



Sermon Transcription • Ephesians 5:18-21 (NIV)

Fill 'Er Up

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[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

Many of you might not know this, but this the 25th anniversary of what was considered by many, one of the great moves of the Spirit of God in Canada. When I use the phrase, Toronto Blessing, some of you in the room will know full well what I'm talking about. Others would be like, "What in the world is that?" Basically, in 1994, in this little church near the airport in Toronto - little Vineyard church, things started to happen that were remarkably surprising to lots and lots of folks. Since its the 25 year anniversary now, and at the 20 year anniversary they had a lot of celebrations around it. You know people all got back together to remember what happened there. In *Christianity Today*, which is an evangelical magazine out of the United States, they did some, they did a column basically about it, an article. So I wanted to just read to you their description of what took place,

"Early in 1994, a small church in a strip mall near Toronto Pearson International Airport had thousands of people waiting at its doors night after night - 50,000 unique visitors, as we'd say today, in the first six months of the year, enough to make it 'Toronto's top tourist attraction of 1994,' according to Toronto Life magazine. [The Blue Jays were pretty good at that point, so that's saying something right.] The Toronto Blessing was falling. Laughing, falling over, shaking, roaring like a lion, and being [what was called] 'drunk in the Holy Spirit' - the Toronto Blessing was a charismatic revival featuring manifestations of spiritual power more commonly associated with the Great Awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries. Thousands registered first-time conversion to Christianity at the services. Every evening people lined up to stand or fall under shouts of 'More, Lord!' [that was the statement that they would give over and over again at these meetings. 'More, Lord, More.'] while hands were laid on them in prayer."

So I was at Dallas Theological Seminary two years after this, and the feeling on the campus there - if you've seen videos of what took place at the Toronto Blessing, it was really dividing opinion on the campus. And it was something you kind of had to deal with in a lot of different classes. The question that people were asking, "Is this a real move of God's Spirit? Is this what happens when the Spirit of God fills you?" And by what happens I mean, some of the stuff that was happening was quite startling. You know people were on all fours crawling around like dogs and barking. You had people - the language of drunk in the Spirit. It looked like people were acting inebriated, like they had just downed a fifth of Scotch, and just were walking around the auditorium. People were shaking in epileptic kind of seizures. Is this what happens when the Holy Spirit fills? My classes were divided on it. I remember some people in the room saying, "Yes absolutely this is the case. You should expect the Holy Spirit,



when he fills people, to effect their physical state.” And then others were arguing equally as hard, “No this is actually a sign of demons.” And people were getting very upset with one another about it. But it does raise the question: “What should you expect from the Holy Spirit filling you?”

[What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit?]

That phrase in fact, the filling of the Spirit, the only command we have for that in the Bible is in Ephesians 5:18. And so what I want to do in the next few minutes, is I want to actually look at this passage in its context, and I want to answer two questions. One: what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? What is Paul trying to get at when he uses that language. And then secondly: what are the results of being filled with the Spirit? What does it mean, and what are the results? You might be surprised, at what he describes as the results, right. So let me show you: what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Ephesians 5:18,

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. [Now that’s a word that you have not used in the last, like 30 years, okay. I understand. Debauchery is not something... so other translations try to go here, or they say, dissipation, which of course does not help at all. Cause you also have not used that word in a long time. It means like, it means, immoral, sensual acts. So don’t be drunk with wine because it leads to immoral, sensual acts.] Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

Now, there’s some historical background here that’s really interesting. So Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus, and one of the gods that they worshipped in the city of Ephesus was a guy named, Dionysus. Dionysus was a very popular god because he was the god of wine. People *loved* to worship Dionysus, because worship of Dionysus basically involved going to the party and getting sauced, right. He’s very popular today, he just, nobody knows his name right. You go to the party, and you get sauced and then in your sauced state you just do what you feel like doing. And the belief is that in this, you know, drunken state, this spirit of Dionysus would enter you and the things that you were doing was actually Dionysus doing those things through you.

