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EPHESIANS 5:15-21

Ephesians: Recognizing Who You Are in Christ

I'd like you to open your Bibles with me to Ephesians 5 today. In Ephesians 5 we're going to look at verses 15-21 in this passage. I want you to see in verses 15-21 I'm going to take some key phrases that we're going to take all the rest of the teaching on in this passage.

If you look at verse 15 that's probably the key words, but I'm going to tie that into part of 18 so you get how they're connected together. Do you see in verse 15 it says, *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise*. That's going to be the statement. Let me read them again so you got them. *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise*.

The next couple of phrases or lines or verses are really going to tell us what not to do. So I'm going to skip those just for the moment so you can connect the phraseology here in the passage to the end of verse 18. It says, *Instead, be filled with the Spirit*.

Let me read all of that minus the part that we're going to talk about, but not right at this moment. It says, *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise. Be filled with the Spirit*. There's something about being filled with the Spirit that allows us to live our lives in that wise way.

Let's go back to the beginning now, verse 15, and we'll take it verse by verse and go through and try to understand the applications for our own life here.

In Ephesians 5:15 here it says, *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise*. I fell in love with this word *wisdom* and *wise*, especially in the Old Testament's use of the term, early on in my Christian life. I actually did a study on wisdom throughout the literature in the Bible, which is Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Every time the word 'wise' or 'wisdom' are used, along with a number of other words tied into it like 'fool' and so on. But just the word 'wise' was really helpful for me and formed much of my desire in my own life to be wise.

The word in the Old Testament in the word *hakam* and it's really used to refer to skill. When they were creating the tabernacle they looked for people who were skilled. When they were building the temple they wanted people who were crafty, that is, they were skilled in taking bronze and overlaying it over the doors. Or skilled in the tapestries that they made for the curtains in various places. They used the word 'skill' to describe that person's ability. Some of you are skilled in various crafts and so on. That means you're wise in those things.

Now the word came to me not only as skill and a craft, but a skill in life. The ability to maneuver through life in a skillful fashion so as not to fall into various challenges or struggles. I work on being wise in my life. There's a lot of times I don't and I say, "Oh my. That wasn't wise." But my goal is to try to be wise, skillful.

You'll know that you're being skillful because certain things will happen. You don't find yourself falling into all kinds of problems all the time. There's a skill about living life. What does that look like? How can I be skillful in the way that I live?

The book of Proverbs is full of ideas about wisdom primarily written to young people. That's why it says over and over again, *My son, listen to your father's instructions*. It's a book written for children. I would suggest that if you're a young person here today that you read the book of Proverbs every day, that you're studying a chapter a day. You're trying to glean the truths from that so you can be skillful in life as you're trying to maneuver through the different challenges that you experience.

You can avoid a lot of pitfalls if you just obey the Bible when it comes to wisdom. That's what he's saying. *Be very careful* (verse 15), *then, how you live* (that's the word walk, how you walk, the steps that you take in your life). Be very careful what steps you take—*not as unwise but as wise*.

One of the things that a skillful person does, notice verse 16, is *making the most of every opportunity*. Sometimes when we look at that we think he must be talking about opportunities to share Jesus with people. I'm not sure that's what he's talking about. It doesn't say anything about outreach there, evangelism, although that is one way that we can be ready, make the most of every opportunity. But I think it means make the most of every opportunity because things will happen in situations and you want to be ready to respond in the right way with grace so that you are ready with an opportunity to be grateful. An opportunity to manage your anger. An opportunity to learn something from somebody else.

Make the most of every opportunity. That's what a wise person does, he's saying. *Making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil*.

Verse 17 now we're going to talk about something negative we need to address. *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is*. Understand what the Lord's will is. That's an interesting statement, especially if you were here last week when we were talking about the statement earlier in the passage which says *find out what pleases the Lord*. As if it's something that we need to dig into, we need to go and hunt for. We don't just have it intuitively. We need to figure it out.

We need to find out what pleases the Lord and then here he says, *understand what the Lord's will is*. That tells me several things. One, that the Lord's will is understandable. I'm not talking about the general will of the Lord, that He wants everybody to be kind and so on; I'm talking about specifically for you.

I love asking kids, young people – I say to a ten year old, “Do you know what God’s mission is for your life?”

