

**A Series on Ephesians**  
**Sub-Series: How to be a Gospel-Centered Charismatic**  
**“Understanding the Gospel and the Spirit”**

**Ephesians 5:18**  
**August 8, 2010**  
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**I. Introduction**

Good morning! Welcome to New City! My name is Kevin Haah, and I am the lead pastor here. [Look at our vision statement]

We've been going through the book of Ephesians. We are kicking off a sub-series called "How to be a Gospel-Centered Charismatic." We are going to be spending three weeks on this topic.

Let's read Ephesians 5:18-20:

**<sup>18</sup>Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup>always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Some people think of being filled with the Spirit purely as an emotional experience. Yes, it is an emotional experience but there is more to it than that. My goal today is to build a strong foundation upon which we can be filled with the Spirit. If we think of it only as an emotional experience, we will burn out. I think that's why so some people who have had an amazing experience of the Spirit of God do not seek to be filled with the Spirit. They don't want a roller coaster Christianity. They want something more steady. My goal is to make us into a church that is solidly grounded in the gospel and filled with the Holy Spirit. I believe that if our spiritual experiences are not grounded in the gospel, we will not be able to sustain it in the long term.

In order to understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit, we need to understand what it means to live by the Spirit. If you know how to do this, you know what it means to be completely soaked in it, what it means to be filled with it. You've got to understand the basics in order to understand the full measure of what it means.

So, what does it mean to live by the Spirit?

The whole theme of the book of Galatians is that we once lived under the law and now we live by the Spirit. There is a movement from the law to the Spirit. To understand what living by the Spirit means, we have to understand it in contrast to living by the law. It is all over Galatians but we don't have time to go over all of it. Let me just give you a couple of verses:

Galatians 3:1-5:

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ as clearly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup> I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? <sup>4</sup> Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? <sup>5</sup> Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

He is talking to Christians who are going back to the law and telling them we can't go back to law after we become a Christian. We have to leave the law and live by the Spirit. That's why he says in Galatians 5:18: "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

There is a movement from the living by the law to living by the Spirit.

Let me give you another passage: Romans 6, 7, and 8. The primary theme of these three chapters is that there has been a movement from the law to the Spirit. Let's look at Romans 7:4-6:

<sup>4</sup> So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. <sup>5</sup> For when we were controlled by the sinful nature,<sup>a</sup> the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. <sup>6</sup> But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

To explain this reality that we don't live by the law anymore, but by the Spirit, Paul starts to illustrate what living by the law is. Living by the law means we focus on fixing ourselves, we focus on doing better, we focus on performance, we focus on trying

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<sup>a</sup> Or *the flesh*; also in verse 25

to do the right thing, we focus on trying to stop doing drugs, we focus on trying to stop that sinful lifestyle. We know what the right thing to do is, but we can't do it.

In Romans 7:15-24:

<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup> I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.<sup>b</sup> For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Have you experienced this in your life? Feeling so wretched. The answer he gives to resolve this problem of the law is Jesus Christ! But, I often I used to stop reading here and say, "Okay, Jesus is the answer, I know that; but I still don't get it; how is he the answer to this particular problem? I was very frustrated that he lays out a very real problem that we could all identify with and end up giving us such a pat answer. And then, I remembered that Paul never included Chapter numbers. We did. I started to read Chapter 8 more carefully, and I realized, he does explain the answer in a powerful way.

A couple of verses later in Chapter 8:1, Paul elaborates:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Do you see that Spirit has set me free from the law? Living by the law just led us to a perpetual and vicious cycle of sin. But, when the law couldn't fix us, God fixed us by sending his own Son to be a sin offering. He paid for the sin in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us. So, life of the Spirit is the life

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<sup>b</sup> Or *my flesh*

that relies on God’s atoning sacrifice for our righteousness. It is a life of freedom! It is a life where we can actually enter into God’s presence regardless of what we have done.

Paul goes on to explain this further in Romans 8:14-17:

<sup>14</sup>because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.<sup>g</sup> And by him we cry, “*Abba,*<sup>h</sup> Father.” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup>Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

So, living by the Spirit means living as sons and daughters, beloved children of God, as opposed to living as a slave to the law and ending up like in a perpetual cycle of sin.