So there’s some crazy stories about what happened about the worship of Dionysus. One of the things that would happen is that men would gather together and they would invite their other male friends for dinner parties. That’s the way you did it in those days. You don’t invite, usually women, especially not your wives to these parties. You did invite some women to the party though, maybe certain ones who you’d like to look at. And so you would gather those women and the men, and they would all drink together for their dinner parties, like a lot of drinking, and then they’d just sort of do what might come naturally. The Romans actually got tired of a festival. The festival for Dionysus was called Bacchanalia, and the reason it was called Bacchanalia was because Dionysus had a Roman name and it was Bacchus. So the way you celebrated Bacchus or Dionysus was at Bacchanalia. It was supposed to be a yearly festival, where everybody got drunk and just did what they felt like. It was supposed to be yearly, but eventually it just turned into five times a month, which you know very popular. The Romans actually got so sick and tired of what was going on at the festival of Bacchanalia, that they actually



outlawed it. And the Romans didn't outlaw anything like this. But they outlawed it in 186 BC. So even they were like, "Okay enough, this is not going well for any of us."

But I don't need to give you that kind of background to understand what Paul's trying to say here. When he says something like, "Don't be drunk on wine which leads to debauchery, leads to sensual living, which leads to doing wicked evil acts." You know full well that that's the case. I remember when I was in college, my first year of university. I was at the University of Washington. And when I was there, I had some friends who told me that the only way you're going to get connected in a school of 45,000 students was if you go and you spend some time in a smaller group. And the smaller groups on our campus that where people live are a fraternities. So I had a number of friends who were in fraternities and said, "Listen you need to come and during Rush Week, which is like the open house for the fraternities where they're trying to get new members in - during Rush Week, you come to our different fraternities and you see how it goes you know." Everywhere I went - okay so you go to one house one night, another house another night, another one, another one, another one. Everywhere I went I noticed, the first thing that they would do is that they would hand me this red cup. Walk through the door, here's your red cup. Didn't matter what fraternity it was, you get a red cup. I noticed as soon as they handed me the red cup, right after it came, some guy who was pouring different kinds of libations into the red cup. I'm not much of a drinker, so like, "Do you have any Diet Coke?" right, so they would usually accommodate me, maybe getting water or whatever some guys were like, "Yeah we've got Diet Coke." It happened every time. At the end of the week, I have a friend who invited me to come to his fraternity said, "Jeff you'll really like it." I showed up, they handed me the red cup and I said to him, "Look, you got to explain something to me." I said it quietly to him. "You got to explain something, all week long I have had more red cups than I've ever had in my life. Why in the world are you always giving me the red cup? And why is every single event that is done with a fraternity has to have alcohol in it?" And he quietly turned to me, he said, "You know Jeff, some of the stuff we like to do is a lot easier to do when you're lubed up."

"Ahhhh." You guys do know what fraternities do yeah? [Laughter] This little guy's over here... "No." Praise God for you brother. [Laughter]

In Cleveland, in the late 1970's, they did ten cent beer night. Okay, for the Cleveland Indians baseball game. You can go online and you can actually watch a video of what happened. You can probably guess what happend. Ten cent beer night, alright by the third inning the entire place was in a complete meltdown. And that's because if you talk to any police officer today, they'll tell you that they would probably be out of a job if alcohol and drug addiction were not a thing. So you know, that drunkenness leads to... it controls you, wine controls you in a certain way that leads to a kind of lifestyle where it's easier to do wicked acts.

So what Paul's saying, look, I want you to picture that, picture Bacchanalia, picture the kinds of things that happen when you get drunk with wine and it controls you. So you do these wicked things. Well the Spirit, controls you so that you do - not wicked things but godly things. You say what kinds of things? Well you go to the book of Acts and you find some of those things, and they're really remarkable.



So, one of my favourites is Acts 4:5. So Jesus has been crucified by the religious leaders, handing him over to the Roman authorities. But the reason he was there was because the Jewish religious leaders put him there. The same religious leaders now, only days later see Peter, and they see John heal a guy in the temple, and they're livid. "In whose name are you healing?" Cause they have heard the rumors that he is talking about this Jesus whom they crucified. So Peter, remember Peter - the guy who was around the fire and who was melting before a little girl. "Ah weren't you with that Jesus?" "No, it wasn't me." Three times over. This guy, the real brave one, this is what happens. Acts 4:5-10,

"The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family [In other words, everybody who was there when they crucified Jesus, was there]. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: 'By what power or what name did you do this?' Then Peter, [note the language] *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said to them: 'Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this [Remember, cowardly Peter, 'Then you know this!'], you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified [Just days ago, you guys remember? Just days ago, you guys, guilty!] but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.'"