Often the child will say, “Yeah. Obey my parents.”

“That is true that you should do that. What is God’s mission? I want to know what the building mission is? What does God have for you for your whole life? Do you know what that is?”

“No.”

I said, “Here’s how you can find it. Start reading God’s word and allow God to speak to you because God will speak to you and when He does He will reveal to you what He wants for your specific life. But understand the Lord’s will.”

Verse 18: 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.

Today I want to talk to you about what this means *be filled with the Holy Spirit*. I think that if we understand this concept it opens up doors for us in a number of different ways so that we have greater capacity, wisdom and so on in life. If we misunderstand this concept we find ourselves in a number of problems. I think it’s very important for us to talk about this.

But before we do he uses an analogy. It’s an interesting analogy because the analogy is being *drunk on wine*. In other words, getting drunk on alcohol. He uses that analogy of something you shouldn’t do and he compares that to something you should do, *be filled with the Spirit*.

So let’s talk about drinking since we’re in that passage. Let’s just talk about alcohol here for a moment so we understand what the Bible says about it and what God’s will might be in this area of alcohol. We’re in that passage, let’s talk about it. Notice first of all it says *do not get drunk on wine*. So if you think that getting drunk every once in a while is acceptable, this will correct your thinking. This is wrong thinking. It is not okay; it’s wrong.

In the scriptures you’re going to have a hard time finding a strong iron clad case for total abstinence of alcohol. You do see here that getting drunk is a violation of what God is saying. But what does God say about drinking in the Bible? Let’s just look at a couple of passages that may be helpful for you.

Proverbs 20:1 says, *Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise*. Here we have the word *wise* again in the book of Proverbs and what we’re saying is be careful because wine and beer, alcohol, they can lead you astray to a place where you’re doing something that’s not wise. You want to be wise? We’re not talking necessarily about right and wrong here. We’re talking about do you want to be wise? Do you want to follow a path that’s going to allow you to maneuver in life in a skillful fashion? Be careful about alcohol. That’s what it’s saying. It’s dangerous.

In Psalm 104:14-15 we have the other side of the coin. I just want to point this out that the Bible says, *He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that*

sustains their hearts. So there it seems to indicate that wine gladdens the heart. There's no condemnation of it there. It seems to be okay in that passage.

I want you to see that the Bible isn't here in the passages in scripture prohibiting alcohol altogether. It's not doing that. But the question we must ask ourselves is drinking alcohol, whether it's drinking alcohol at all (certainly drunkenness is wrong, we're not talking about that, we're talking about drinking wine or alcohol), is that a wise thing to do?

And so we have to go to some other principles that will guide us to be wise in making our own decision before God in this issue. In 1 Corinthians 6:12 it says this: "*I have the right to do anything,*" you say—but *not everything is beneficial.* "*I have the right to do anything*"—but *I will not be mastered by anything.*

So somebody says to you, "Hey, I have the right to do anything I want." That is true. You do. Understanding our Christian freedom makes this statement that we are free to do anything that the scriptures don't expressly prohibit. We have the freedom to do all kinds of things in the world.

So yes, we have the right to do all kinds of things as it might be in this case, drinking alcohol. But is it wise? Is it beneficial? Is it something that we want to have or you want to have in your own life? It's a very important question. We're not talking about drunkenness; we're talking about the issue of mastery. Certainly *I will not be mastered by anything.* Addiction to alcohol would certainly be mastery. It would be a problem for someone.

Now some peoples choose to abstain from alcohol altogether. Although there's no direct statement in scriptures, some people take a stand against that for their own personal lives for various reasons. Some people choose to abstain from alcohol because of the influence that it might have on their children. Because what often happens is what parents do in moderation, children do in excess. So some people will say I'm not going to participate in this at all because I don't want my children to be involved in something that might cause a problem for them.

Others know that one drink for them moves them down a path that would not be right for them. It opens doors for things they should stay away from in their life. For some it means an addiction to alcohol and so they stay away from it because one drink leads them down that path. So for them, drinking is wrong.

Others might say it lowers their self control. Because it lowers their self control they say it's wrong for me. Another person might say it heightens their anger or their abuse of others. So it's wrong for them. There are some people who take a stand and they say one drink even is not acceptable for me because of what it does to me.

