

# Ministry of Grace Church

## The Acts of The Apostles Chapter 9

### Preface:

In the previous chapter, we learned about the first persecution of the church. It began immediately after the execution of Stephen who had been condemned because the Sanhedrin claimed he spoke against the Temple and against the teaching of Moses. In his speech before the Sanhedrin, however, Stephen defended himself masterfully and presented a clear case against the religious leaders because they had rejected their Messiah, Jesus, the one who had been sent to save them.

Stephen had been one of the seven men selected by the church to assist the Apostles by serving at the tables where donations were distributed to those in the church who had need. Another of the seven was Philip. When the persecution of the church began, he felt called by God to go to the city of Samaria where he had a wildly successful evangelistic campaign. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard of the success of Philip's preaching, they sent Peter and John to Samaria where they laid hands on the new believers and they received the Holy Spirit.

### The Conversion of Saul

#### **Acts 9:1-9**

**<sup>1</sup>But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. <sup>4</sup>And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" <sup>5</sup>And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup>But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.**

### Notes:

If you recall, as the members of the Sanhedrin were going outside to stone Stephen, they laid their coats at the feet of Saul, a young Pharisee who was an up-and-coming member of the Sanhedrin. And, as we learned last week, he was not simply consenting to the stoning of Stephen, he was delighted with it, as were many other members of the Sanhedrin. As a result of his zeal in serving God, Saul went house to house to find members of the church so he could have them imprisoned.

However, because of this persecution, members of the infant church scattered, and many of them left Jerusalem. There is some evidence that a large group of them settled in Damascus. So, Saul went to the high priest to get permission to go to Damascus and arrest any Christians that he

found there. Notice that he went to the synagogues in Damascus. This is because the church, at this point in time, was predominantly Jewish. They were still meeting in the Jewish Synagogues. The word synagogue literally means “a place where people gather together.” Even James, the brother of our Lord, referred to the Christian meeting place as a synagogue.

For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, (James 2:2)

Here, the word translated “assembly” is actually the Greek word *sunagōgē*. Within a couple of years, probably because of Saul and others who persecuted Christians in the synagogues, they abandoned meeting in the synagogues.

On his way to Damascus, at about midday (according to Acts 22:6), Saul was driven to the ground by an immensely bright light and the voice of the Lord. When Saul asked who it was, He said,

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”

Later, in Acts 26:14, we are told that the men with him also fell to the ground. And, according to Acts 9:7, the men travelling with him heard the voice but did not see who Saul was talking to. However, according to Acts 22:9, the men with Saul saw the light, but did not understand the voice that spoke to him. So, putting these all together, we see that when the Lord appeared to Saul, they all saw the light, and they all heard the sound, but only Saul understood the words that were spoken to him.

Notice the similarity between the message given to Saul and what was said to Abraham. Abraham was told to go to a land, not knowing what land it was, but that God would reveal it to him when he got there. Similarly, Saul was told to go to Damascus where he would be told what to do once he got there. Sometimes the Spirit of God tells us to do something without giving us all the details. We need to learn to be sensitive to the voice of God even when we don't have all the facts.

## **Ananias Gives Saul his Sight**

### **Acts 9:10-18**

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy

**Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;**

**Notes:**

Ananias lived in Damascus and had recently become a Christian (here called a disciple, which is the most common name for a Christian in the book of acts). He had a vision of the Lord who told him to go find Saul of Tarsus and lay hands on him so that he might receive his sight. Ananias had heard of Saul. He had even been told that Saul was on his way to Damascus to capture Christians by force and haul them off to jail.

The trip from Jerusalem to Damascus takes about a week, and yet, the Christians in Damascus had already heard that Saul was coming to arrest them. Naturally, Ananias was reluctant to go find Saul, knowing that his life might be in danger. However, this new Christian obeyed the voice of the Lord and went to find Saul and did as God had instructed him.

I believe it’s fairly obvious that Saul became a believer as soon as he had his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. But – he was not filled with the Holy Spirit until Ananias came and laid hands on him. How come? We learned earlier that the first Christians did not receive the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost and the Samaritans did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John went down and laid hands on them. Now we see that Saul was not filled with the Holy Spirit until Ananias laid hands on him. Do we need to adjust our theology here and accept the notion that a believer does not receive the Holy Spirit the moment he or she is saved?

Absolutely not!