Like how in the world did this guy go from being the scared of a little girl, to standing in front of the religious leaders of the day. And the answer is, he was filled with the Spirit. That what it says? That's what happens, you get controlled by the Spirit, it leads to kind of a, a boldness and proclamation. It's all over the book of Acts. But also leads to some other stuff. Another occasion in Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas this time, are preaching the Scripture, they're basically preaching the message of the gospel to a group of Jewish people, who then gets so upset about it that they rile up the local, the local leaders. Listen to what happens, Acts 13:49-52,

"The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. [Right, 'Mayor, council, we need to have a meeting this guy's a jerk.'] They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ['You get out of our town.' Probably ushered him to the edge of the town and kicked him out.] So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples [note the language] were *filled* with joy and with the Holy Spirit [at getting kicked out of the town. 'Praise God']."

I would say that if I left Calgary. But listen, [laughter] if you kicked me out of Abbotsford today for proclaiming the gospel, "Hello Mayor, get rid of him." And you lead me to the... I probably would not be thrilled with this, but when the Holy Spirit comes upon these guys he fills them with joy in kind of, shocking circumstances, with boldness when they proclaim the word of God. Is that all he does? Is that the only product of the filling. What are things does the filling of the Spirit lead to? Barking? Well maybe, but look what Paul does here, alright.



[What Are the Results of Being Filled with the Spirit?]

So the first what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit needs to be controlled. But second, what are the results of being filled with the Spirit. I want to read Ephesians 5:18-21 again and then we're going to continue and show what Paul's describing.

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Now in English they haven't made this quite as clear as it is in the original version. The original language this was written in was, was in Greek. And in the Greek language this a really, really clear passage when it comes to what Paul's trying to describe are the outcomes of being filled with the Spirit, okay. I'm so excited, flip chart <laughing>. So here we go, here we go. So don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. What does that look like? Well he tells you, speaking to one another in psalms hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Singing and making music in your heart to the Lord. Speaking, singing, giving thanks to God for all things. And submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. What Paul's basically saying these four things are what it's going to look like to be a Spirit-filled Christian. So here's what I want to do. I just want to take each one in turn, and describe for you what I think he's after.

- **Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit**

So first, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, songs from the Spirit. You see that in verse 19. Now the book of Ephesians is written at the same time as the book of Colossians. These are called the Prison Epistles, the Prison Letters. And they're called that because Paul's in prison when he's writing them. Probably doing it through a, through a secretary of some kind. So he's dictating them, but this is lead lots of us to say, “Look there's a lot of parallel between what he's saying in Ephesians and to what he's saying in Colossians.” And some places it looks like it's directly parallel. It's almost like he did a cut and paste, but he changed a few of the words for the different audience. So Ephesians, the passage that we're looking at, Ephesians 5:18-21, is actually parallel to Colossians 3:16-17. So listen to Colossians 3:16-17, cause I'm trying to understand - what does it mean to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. Usually we would say sing to one another those things, right. So what does it mean to speak to one another, what are you after Paul? So here's what Colossians 3:16 says,

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly [so instead of being filled with the Spirit, he says, let the message of Christ dwell among you richly] as you *teach* and *admonish* one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

You can see the kind of parallels there. So what this means then is that speaking, in Ephesians, is defined as teaching and admonishing, in Colossians. So here's my question, what does it mean to



admonish? Well a number of years ago, I had to face one of the more difficult situations I've had to face in my home - I had to put in a microwave. And if you know me, you'll know that that is a very difficult proposition. Usually people just go out and buy the microwave and put it on their counter. I would've preferred this, but my wife <argh> she wanted to have this thing mounted underneath, I don't know what it's called, it's a hood. Anyway, so it's going to be on the wall, everybody else has got it like that, Jeff we have to do it too, like we're lemmings ... anyway so we ... I can't do this. I started to read the instructions for it when I bought the microwave, and I was like man, there is no way that this is going to happen. So I called my father-in-law, who often fixes things for me. And he came and he helped, but we couldn't do it quite right. So in the end I had to call one of our pastors at our church. Now Vic Schellenberg is the one I called because Vic has a history is a pig farmer, *and* he was a renovator at the same time. So man you've worked with pigs, and you can renovate, you're perfect for me, right. So he came over and during this time, Vic ... I got the microwave there and Vic's like, "Okay Jeff, listen I'm going to teach you how to do this. I need you to take the tape measure and we're going to measure over here. You put your finger over here. Jeff, not there, no over there, no up higher, nope there." And I'm like, "Where? I don't know?"

