpose that every Christian should live a life of deep growing spirituality. The Holy Spirit lives within us to accomplish this in three ways. He reveals through the Word the fullness to be had in the glorified Christ. He creates in our hearts a desire for this fullness, and then He acts as the channel for its transmission from Him to us.

In one terse command God shows us the highest point the believer can reach in relationship to the Holy Spirit.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

"Be filled with the Spirit." You have Him dwelling in you, but that is not enough. Give the Spirit full right of way. Let Him fill you from center to circumference. Permit Him to energize you with His mighty power through filling you with Himself.

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is every Christian's birthright. By virtue of the new birth he has the right to such fullness. It is not the privilege of a few but the prerogative of all. Are you despising your birthright, as Esau did his, and selling it for a mess of pottage? Do you care more for pleasure or money or position than you do for the fullness of the Holy Spirit?

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is every Christian's need. No one can live a truly spiritual life without the Spirit's fullness. One hundred and twenty were filled at Pentecost. Only eleven of them were apostles. Some were women who went back home to cook, to sew, to care for a family; others were men who returned to the field and the shop. The names of only a very few are recorded in the Bible, but I have no doubt that the rivers of living water flowed from the lives of all into other lives.

Do not think you are too young to be filled with the Spirit. It will save you from the years of wilderness wandering of many older Christians. Do not say that you are too old, that the hold of sinful habits is too strong upon you. Give the Spirit a chance. Only admit that to be filled with Him is your greatest need and submit your life to Him, and He will do the rest.

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is every Christian's responsibility. "Be not drunk with wine." Do you obey this command? Surely you do. "Be ye filled with the Spirit." Do you obey this command? Why not? Is it not equally binding upon you? Is not God dishonored through disobedience to one just as much as to the other?

As no Christian is refused the blessing of such an experience, so none will be exempt from its responsibility. As refusal of life in Christ is the greatest sin of the unbeliever, so refusal of the abundant life through the Spirit is the greatest sin of the believer. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not optional but obligatory. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

"Filled" -- "Full" -- "Fullness."

"Be Filled with the Spirit" -- A Crisis.

"Full of the Holy Ghost" -- A State.

"Filled unto all fullness" -- A Process.

The apostles were with Christ for three years, but they were not filled with the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost. This was a crisis. But they were filled more than once, until we read of Stephen and of Paul that they were "full of the Holy Ghost." This was a state. But there was an inexhaustible, infinite fullness from which they might draw according to their receptive capacity, so there was a continuous infilling. This was a process.

There should be a definite time when we are "filled" for the first time. But there should be repeated infillings that we may be habitually full and yet ever taking in more and more of the fullness of God. To be spiritual one must be filled and kept filled...

## The Prerequisite to Fullness -- Cleansing

The infilling of the Holy Spirit demands cleansing. Two commands given to Christians reveal this fact very clearly.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

Grieve is a love word. You cannot grieve one who does not love you. You can hurt him or anger him but you cannot grieve him. The Holy Spirit is a loving, tender, sensitive Personality. To grieve Him means that we are causing pain to Someone who loves us. How can we know what grieves Him? By His names which indicate His nature.

He is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17). Anything false, deceitful, hypocritical -- grieves Him. Is there a lie in your life? Then do not expect to be filled with the Spirit of truth until your heart is cleansed.

He is the Spirit of Faith (2 Corinthians 4:13), so doubt, unbelief, distrust, worry, anxiety, grieve Him. Do you doubt His Word? Is there unbelief regarding the fundamental truths of salvation? Do you worry over your business, your children, your health? If so, you are grieving the Spirit of faith and He cannot fill you.

He is the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29), so that which is hard, bitter, ungracious, unthankful, malicious, unforgiving, grieves Him. Is there anybody whom you will not forgive or to whom you will not speak? Is there someone with whom you have quarrelled? Is there bitterness in your heart toward God? Do you spend your days in murmuring against your circumstances? Then do not pray to be filled with the Spirit unless you are willing to be cleansed.

He is the Spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4), so anything unclean, defiling or degrading, grieves Him. Do you harbor unclean thoughts? Do you read unclean books? Do you have degrading pictures hung in your home? Do you listen to unclean stories? If so, you are grieving the Holy Spirit.

He is the Spirit of Wisdom (Ephesians 1:17), so ignorance, conceit, arrogance, and folly, grieve Him. The Holy Spirit stands ready to teach us and to reveal the deep things of the Word to us. Our ignorance of the Bible, our pride in our own knowledge and ability and our foolish ways, grieve Him.

He is the Spirit of Power, Love and Discipline (2 Timothy 1:7), so our weakness, fruitlessness, disorderliness and lack of control, grieve Him. There are thousands of people all around you who are still unsaved and who do not know the gospel. Perhaps some of these are in your family. Why cannot Christ win them? Because the channels through which His power should flow are choked with sin. Are you embittered because you have been wronged and is your life poisoned by hatred? Do you give way constantly to your bodily appetites, your fleshly desires and your temperamental weaknesses? All this grieves the Holy Spirit.

He is the Spirit of Life (Romans 8:2), so anything that savors of indifference, lukewarmness, dullness or deadness grieves Him. Do you go for days without opening your Bible? Do you prefer the haunts of pleasure to the house of prayer? This grieves this wonderful Spirit of life.