Sometimes people choose to avoid alcohol because of its association with other things. When I was ministering in Kenya, the Christian community took a stand as a whole against alcohol. Why? Because in Kenya, among the people, the people who are drinking are often people who are carousing and they're doing the wrong thing. And so when people get saved they get saved out of the alcohol scene. So for them drinking is wrong. It's not a part of what they do.

The Christian community to a great extent has taken a stand against that. Not a bad idea especially when you look at drinking today in our own community. If we were living in France or Spain and you were drinking socially that's a different thing. But a lot of times drinking today is associated with things that are not healthful. It's dangerous and we need to be careful about what we're going to do about that. The only thing we need to understand is this is a personal conviction. You're not going to impose your conviction on someone else.

You need to make a decision before God as to what you're going to do in this area of alcohol. We know drunkenness is wrong. That is clearly prohibited in scripture. Use of alcohol other than that is something that you need to come to a conviction of between you and the Lord. As you do, the Lord will give you convictions about what is good for you in any given situation because it might be right or wrong for you, but you don't want to then flaunt it in front of others.

If God gives you a freedom to drink alcohol you don't want flaunt that in front of others because other people who are young Christians or whatever may misunderstand that and they may be associated with something that's not good. Also if you are determined that alcohol is wrong for you, you can't lay that on somebody else and say, "You can't drink." We can give people as much advice and wisdom as we think is wise and helpful, but that is a personal conviction that people must have before God.

If we go back to Ephesians 5 I want you to see that the passage is clearly saying that it's not about external things that determine our spirituality, it's about something going on inside of us. And so when he says those words, *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit*, he's talking about something inside of us that really determines our spirituality. It has something to do with the Holy Spirit and what He does.

Before we leave the idea of alcohol I want you to see there's a valuable contrast being made between getting drunk and the Holy Spirit. It's a fascinating thing. There are a number of similarities between getting drunk and being filled with the Spirit.

In fact, it's interesting in Acts 2 when the people became Christians in the first century as they were excited about Jesus and at Pentecost the people looked on. As they looked on, they said this: *"Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."* In other words, they were drunk. Interesting. They weren't drunk; they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

When we're filled with the Holy Spirit things change. There's a similarity between being filled with the Holy Spirit and being drunk. One of the similarities is why. Why do people get drunk? People get drunk sometimes to forget things that are going on, they want to get rid of their pain, they want to be happy. When we come to Jesus Christ we have the Holy Spirit filling us. He helps us deal with pain. He helps us deal with our emotions. It's interesting the motivation behind them can be similar, your behavior changes. The way you walk is different. The way you talk is different. The way you make decisions is different. The way you feel is different when you're drunk or when you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

You can tell a person is drunk not because they wear a bumper sticker or a t-shirt that says I'm drunk. You can tell a person's Spirit-filled not because of a t-shirt they wear or a bumper sticker they have on their car. It's the way they live, their behavior that helps you understand that that person is filled with the Holy Spirit.

I'd like to talk about what it means to be filled with the Spirit. If we look at those words in verse 18 that say *be filled with the Spirit*, I want to point out four grammatical things from the Greek language which is what the verse is written in. I want to point out four grammatical things that will help us understand what this means be filled with the Spirit.

Number one: it's a command. It's not optional. It's not just an idea. It's not for some denominations and not for others. It's for everyone that we have this command to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Number two: it's in the passive voice. *Be filled*. It doesn't say fill yourself up with the Holy Spirit. It says *be filled* and that's similar to English we use the passive voice. If I were to sit in the car and drive across town, that's the active voice. If I wanted to turn it into a passive voice I'd say, "Get in your car and be driven across town." In other words, something being done to you.

That's what it means here. You're allowing the Holy Spirit to do something to you. He comes in and He fills you. It's something that God is doing in our lives. In other words we're allowing that to happen. It's being done to us. That's the second thing that's happening. We call that being yielded to the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit.

The third thing we see is it's in the present tense. Tense in Greek is different than in English. When you've studied the idea of tense in Greek there's the aorist tense which is point action and there's the present tense which is continual action. It doesn't have to do with time. In the English when you talk about tense we say past tense or present tense, it has to do with pastime or present time. That's not what it means in Greek. It has to do with point time or continual time. This is in the present tense which means continually. In other words, you're going to continue to do it. It doesn't just happen once, it continues on. If it was going to happen once he would've used the aorist tense.