"So measure it across." Okay measure it and then I give him the measurement. And he measures it, it's all wrong. He's like, "Listen do you know how to count Jeff, cause that's just, it says it on it. I just need the number."

"Ohh okay." So I'm measuring it and he has to correct me at several points. He's teaching me, he's correcting me at several points. One point I'm on the floor because I'm depressed because it's very terrible. He's down there with his hand on my shoulder, saying, "Jeff it's okay."

"<crying> But she's going to get so mad. You know." [Laughter] So what do we call what Vic is doing here? The teaching, and the correcting, and the encouraging, "It's okay, Jeff. You're a real man." Right, [laughter] all of that. What do we call all of that? And the answer, the Biblical term, admonish, covers all of that. So to admonish one another with songs and hymns and songs from the Spirit is to remind one another of what's true about God with agreed upon creeds and poetry and songs that we sing and Biblical verses, so that we can spur one another forward. So that we can encourage one another. So that we can instruct one another.

So say you come to church on a particular day and you've had a horrible week. There've been things that have gone on this week that you just, you can't even explain how hard it's been for you. You show up and you have the courage, finally, to share it with somebody that you know here. They listen to you, and they see you struggling and they respond by saying, "You know, the Lord is our shepherd, and we lack nothing. He makes us lie down in green pastures, and he leads us besides quiet waters, and he refreshes our souls. He guides us along right paths for his namesake. See even though we walk through the darkest valley, we won't fear any evil, for he's with us." What have they done? They've admonished you. With what? A Psalm - 23 in this case.

Or maybe you come up to me, and we have a conversation and I hear the challenges that you've had. And somebody like me who's got a deep love for Christian history and my mind starts rolling and I'm thinking about, "You know, you really should know about William Cowper, who is a friend of John Newton." Do you remember John Newton? He wrote, *Amazing Grace*. And Cowper was a depressive, he was really down all the time. But he wrote some of the most beautiful hymns, we don't sing them. I



don't know if the tunes are great, but the poetry is phenomenal. And one of my favourite Cowper hymns is, *God Works in a Mysterious Way*. Just listen to the language. You're standing there, and you're sharing with your concern. And this is rolling through my mind, so I say it outloud to you. I say,

“Oh fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds you so much dread; Are big with mercy and shall break; In blessings on your head. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace; Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face.”

You might at that point say, “Speak English man.” And I'd say, “What it's saying is that even though it looks dark in the moment, and it looks like God has turned his face against you, he's frowning upon you in his providence, that actually because you're a Christian and his goal is to seek your eternal good, he's using *that*, to achieve *that* good end. So behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.” What have I done? I've admonished you - with what? A hymn. Spirit-filled Christians are encouraging and admonishing Christians.

- **Singing and making music from your heart to the Lord**

Second, singing and making music from your heart to the Lord. So the first line is talking about how we interact with one another, yeah? We admonish one another. But this one is focused, not horizontally, but vertically. We also sing and make melody from our hearts to the Lord. And that language of, from our hearts, means with everything you've got! So a Spirit-filled Christian is a singing Christian. “Yeah I sing when I feel like it.” Yeah, but even when you don't feel like it. The Spirit fills you, and you end up having songs of praise to God.