He is the Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14), so that which is worldly, earthly or fleshly, grieves Him. Are you carnally minded? Do you love the world? Is your heart set upon the things of earth? This grieves the Holy Spirit.

He dwells within to enable us "to grow up into Christ in all things"; and to bring us daily "into conformity to His image." So anything in us which hinders Him from carrying out this purpose grieves Him. Knowingly to permit anything which is contrary to what the Holy Spirit Himself is, to remain in your life must mean that you love sin more than you love Him. Such unfaithfulness grieves Him.

Spirituality depends upon an harmonious relationship with the Holy Spirit. To indulge known sin means that we are living with a grieved Spirit. To be filled one must be cleansed. "God does not require golden vessels. Neither does He seek for silver ones, but He must have clean ones."

"Quench Not The Spirit"

1 Thessalonians 5:19

We "grieve" the Spirit when we say "Yes" to Satan when he lures us into sin. We "quench" the Spirit when we

say "No" to God when He woos us into sanctification and service. To bring the believer wholly into the will of God is perhaps the Holy Spirit's hardest task. Self-will is latent in every one of us and is always bursting out into rebellion. The only cure for it is a deliberate choice to do God's will in all things, at all times, and at all costs. It is to have one's heart firmly fixed upon the doing of God's will as the rule for daily life and to permit no exception to the rule.

To grieve or to quench the Spirit is sin. He dwells within us to purify and cleanse us. In a darkened room there would be much of dirt which would pass unnoticed, but when the doors and windows are opened and the sun shines in, even the dust is revealed. The Holy Spirit brings out into the light the sin in our lives, and the more completely He fills us the more perfect will be the revelation and recognition of sin.

The nearer God comes to us the more sensitive to sin are we made. Some things which a year ago or even a month ago you would not have called sin you now acknowledge to be sin.

### The Means of Cleansing

For sinner and saint alike nothing but the blood of Jesus suffices to cleanse from sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

The Christian is in constant contact with sin and the very tense of the verb shows that he never gets beyond the need of the cleansing blood of Christ.

### The Method of Cleansing

The Holy Spirit will tell us what grieves Him, will point us to 1 John 1:9 and then our responsibility begins. God requires but one thing of us -- a frank, full confession prompted by a true heart repentance. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

God will accept no substitute for confession and He instantly detects a counterfeit. Have you ever thought that God would accept from you a larger gift of money, greater activity in service or a longer prayer in lieu of a confession of sin? Or are you self-deceived in thinking that regret because of suffering for the punishment of sin, or a forced acknowledgment of some offence with no heart sorrow for the sin itself is confession?

Sometimes a supposed confession is a confession of the other fellow's sin and a justification of oneself. Oftentimes a confession is but a partial one. Some top sin is mentioned while the root sin is altogether unconfessed.

Some sins need to be confessed only to God because against Him only have we sinned (Psalm 51:4). Other sins need to be confessed to individuals against whom we have sinned (James 5:16), and again a public confession of sin is sometimes necessary when the whole company of God's people have been wronged (Joshua 7:19-25).

### The Measure of Cleaning

The cleansing must be from all defilement of both flesh and spirit. Separation from every defiling thing is God's requirement.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

God demands a cleansing that reaches from the innermost desire to the outermost deed; that goes from the core to the circumference of our lives. He asks us to take His conception of sin which regards a lustful look as truly sin as a lustful act, which sees a murderer in the one in whose heart there is hatred as truly as in the one in whose hand there is a bloodstained dagger.

Do you resemble the Pharisees of old who were like whited sepulchres, which appeared beautiful outwardly, but within were full of uncleanness? God commands us to cleanse both the inside and the outside. Is there a root sin in your life that has been there for years? Roots multiply and spread. There is then a trail of sin marking the path of your life since. You must go back over it, claiming cleansing for all sin.

God's withholding of His presence in power from His own children until sin is put away is very strikingly

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revealed in His dealings with the children of Israel over Achan's sin. God had told them that, when Jericho was taken, no one was to take any of the spoils for himself. But Achan, coveting gold, silver and a Babylonish garment, took them and hid them under his tent. No eye but that of the all-seeing God saw it done. Immediately afterward Israel met with overwhelming defeat at Ai. Joshua, falling upon his face in prayer, charged God with blame for such humiliation before their enemies.

But God commanded Joshua to stop praying. He told him that he would not presence Himself with power in their midst so long as the accursed thing was there. The man who had coveted, stolen and lied must be found and confession of sin made.

Is there an Achan in your church who hinders the manifestation of God's power? Are you the man? Have you been praying fervently for the fullness of the Holy Spirit while all the time there has been the continued indulgence of some known sin, the willful disobedience of some known command, or the deliberate resistance of God's clearly revealed will.

If so, God is saying to you, "Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Thou hast sinned, neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify yourselves, thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you" (Joshua 7:10-13).

So long as you are living with a grieved or a quenched Spirit you cannot be filled. To be filled one must be cleansed of sin.

"There's a Man in the Glory  
Whose life is for me,  
He's pure and He's holy,  
Triumphant and free.  
He's wise and He's loving,  
Tender is He;  
And His Life in the Glory  
My life must be."

From Rivers of Living Water, by Ruth Paxson.