You see, I have played a bit of a word game with you just like so many false teachers today, who try to prove their false doctrine with Scripture. As I have said before, we need to read the Scriptures very carefully, and whenever we listen to someone teaching or preaching, we need to listen very carefully and check what is being taught against Scripture, as the Christians in Berea did (see **Acts 17:10, 11**). Here’s the key to understanding what God is teaching us here. There is a significant difference between “receiving the Holy Spirit” and being “filled with the Holy Spirit.” All Christians receive the Holy Spirit, that is, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the moment we are saved. In the book of Ephesians, Paul (this same Saul we are talking about here) is speaking to Christians; those who have already been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, because they are saved. And yet – he commands them,

**And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,  
(Ephesians 5:18)**

Again, these are saved Christians that Paul is talking to. They are already indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, Paul commands them to “**be filled with the Spirit.**” So, there’s a definite difference between being saved, that is, having been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and being *filled with the Holy Spirit*. The word translated “filled” means “to fill a vessel completely, all the way to the top.”

Now let me read the statement I made earlier. I want you to pay particular attention to the words I used.

I believe it’s fairly obvious that Saul became a believer as soon as he had his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. But – he was not filled with the Holy Spirit until Ananias came and laid hands on him. How come? We learned earlier that the first

Christians did not receive the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost and the Samaritans did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John went down and laid hands on them. Now we see that Saul was not filled with the Holy Spirit until Ananias laid hands on him.

Do you see the difference? Saul did NOT receive the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him. That happened the moment he got saved. Now let's go directly to the text in front of us, because it is not clear that Saul was even filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of Ananias laying his hands on him. In verse fifteen Ananias said,

... "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17)

The Lord also told Ananias that Saul had seen a vision of a man laying hands on him so that he might receive his sight (no mention of being filled with the Holy Spirit).

And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." (Acts 9:11-12)

Do you see the difference? Ananias added the fact that Saul would be filled with the Holy Spirit. That was not part of Saul's vision. And – After Ananias laid his hands on Saul, we are told that,

... immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; (Acts 9:18)

Dr. Luke does not tell us that Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him, only that he regained his eyesight. I'm not saying that Saul wasn't filled with the Holy Spirit at that time, just that the Scriptures are not definite on that point. We just don't know whether Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid hands on him. So, to use this passage to teach that we must receive the Spirit as a second act of grace is not only tenuous, it is not supported by Scripture here at all.

## **Saul Proclaims Jesus in Synagogues**

### **Acts 9:19-25**

<sup>19</sup>and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. <sup>20</sup>And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." <sup>21</sup>And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" <sup>22</sup>But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. <sup>23</sup>When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup>but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, <sup>25</sup>but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

### **Notes:**

Back in verse 9 we were told, "for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank." Saul had been fasting and praying for three days. However, once his eyesight was restored, he

allowed himself to eat again. One can only wonder what Paul thought about during those three days. Knowing now that Jesus is, indeed, the Messiah, I'm sure that he prayed to the Father and spent considerable time thinking through the scriptures that talk about the Messiah. Since he probably had it memorized as did most devout Jews of that day, he probably mentally studied Isaiah 53. This is clearly a Messianic passage that didn't make sense to the Jews of the first century. As Saul went over this passage, I'm confident that he realized that it perfectly described Jesus and his suffering for us.

<sup>1</sup>Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup>For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? <sup>9</sup>And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup>Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup>Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup>Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:1-12)

Once Saul had regained his strength, he got to work immediately, proclaiming in the synagogue that Jesus is the “Son of God.” Incidentally, this is the only place in the book of Acts that the title, “Son of God” is used. However, Paul used it in his epistles at least 15 times.

Saul was as much a relentless witness for Christ after he got saved as he had been an antagonist previously. Imagine the amazement of the new Christians in Damascus who had been in abject fear of Saul. They were now hearing him proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah. Saul was such a master of the Old Testament that he was now supremely able to demonstrate to the Jews in Damascus that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Messiah.

Although Luke says nothing about it here, somewhere around this point in time, Saul left Damascus temporarily and travelled into Arabia. This is detailed for us in Paul's letter to the Galatians:

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. (Galatians 1:13-17)

Upon returning to Damascus, Saul continued proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, in the synagogues of Damascus. As a result, just like Saul and others had done to the new church in Jerusalem, the Jews of Damascus rejected the truth and tried to stomp out this new sect in any way possible. They were convinced that the only way to stop this heretic was to have him killed before he did any more damage. Fortunately, Saul's disciples discovered the plot against him and helped him escape by lowering him outside the wall in a basket. Saul had left Jerusalem of his own accord, a man on a mission, but he was led into Damascus as a helpless blind man and had to be snuck out of Damascus as a fugitive. He came to Damascus as a predator and left as the prey. God's ways are above our ways.

But before we go on, did you notice who it was that helped Saul escape? It was his disciples! Even though Saul had only been saved for a few years, he was such a powerful proponent of the Christian faith that he had already developed devoted followers, disciples.