One of the great examples of this is actually, is in the book of Acts. Acts 16, what you get is Paul, he's in Philippi, things aren't going enormously well. You see, he cast a demon out of a slave girl, and this demon was of particular value to the slave girls owners because the demon could tell the future. So they could charge a lot of money, “Come see our slave girl, she'll tell you what's going to happen to you. And that'll cost you a \$100.” So she was a money train for them. And Paul got sick of her following him around and saying, “These men are from God, the most high God.” And Paul's like, “Ahhh ... stop already! Demon come out of her!” And so her owners now are like, wait a minute, you just derailed the money train. So they get all the leading people of the city to get angry with Paul and they drag him in front of the amphitheatre, Acts 16:22-25,

“The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been *severely flogged*, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. [You guys can picture them there, feet in stocks, *bleeding* like crazy. If there was ever a time that I were in this situation, I would be like, ‘You know God, I got a couple of problems with you.’ Like I get mad at God when I get a hangnail. ‘Lord, serving you when my finger hurts!’ But what are these guys doing in prison? Well] About midnight [verse 25] Paul and Silas were praying and *singing hymns* to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.”



Why are they doing this? Who sings in the middle of these difficult circumstances. Well I'll tell you a Spirit-filled man does. So compare that, okay take that picture and put it over here. Compare that image to this. I was speaking at a conference a number of years ago, and at the end - I'd spoke like five different times during the week. It was at a camp, and five different times. And at the end of each one of the times I spoke, there's this guy. He came up to me, he would make a beeline for me, because he was really, really argumentative and wanted to make sure, he kept saying over and over again, "<aggressively speaking>I think the Holy Spirit is pushing me to say this to you." Sometimes he was just flat spouting heresy, so I was like, "Yeah, probably not the Spirit there." But, every time after I'd talk, he would get up, even before I was like the end of the prayer, he was standing and then he would walk forward. It got to the point where I was like, "Ohh I'm going to go over here for a while. Oh there he comes again." Really concerned that the Holy Spirit were honoured. He kept using that language over and over again. Anyway the last time that I was speaking I was sitting toward the back and I was singing the songs with everybody else, the worship was fantastic, and we were just enjoying each other and the songs that we were singing and I looked down the aisle, and there he was. He was not standing with everybody else, but sitting, and he had his legs crossed and in his hand he had his phone out and he was playing a game, while the music was playing. And as soon as the music stopped and it was my time to get up, he put it away, and he sat up straight. I asked the guy who was standing next to me at the time. "Has he done this the whole time?" And he said, "Oh yeah." So you tell me, Spirit-filled? "But I care deeply about the Spirit." But are you filled with the Spirit. See I think you're not because Spirit-filled Christians are singing. Christians, and not just singing Christians, like with everything they've got, singing Christians.

So look, I'm not telling you that you need to raise your hands when you sing, I'm not telling you there needs to be any particular posture, but I am telling you, there's nothing wrong with it. That you should probably expect that when the Spirit of God is filling you, there should be some affect in your body. You are not just a seperated, vated brain. That brain is connected to all of you. So if you find that your heart is warmed toward Jesus and you just can't help yourself but sing, then you know the Spirit's filling.

- **Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**

Third, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So Ephesians 5:20 says that. So I want you to imagine something with me that is not going to be hard for you to imagine because you've been imaging it for the last month. I want you to picture yourself on a beach in Hawaii, [laughter] and you're there on the beach in Hawaii, and there's sand and the sea's lapping there. The kids aren't there - praise Jesus [laughter]. So you're there, right you got a *non-alcoholic* drink next to your side, and you're there and you're enjoying the time, can hear the birds chirping and you're looking at the palm trees swaying. You just start thinking, "Thank you God." Don't you? You start saying, "Lord, I want to thank you for Hawaii, I want to thank you for America. I don't say that alot God, but I want to thank you for America, right. I want to thank you Lord for my spouse, I



want to thank you Lord for the wind and the weather and your magnificence. Lord, I even want to thank you for Air Canada, right.” So you start thanking God for everything in the world because you’re on the beach in Hawaii.

Alright, compare that to maybe another day, when you’re sitting in a different location. Namely a doctor's office at this point. And you’re sitting there and you’re hearing dreaded words come from the mouth of your doctor, about your condition, or the condition of someone you love. And what you’re not doing, in that moment, is, “Thank you God.” And of course you’re not. We’re really good at giving thanks in the good moments and not that good at giving thanks in the bad moments because why would you give thanks in the bad moments. Really good, goldilocks thanks-givers, right, just right. And yet I want you to see what he’s saying here. Okay, so *always*, a Spirit-filled Christian *always* gives thanks to God the Father, *for everything - always for everything*. Ah Paul why did you add those two? So regardless of the circumstance, there’s a thanksgiving that wells up in the heart of somebody who’s filled with a Spirit.