I want to try to summarize this if I can:

<b>Living by the Law</b>	<b>Living by the Spirit</b>
<b>Slavery (Romans)</b>	<b>Sonship</b>
<b>Death (Romans)</b>	<b>Life</b>
<b>Bondage (Galatians)</b>	<b>Freedom</b>
<b>Darkness (Ephesians)</b>	<b>Light</b>
<b>Old Covenant (Hebrews)</b>	<b>New Covenant</b>
<b>Work (Ephesians)</b>	<b>Grace</b>
Performance based (our identity, worth, and self value come from how we perform)	Grace based (we are adopted, loved, and valued because of Jesus)
Contractual (have a tendency to bargain with God. I obey in order to get things from God).	Grateful and thankful. Makes us humble and confident at the same time
We are constantly trying to get God to do something.	We are soaking in what God has already done.
Earning our approval.	Soaking in our approval

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<sup>g</sup> Or *adoption*

<sup>h</sup> Aramaic for *Father*

To live by the Spirit is to live in the second column and leave the first column. That's not Christianity. Remember what Paul said in Galatians? Who has bewitched you?? We live by the Spirit, not under law.

### **III. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?**

If to live by the Spirit means to live in the second column, to be filled with the Spirit means to be filled with God's beautiful presence, unconditional love, grace, freedom, joy, power, all of the stuff of the second column. That's why Paul says in Romans 5:5b says: "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us."

Being filled with the Holy Spirit ultimately has to do with God's love in our heart. It is an experience of His love in our hearts.

Being filled with the Spirit is not just an emotional ump for emotional ump sake. It is an experience of God's love in our hearts. Fill our hearts with God's grace, God's love, God's freedom, God's joy, God's beauty, God's presence. Allow the presence of God to overwhelm you.

When you experience love from someone, doesn't it make you feel all warm inside? Makes you feel secure. Makes you feel good. God's love is not just in the head. It's not just intellectual. It comes into our hearts and makes us feel good. Sometimes, when we really feel it, it makes us drunk.

- Sometimes, when people are filled, they dance, they shout, they feel saturated by God's presence and love, they are filled with joy and can't stop laughing.
- Sometimes, they just start to cry out of joy, relief, freedom.
- Sometimes, people fall in the power of the Spirit.
- Sometime, people feel a warm sensation, physical heat, in their body when they are filled with the Spirit. [explain what happened to me]

I am not saying that any of you will experience this.

- What I am saying is that sometimes, some people do experience these physical manifestations.

- I want to let you know that because if you do experience it, I want to you to know what it is and not be scared by it.
- However, I am not saying that we should seek these kinds of physical manifestations.
- What matters is not the outward manifestations of the Spirit, which you may or may not experience, what matters is the inward experience of the Spirit.
- Let me use an analogy. I remember when I fell in love with Grace. I felt these tingling sensations in the spine when I thought about her and my heart beat faster when I saw her. I was almost giddy with excitement especially when I was going to see her after a long time of not seeing her.
- It would be silly to try to seek after these manifestations. I should seek after Grace, which I did.
- Now, these sensations are a byproduct of my love for Grace.
- The important thing is seeking Grace, not these sensations.
- The important thing is to seek after God, not the physical manifestations.
- On the other hand, it is not bad to feel these sensations. If I felt that I should not feel these tingling sensations or excitements when you're in love, that would also be silly. The feelings and sensations are a natural byproduct of my love for Grace. It's perfectly natural and normal. Some people feel it and some people don't. But, it's not what matters. What matters is the person.
- And what we seek is an experience of God, of being a child of God.  
 Thomas Goodwin, a Puritan who lived about 300 years ago, illustrated it like this. Picture a man walking with his little son holding his hand. This man loves his son and the son knows that his father loves him. But suddenly, the father stops, lifts up the son and embraces him, kisses him, and tells him I love you, and puts him down again. And they continue walking hand in hand.
  - It is wonderful to walk hand in hand with the Holy Spirit. It is even more awesome when he lifts you up and embraces you and tells you that he loves you.