Grace Fellowship Church Series on the Fruit of the Spirit Rick Griffith

February 15, 1987 Message #1

NIV 35 Minutes

**The Filling of the Spirit**

Galatians 5:13-26

**Subject:** The filling of the Holy Spirit

**Complement:** gives us the power to overcome the weaknesses of our natural temperament

**Purpose:** To instruct the listener how to be filled with the Spirit in his daily life in order to experience victory over his natural weaknesses

**Attribute:** We worship the Holy Spirit, our Source of Power

**Meditation:** Ephesians 5:18

**Introduction**

1. Please allow me to introduce you to four special friends…

# Temperament Occupation Response to Stress

a. Sparky Sanguine (Extrovert) Actors "What stress?"

1) Strengths: Fun, personable, talkative Salesmen

2) Weaknesses: Loud, undisciplined, undependable Speakers

b. Rocky Choleric (Extrovert) Builders Blows his cool

1) Strengths: Strong-willed, leader, productive Producers

2) Weaknesses: Anger, cruelty, domineering Leaders

c. Martin Melancholy (Introvert) Artists/Musicians Internalizes

1) Strengths: Aesthetic, gifted, perfectionist Inventors (Depression)

2) Weaknesses: Self-centered, moody, unsociable Philosophers

Professors

d. Philip Phlegmatic (Introvert) Diplomats Falls asleep

1) Strengths: Calm, easy-going, humorous (dry Accountants

2) Weaknesses: Laziness, indecisive, spectator Teachers

Technicians

2. Temperaments are our natural abilities and weaknesses.

a. This fourfold division of personality types was initially proposed by the Greek "father of medicine," Hippocrates.

b. In the 1980s it was popularized by author Tim LaHaye.

c. Although each temperament has its own set of inherent weaknesses, LaHaye has done a better job than Hippocrates in terms of helping us overcome our natural weaknesses.

3. How is this? LaHaye's main point (and my main point today) is that the issue for the Christian is not **what** his temperament is, but whether he has a **Spirit-controlled** temperament!

a. Being Spirit-controlled allows us to experience the fruit of the Spirit--love, joy, peace, patience, etc.

b. Unfortunately, most Christians don't experience these qualities as an everyday experience. Why? To produce fruit you need water!

c. The reason most Christians don't have the fruit is because they don't know how to get the "water," the filling of the Spirit!

d. This leaves their lives spiritually dry and unproductive.

4. So my topic today is simply this: How can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?

5. Actually, today I will address four related issues:

a. Some **preliminaries** before understanding the filling of the Spirit.

b. What it **means** to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

c. The **results** of being filled with the Spirit

d. **How** to be filled with the Spirit.

**I. Some preliminaries are necessary to understand before comprehending the filling of the Spirit.**

**Let's take a brief look at 3 important questions before investigating what it means to be Spirit-filled.**

(The first question is this: Who is the Holy Spirit? The Bible affirms that…)

A. The Holy Spirit is God.

1. (Acts 5:1-4) Ananias is said to have lied to the Holy Spirit in verse 3 but to God in verse 4.

a. Whom did He lie to, God or the Holy Spirit, or does the Scripture contradict itself?

b. He lied to both because the Holy Spirit **is** God!

c. Notice also that while some religious groups teach that the Spirit is an impersonal force, here we see that He is a person, for you cannot lie to an influence!

2. (Jn 14:16) Christ said that He would send "another Helper," or "Comforter."

a. There are two different Greek words for "another," one meaning "another of a different kind" and the other meaning "another of the same kind."

b. John used the second word here meaning that, if Christ is God (and He is), then the Spirit, the other Helper of the same kind, is also God.

(The second preliminary question is: Which believers have the Holy Spirit living within them? The Scripture teaches that…)

B. Every believer has (is indwelt by) the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9-11).

1. The end of verse 9 says that if you do not have the Holy Spirit then you aren't a Christian.

2. Verse 11 states twice that the Spirit lives in the believer.

3. 1 Corinthians 6:19 also supports this where it states that the Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

(This teaching about the indwelling of the Christian leads us to our third question: Does the fact that the Spirit **indwells** every Christian mean that every Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit? No, because…)

C. All Christians are either spiritual or carnal (1 Cor 3:1).

1. Paul, writing to Christians, said that they were not spiritual but worldly, or carnal.

2. This is what Paul meant in Romans 7 where he stated that, even as a Christian, he had a tendency to want to sin.

3. Campus Crusade for Christ has illustrated these two types of lives with this concept: Every Christian's life has a throne, or a control-center. Christ is either on the throne or self is on the throne (ILL: Brad Bright, *TC#4*, pp. 18-20).

(So our preliminary questions have shown us that the Holy Spirit is God, who indwells every Christian although not every believer is filled with the Spirit. With this background let's turn our attention to our second major point: What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?)