Paul says this similarly in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18,

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

How are you going to do that? Like sitting in that hospital, in that doctor’s office, how are you going to give thanks there? It’s easy to give thanks in the Hawaii beach, but how are you going to give thanks there? So here you go. If you want to give thanks in all circumstances, if you want to give thanks, for everything and always, you need to remember who God is, what he has done and what he will do. You got to remember who God is, what he has done, and what he will do.

So imagine, I’m going to give you a billion dollars, I have it, like I invested it in Amazon and Google. I’m filthy rich. And so I’m going to give you my billion dollars, it’s a gift. I’m gracious like that. Here’s a billion dollars. You need to pick it up in Langley, I know it’s a bummer, right, cause you got to go to Langley to pick it up. So you’re going to go over to Langley. You take your car on the way to pick up your billion dollars in Langley. And it breaks down somewhere near Aldergrove, your car, cause it’s a piece of junk. And you get out of your car and you kick it, and you realize the only way to get to where you need to go, is you’re going to start walking. What are you doing while you’re walking? Well, what you’re doing while you’re walking completely depends on if you remember the context of why you’re going there, yes? Like, if you remember, if you don’t remember who I am, what I’ve done, and what you’re going to - you’ll be walking along that side of the street, “Stupid car, I hate Aldergrove, and I hate Langley, and I hate all of this. God why did you make this happen?” But if you remember who I am, what I’ve done, and where you’re going - aren’t you like down the street, “<singing and skipping> I’m going to get a billion dollars, to Langley.”

“Do you need a ride?”

“No, I’m going to skip on my way there.” [Laughter] Christian, you do realize that I just described you yes. Like essentially, God, in his infinite grace, called you out from darkness, gave you faith that you might believe, he is keeping you by the power of the Spirit, so that he might bring you to an eternal



home. In 30,000 years you might not even remember that your car broke down. So yes, it's difficult, I understand, it's difficult in the moment. I do, faced the same challenges that everyone else does, but the difficulty should be met with context as well. And when you meet it with context, man, I tell you, thanksgiving will start to well up.

My wife does not like watching movies with me, unless she knows the ending. Because she's like in the middle, when everything's going wrong, she'll say, "Pause it, okay does he live? Does he live? You need to tell me right now, does he live?" I'm like, "Yeah, he's fine, he lives, he lives."

"Okay, we can watch it then, right." Because knowing the ending gives context to the struggle in the middle. I'm going to tell you guys a secret. Shhh, shhhh, <whispering> I read the end of the book. We win. [Clapping] So, here's the thing. Shouldn't the fact that we win and that the Sovereign God who has written history into existence and that we are working it out in the present time, but his future as now as his present. That this God, is going to bring us safely to where he desires us to go. And shouldn't that give some context? See when that happens you'll start to say, thank you. Even in the middle of that doctors office, "Thank you God that you are Sovereign, even though this stinks, I know that it's going to work out for my eternal good cause you promised it, and you don't break your promises."

- **Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ**

Alright, last one. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. So is everybody supposed to submit to everybody else? I mean some people read that that way, the problem is the ones who read it that way just haven't kept reading. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Well what he means by this, actually he describes in the next few verses. He says, okay so I want you to submit to one another, not everybody's going to submit to everyone else. But in every little area of your life, you have authority and submissive relationships. So the first one, he's going to say, I want you to submit, and then he starts talking about wives and husbands; and then he talks about children and parents; and then he talks about employees and bosses. So in every area of your life, there's a way that the Holy Spirit, who's filling you is going to work out. In the everyday stuff that you face, right now. The Spirit wants to fill you, to bring about certain kinds of actions. So here's what he says specifically. Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church." You know, self sacrificially, gives himself up for her, for her good, is always seeking her benefit. The kind of love that Jesus shows. The kind of leadership that Jesus shows, is the down on your hands and knees and washing the feet of your wife, pursuing *her* benefit, and *her* prosperity above yours. Even if it costs you something, even it kills you. Holy Spirit filled husbands, that's what marks them. And wives, Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord." There's a disposition to yield, and attitude of - "I want to follow you. I want to be part of this team in a contributing matter. I don't want to fight against you."