## **Saul in Jerusalem**

### **Acts 9:26-31**

<sup>26</sup>And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup>So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup>And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. <sup>30</sup>And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. <sup>31</sup>So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

### **Notes:**

In a very short span of time, Saul of Tarsus had become well known in Christian circles. Initially, it was because he ravaged the church and hauled people off to prison. After his conversion, however, he became just as well known around Damascus as a champion of the faith and as a debater whose presentation of the Gospel became so powerful that no one could refute him. As a clear leader in Christian thought, it would only seem natural that he should get together with the apostles who were all in Jerusalem. However, the disciples in Jerusalem were actually afraid of him because they didn't yet believe that he was really a Christian.

So, to the rescue comes a man named Joseph, although the apostles called him Barnabas. We first met him back in Acts chapter 4,

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:36-37)

This same Barnabas, who was one of the first to sell property and donate it to the church, had apparently been with Saul in Damascus and took Saul with him to see the apostles. After explaining Saul's conversion to the apostles and telling of Saul's boldness in preaching the gospel in the name of Jesus, the apostles accepted him.

Saul was particularly adept at disputing with the Hellenistic Jews, probably in part due to the fact that Saul was himself a Hellenistic Jew. But once again, his ability to proclaim the truth about Jesus got him in hot water with the Hellenists. They, like others before them, tried to have Saul killed. And – once again, the plot was discovered. Saul was taken to Caesarea, where he took a ship to his hometown of Tarsus. Isn't it amazing how God protects those who are submitted to Him and doing His will?

Since Saul had become such a lightning rod for opposition to the new found faith of the early Christians, once he was out of the way, there was a lull in the persecution fervor. Luke now gives another of his status reports on the church. He says:

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (Acts 9:31)

## **The Healing of Aeneas**

### **Acts 9:32-35**

<sup>32</sup>Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. <sup>33</sup>There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup>And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. <sup>35</sup>And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

### **Notes:**

Now the focus of Luke's account turns back to the Apostle Peter. It appears that ever since he and John had gone down to Samaria to lay hands on the believers for them to receive the Holy Spirit, he had been led by God to travel about proclaiming the gospel message. As part of this ministry, he went to the town of Lydda (today, the town is called Lod, just south of Israel's international airport at Tel Aviv.) His itinerant ministry would eventually expand to areas north of Israel, in what is today the nation of Turkey. Here's how he opened the book of 1 Peter:

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (1 Peter 1:1)

While he was in Lydda, Peter encountered a man named Aeneas who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. Without hesitation, Peter addressed the man and healed him in the Name of Jesus. This is reminiscent of the time when Peter healed the man at the Beautiful Gate in the Temple. That man had been crippled from birth (see Acts 3:1-8). The text tells us that Aeneas stood up immediately and all the local residents were so amazed that they turned to the Lord.

## Dorcas Restored to Life

### **Acts 9:36-43**

<sup>36</sup>Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. <sup>37</sup>In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. <sup>38</sup>Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, “Please come to us without delay.” <sup>39</sup>So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. <sup>40</sup>But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. <sup>41</sup>And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup>And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. <sup>43</sup>And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

### Notes:

While Peter was still in Lydda, in the nearby town of Joppa a Christian woman by the name of Tabitha was being mourned. The name Tabitha is Aramaic for “gazelle,” which in Greek is Dorcas. She was well known in Joppa for her deeds of righteousness and her charity toward the poor in the city.

It became known that Peter was in Lydda, about 10 miles away. So, they sent for him, hoping that he could raise Tabitha to life again. When he arrived, the women of the town showed Peter many of the articles of clothing that she had made for others. Then, after having everyone leave the room, Peter simply said, “Tabitha, arise.” Immediately, she came back to life and Peter took her out to be with the other women. Then, just as had happened in Lydda, the local residents heard about the miracle and many of them believed in the Lord.

### So What?

Throughout the first half of the book of Acts, we repeatedly encounter the word “apostle.” So, we need to answer a couple of questions. The first is, what exactly is an apostle? The second question is, are there any apostles in the church today? The answer to the second question is, “No and Yes.” The English word apostle comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, which means “someone who is sent.” In the New Testament, the apostles of Jesus consisted of the 11 disciples (Judas not included), Matthias (who replaced Judas), and Paul. Scripturally, in order to be considered an apostle of Jesus Christ, the person had to have seen Jesus and had to have been specifically and individually sent by Jesus. For this reason, there are no apostles of Jesus Christ in the church today. However, strictly speaking, we have all been sent. In Matthew’s gospel account Jesus said,

having gone, then, disciple all the nations, (baptizing them—to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all, whatever I did command you,) and lo, I am with you all the days—till the full end of the age.’ (Matthew 28:19-20) [YLT]



Therefore, in reality we are all apostles. We have all been sent on a mission with a message to declare and a job to do. However, the way the term is used in the New Testament, it applies only to those special men who were called by God to lead and care for the infant church.