**II. Being filled with the Holy Spirit means to be controlled by God (Eph 5:18).**

**When the Lord directs our lives rather than ourselves we are filled with the Holy Spirit.**

A. I said to be filled means to be controlled, but how do we know this is what it means?

1. Look at the comparison in the verse which has both a negative and a positive command.

a. The negative command says not to get drunk because being drunk is debauchery, or a plain waste. Why? Rather than controlling himself, the wine controls him.

b. The positive command says that a believer should not control himself but should be filled, or controlled, by the Spirit.

c. You see, a man controlled by alcohol does things which are abnormal--beats his family, kills people on the highways, etc.

d. In like manner, a man controlled by the Holy Spirit also does things which are abnormal, because they are supernatural. (We'll take a look at these things in a moment.)

2. The issue is one of control.

a. Who is on the throne of your life? You, or the Lord?

b. Does the Lord have to yield to your will or is your will yielded to the Lord?

c. To put it in automotive terms, "Who has the right-of-way in your life?"

d. In relation to temperaments, does your temperament control you or does the Spirit of God control your temperament?

B. Let's take a closer look at this command to be filled…

1. It's a command, which means that it's definitely God's will for every Christian.

2. It's in the present tense, meaning that this should be our constant experience. This also means it's not a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

3. It's in the passive voice, meaning that we don't do it ourselves.

a. We don't fill ourselves with the Spirit because it isn't a work of man--only of God.

b. A J. Gordon, one of the founders of Gordon Conwell Divinity School, once was taking a walk and noticed across a field what appeared to be a man pumping furiously at one of those hand pumps—except it was an electric pump!

c. Many Christians are pumping furiously but are not connected to the Spirit's power-—and they don't get a drop!

(What happens, though, when you **are** connected to the all-powerful Pump? When you are filled with the Spirit, what are some of the results? Let's read on in Ephesians 5:19-21 to discover the answer to this third major question this morning…)

**III. The results of being filled with the Spirit are new abilities in several areas (Eph 5:19-21; Acts 1:8; Gal 5:16ff.).**

**The New Testament mentions six brand new capacities which are evident when a man is controlled by the Spirit.**

(The first four results appear in Ephesians 5:19-21. Unfortunately, these are not commands but **evidences** of the Spirit's filling, but for some reason the NIV translates them as commands, so I'll use the KJV, which is the best translation for these four new capacities. The first new capacity is that…)

A. Corporate praise results from being Spirit-filled (Eph 5:19a="speaking to yourselves [one another] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" KJV).

1. Here we see praising God in…

a. psalms (OT songs sung with a stringed instrument)

b. hymns (praises composed by Christians) and

c. spiritual songs (a general term).

2. Once at a company Christmas party the folks sang "Twelve Days of Christmas" with gusto but had hardly a peep on the songs telling what Christmas is really like.

3. Singing in corporate praise should be the natural outflow for the Christian.

a. Church music should be one of the means by which we minister to each other.

b. Even though the phlegmatic has a tendency to be unmotivated and withdrawn as a spectator, the Spirit-led phlegmatic will **love** to meet with other believers in corporate praise!

(Whereas corporate praise is done externally "to one another," the second evidence of being filled with the Spirit is more internal. Secondly…)

B. Individual worship results from being Spirit-filled (Eph 5:19b="singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" KJV).

1. Notice that this this music is sung "in your heart."

2. Notice also Who your number one Audience is when you sing while filled with the Spirit--it's God Himself!

a. Do you sing primarily to the Lord or your neighbor? (Some don't have this problem cuz their neighbor can't hear them!)

b. Here's where the Charismatic churches have one over on us. We may not agree with all their theology, but we sure can learn from them how to shut out other influences and sing to the Lord!

(There's a third evidence or result of the filling…)

C. Thankfulness results from being Spirit-filled (Eph 5:20="Giving thanks always for all things unto God and [even] the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" KJV).

1. Here's a trait which God often dramatically changes in Spirit-controlled cholerics and melancholies.

a. Sanguines and phlegmatics have an uncanny ability to shrug off difficult situations, making it easier to thank the Lord.

b. But this isn't a natural ability for the choleric (who finds some situations hard to be thankful for since they may ruin his dreams and plans), or for the melancholy (who can sulk in a "Why me?" syndrome).

2. Do you see what this circumstance says? Any person controlled by the Holy Spirit can actually be able to thank God by faith in any circumstance! (ILL: Kurt crying at night/running over the JVC unit).

D. Submissiveness results from being Spirit-filled (Eph 5:21="Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God" KJV).

1. How many marital conflicts do you think would cease (or not even start) if both partners were filled with the Spirit? I think at least 90% would!

a. Some teach that wives are to submit to their husbands, but not the reverse.

b. Husbands, if you love your wife and are truly controlled by God's Spirit, you will often submit your own will to meet the needs of your wife.

2. A young couple once shared with me about their difficulties adjusting to having a new baby in the house.

a. She thought he ought to help bottle-feed the baby in the middle of the night, but he saw this as **her** responsibility.

b. What was the problem? Tiredness? A baby which couldn't tell time? No, simply the ole stubborn self-will, conquered only by being controlled by the Holy Spirit.