We'll start with parents, Ephesians 6:4, "[Parents, Paul says,] do not exasperate your children." Stop nagging them all the time. Spirit-filled parents don't nag all the time. "You're hair's too long and you have tattoos and why do you want an earring, and blah, blah, blah." Like, sounds like, I said all of that yesterday by the way, right. So but it is. Look, encourage your kids so they don't loose heart, is what it



says in Colossians. You don't want them to lose heart. And every kid in the room's like "Yeah, preach, like that's awesome." Okay, Ephesians 6:1, "Children, [Paul says,] obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." And you do know that it's right - you're 15, you're not a rocket scientist, right, you don't understand the way the world works completely. And so sometimes when your parents are asking you to do a particular thing it's cause they know more and they made the mistake already, and they want to correct it now. So, just do what your told a little bit Micah. [Laughter]

So bosses, bosses treat your employees how Jesus treats them, Paul says in Ephesians 6:9. You show compassion and concern for them. They are your fellow human beings, they share the image of God and God doesn't see partiality because of your role. God's not going to get to heaven and say, "Well actually, because you're an employer you're far more important." No, he's not, you keep your mind that Jesus is there with you when you're disciplining or thinking of the future of your work. And employees, he says, "Obey your boss, just as you would obey Christ." I mean sometimes just do what you're asked. Do you have to know everything about everything before you can submit to the authority of the boss? Make it a pleasure to work with you, the Holy Spirit wants to fill you so that you are a pleasurable employee. You guys do see how normal all of that is, yes? Like it's just everyday, every moment, stuff that the Holy Spirit wants to make happen in you, cause he's filling you.

So let me finish with this, I have a dear friend who died when I was in seminary. Actually, I got to know him when I was in seminary - 62 years old, Tommy Willis from Chattanooga, Tennessee. Tommy worked with me at the distribution centre at Dallas Theological Seminary. He was in the back and he delivered the mail everyday to the massive mail drop-off in Dallas, Texas. He came to faith in Christ through a Union Gospel Mission, after he had been an alcoholic on the streets and prior to that he was a NASA rocket scientist. Smart dude. He would be in the back of the distribution office, and whenever you'd walk back there, Tommy was humming a tune or singing something. "Jeff, Jeff, Jeff - you know this hymn?" He starts singing it. "I just learned this hymn, man Jesus is good. Let me tell you how Jesus is good." He just start rolling it off.

"Yeah, yeah, okay Tommy, I got it. <laughing>" I would travel with him sometimes to deliver the mail. You know you go to this mail drop-off and it's all these 25 year old people who it's their first job and they love the authority. It's their little fiefdom in there. And so they're like, "You sit there! You know... Why are you standing up? Take a number! You parked in the wrong way!" And just all sorts of stuff. And everytime that they would yell at Tommy, this 62 year old, former rocket scientist, would stand in front of them, his hands folded and he'd say, "Yes sir, yes ma'am. What can I do for your ma'am?" No matter how loud they yelled. "I am here to do what you ask, just ask." We were driving back one day, from dropping off the mail. And I said, "Tommy, I don't know how you do that? I want to scream at them, put them in their place." He said, "Ah Jeff, the Holy Spirit's at work in all the little ways." He might be one of the most Spirit filled men I've ever met in my entire life. I don't know if he ever fell down and shook, I don't know whether he barked liked a dog. I have no idea.

So here's my point, the Holy Spirit may very well overwhelm you some day so that you fall down and shake. And I pray, if that's a source of renewal for you, I pray it does happen. But more likely, his filling will show up in all these remarkably, unremarkable ways. So let's be a Spirit-filled people, and a *truly* Spirit-filled church. Let me pray for us.



Father, I'm so thankful for this text. It's meant so much to me over the years. I pray Lord that you would take it, by the power of your Spirit and plant it deeply into our hearts. There's a lot here. Remind us of it as we're in the highways and byways this week. We thank you for our Lord Jesus, and it's in his name we pray, Amen.