Now, what's the difference between an apostle and a disciple? A disciple is someone who is learning a discipline. More specifically, in the Bible a disciple is someone who is following a teacher and is committed to learning what that teacher has to offer. The Greek word for a disciple is *mathētēs*, which simply means "a student." We read in [Acts 9:25](#) that Saul's disciples helped him escape by lowering him down the wall in a basket. They were Saul's students.

When I was a young Christian, I was taught that there are no apostles today and that we are all disciples. Now here's my quandary. Technically, every Christian is an apostle, because we're all sent to fulfill the Great Commission. And – any Christian can be a disciple, but not every Christian is a disciple. Remember, a disciple means a learner, a student. Only those who are active students of Jesus, who are active students of His Word are really disciples. Only those who are committed to learning how to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are really His disciples. Are you a disciple, or just a Christian?

We talked earlier about Saul possibly having been filled with the Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him. So, let's talk about being filled with the Spirit. In the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel account, Jesus said,

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, so that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you. ([John 14:15-17](#)) [MKJV]

And, in his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul said,

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#))

These two passages describe the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the seal and guarantee of our salvation, which we received the moment we were born again and which we can never lose. Earlier I made the distinction between being indwelt by the Spirit and being "filled with the Spirit." I even quoted from Ephesians where Paul commanded us (all Christians) to be filled with the Spirit. So – what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit and how does one go about being filled? First, before I go any further, let me say that if you're not a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are not filled with the Spirit. The one depends on the other. Likewise, you can be indwelt by the Spirit and not filled with the Spirit. Indwelling is a "once for all of time and eternity" sort of thing that is part of the whole "salvation package" and we have no control over it once it has happened. Being filled with the Spirit, on the other hand, is voluntary and only lasts as long as we allow the Spirit to fill us.

When we are filled with the Spirit, He permeates every part of our being and has complete control of our lives. That means, if you have sin in your life that you haven't confessed, you are not filled with the Spirit. It means that if you are involved in activities that grieve the Spirit, you are not filled with the Spirit. Notice that I said, when we are filled with the Spirit, **He** permeates every

part of our being. The Holy Spirit is a person every bit as much as the Father and the Son are persons. He has a will and He has volition. He is almighty God just as much as the Father and the Son are.

As I mentioned earlier in my message, Paul commands us to be filled with the Spirit.

**And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,  
(Ephesians 5:18)**

The Greek verb that is translated “be filled” is a present tense command, which indicates a continual action, not a one-time thing. Also, the verb translated “do not get drunk” is a present tense command. So, we are to be continually not getting drunk with wine and we should continually be filled with the Spirit. What happens when a person gets drunk? I don’t mean what kind of silly, stupid, and dangerous things does a drunk person do. I mean, what is the effect of being drunk. A drunk person does silly, stupid, and dangerous things because he or she is not in control of himself or herself. He or she is controlled by the alcohol. You see, the result of being drunk is that you have given up control of your life. It’s no longer “what I want to do” but it is what the alcohol wants me to do. Likewise, when we are filled with the Spirit, we are letting the Spirit of God control our lives. It is no longer “how I want to live my life” it is living how the Spirit wants me to live my life.

There is a famous 12-step process for getting away from having alcohol control our lives. Unfortunately, there is no 12-step process for being filled with the Spirit. I can’t tell you, “Do this, this, and this and you will be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as being controlled by the Spirit. It means that you let God have control of your life by living in obedience to Him. It is not an emotional thing; it is a lifestyle thing. The more we submit our will to Him, and seek His honor in everything we do, the more we will be filled with the Spirit of God. It is a matter of living intentionally according to His will and resisting the sinful desires of the flesh. In order to do this, we need to know what His will is for our lives, and that requires us to be disciples, learning from Him and submitting our will to Him.

So, the bottom line is, if you want to be filled with the Spirit then first you need to be a disciple. Then, you need to immerse yourself in the things of the Spirit. You need to cultivate a close walk with God. This means regularly reading and studying His Word. It means living in obedience to His will as much as humanly possible. It means praying without ceasing and it means humbling yourself to His will in every aspect of your life. Is it easy? Absolutely not. But is it rewarding? Yes, without a doubt.

Do you want to be filled with the Spirit?

**Let’s pray.**

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