3. No matter what temperament we are, we all have a leaning towards a stubborn self-will. It's easy to excuse it on our temperament, but submitting ourselves to the wishes of others can only truly come when we're Spirit-led.

(I've discussed four results of the filling of the Spirit mentioned here in Ephesians 5: Corporate praise, individual worship, thankfulness and submissiveness. Now for the fifth result…)

E. Enablement to witness results from being Spirit-filled (Acts 1:8).

1. Trace through the book of Acts and you'll notice that whenever the filling of the Spirit is mentioned, people are converted.

2. I know from first-hand experience that my desire to share Christ, my motives and the success is often directly linked to whether I'm seeking to share Christ inmy own pwer or by trusting the Spirit's power through me.

(The last result of the filling of the Spirit I will really only mention this week, and this is that…)

F. The **fruit** of the Spirit results from being Spirit-filled (Gal 5:22-23).

1. What we're really taking about here is Christlike character.

2. Do you want to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control? This is only possible by walking in the power of the Holy Spirit!

3. It would be impossible to even touch on each of these nine characteristics in this message, so I have decided to spend the next nine weeks on a series on the fruit of the Spirit.

(To this point this morning I have discussed some preliminary considerations, what the filling of the Spirit means, and some of the results. All that remains is the "how to!" How are we filled with the Spirit?)

**IV. We are filled with the Holy Spirit by yielding ourselves to God in faith.**

**Only when we live a life of dependence upon the Lord are we controlled by the Spirit.**

(I'd suggest just two steps to demonstrate this dependence…)

A. Confess any known sin (1 Jn 1:9).

1. How can I hold onto sin and yet be filled with the Holy Spirit at that same time?

a. Since God's Spirit is **holy** this can't be done!

b. We can never fool God into thinking we want Him in control when we harbor secret sin.

c. As Lewis Sperry Chafer used to say, "Secret sin on earth--is open scandel in heaven!"

2. Thank God He has forgiven all your sins--past, present and future--because Christ died for you.

(The second step in yielding yourself completely to God is to…)

B. Present every area of your life to God (Rom 12:1-2).

1. The key phrase here is to "offer you bodies as a living sacrifice," but what does that mean?

a. Obviously, God is not interested in just having our body, but our mind, will, soul, spirit, conscience, and interests.

b. So it's best to understand "body" as referring to one's total life and activities, which are lived out through the body.

c. Offering the body on the altar as a sacrifice should remind you of the Old Testament sacrifices where whole animals were killed on the altar.

d. The difference here, though, is that we are to offer **living** sacrifices (which, as others have said, tend to want to crawl off the altar!).

2. In light of the fact that God has demonstrated His mercy on the cross of Calvary, have you offered to Him your total life?

a. When you hold back the keys to your life, you can't be filled ith the Spirit.

b. When you turn the keys over to Him, you give Him the opportunity to drive you to greener pastures!

**Conclusion**

1. As I stated at the beginning of this message, we all have inherent weaknesses due to our natural temperament. As hard as we try in our own strength, we can't overcome these weaknesses.

M.I. 2. However, the filling of the Holy Spirit gives us the power to overcome the weaknesses of our natural temperament.

a. The sanguine's insensitivity and loudness turns into a sensitive, stable ministry in the lives of others.

b. The choleric's anger and cruelty is overcome to be a calm spirit in the Spirit's power.

c. The melancholy's sel**fish** moodiness is transformed into a self**less**, sensitive spirit that reaches out to empathize with the hurts of others.

1) The melancholy gets tempted to say, "Look, I'm depressed. Just leave me alone until I get out of it then I'll be O.K."

2) When he or she says that the actual situation is this, "Look, I'm depressed and I'm unwilling to be filled with the Spirit."

d. The phlegmatic's laziness turns into self-discipline beyond his natural capacity.

3. All that I've been saying this morning leads up to this question: Are you filled with the Spirit or are you living in the power of your limited, natural ability?

a. Are you able to praise and worship God, here at church and when alone?

b. Do you experience thankfulness and submissiveness towards others?

c. Are you so excited about the Lord that it spills over onto others with whom you just have to share the good news?

d. Do you experience the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?

4. Remember that to be controlled by God's Spirit you need to do but two things:

a. Confess your sin to God.

b. Present yourself to Him to do as He pleases.

5. Will you do it now? Will you relinquish control of the throne of your life to the Lord?

a. In a moment of silent meditation I want to encourage you to trust God to fill you with the Spirit.

b. Then, we will do something we have not done here since I have been pastor.

1) I want to encourage you to make public your desire to have the Lord in control by coming forward during the next hymn.

2) I will meet you up front as Charlie leads us.

6. Invitation: Hymn #147 *Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart* (all verses)

Vs. 1 Sing

--Filling of the Spirit

Vs. 2 Sing

--Baptism

Vs. 3 Sing

--Salvation

Vss. 4-5 Sing