He's not using that. He's using the present tense, so it's be continually filled with the Spirit. That means that it's something we can continually do in our lives. If you get up in the morning you say, "Lord, fill me with your Spirit today." A couple hours later you say, "Lord, fill me with your Spirit today." In the afternoon you say, "Lord, fill me with your Spirit now." In the evening, "Lord, fill me with your Spirit now." Because we want to be continually filled with the Spirit.

D. L. Moody was asked this question: Why do we have to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit? Why not just once for all? His response was, "Because we leak." I like that answer and I think there's two ways according to the Bible that we leak the Spirit out of our life.

One of those ways that we leak the Spirit is in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 that says, *Do not quench the Holy Spirit*. What it means is do not put out the Holy Spirit's fire in your life. So if the Holy

Spirit prompts you, you should go and talk to that person about that. Or the Holy Spirit prompts you, you shouldn't be saying that about yourself to yourself, you shouldn't be talking that way in your heart. If the Holy Spirit prompts you in a particular way and you say, "I don't want to listen to that," and you quench it, that is leaking spiritually. You are leaking the Holy Spirit out of your life and so you're making a mistake, you're quenching the Holy Spirit.

A second one happens in the passage we talked about a few weeks ago in Ephesians 4:28. It says, *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit*. When it says *do not grieve the Holy Spirit* that's in response to some kind of sin. When you sin, as soon as you sin you have moved out of the Spirit-filled circle.

I think it's best to describe this as two circles that are completely separate. You are either Spirit-filled or you're not right at this moment. I'm talking about right now at this time you're either Spirit-filled in this moment or you're not. The opposite of being Spirit-filled is what the Bible calls carnal or fleshly. You can't be partially filled. You're either all the way filled or you're carnal. Those are the two options.

That's why we need to continually come before God and ask Him to fill us again. Because whenever we make the mistake, we sin, we say an unkind word to someone, we say something to ourselves that we know we shouldn't be saying, we start worrying about something. As soon as we do that we move into the fleshly side and now we're starting to think fleshly. Our heart is starting to have the flesh creep in and help us make decisions and think and so on. We need to stop that and we need to move over to the Spirit-filled side.

That's why we need to be doing this regularly coming before the Lord and saying, "God, fill me right now again." It's continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what he's talking about here. If you're in the habit of praying each night and confessing your sins from the day in order to get things right before you go to bed, that's an admirable thing to do. But I want to encourage you to make a change. I would encourage you that if you find yourself in error in the course of the day, sinning or doing something that's not the best, where you have now taken control over your life and not allowed the Holy Spirit to run it, right at that moment as you're walking from one place to another you don't have to be in a special place. Just say, "Lord, please forgive me for that. Lord, I want to confess that to you. Would you fill me again?" And you're on your way.

I call that confession on the run which I think is very healthy and godly as we're moving forward because we want the Holy Spirit to fill us again. Lord, give me what I need right now so that as I go to the next thing, as I arrive at the next, we're going to the next room, or the next thought comes I'm ready with your Spirit, that you're filling me up here. That's what he's talking about in this particular passage.

When we say Spirit-filled we're not talking about a title. Some people say "I'm a Spirit-filled Christian." There's nothing wrong with that. Usually when someone's saying, "I'm a Spirit-filled Christian," what they're referring to is that they believe that all the gifts are for today and the Holy Spirit is alive and working today. Sometimes it means they speak in tongues. At Calvary Chapel we believe in all of the gifts of the Spirit. We believe in speaking in tongues. All of those things are important.

That's not what this passage is talking about. I think if someone starts to wear a badge in essence that says I'm a Spirit-filled Christian, they might be missing some of the emphasis here in this particular passage which is something I don't just wear, I am. I am doing. It's a process. It's something I'm doing continually over and over again. That's what we're talking about as we're moving forward here.

I started to tell you there are four grammatical things and I kind of got sidetracked on this one about being present action continual because I think that's so important to understand as we look as this word *filled with the Spirit*.

The fourth one though is that it's plural. It's just referring to one person; it's for everybody. As Paul's speaking here to the Ephesians, who is the audience at that church? We're going to find out in the next chapters because we're going to talk about husbands next week and wives. Then we're going to talk about children, about slaves and masters. Now that's really interesting.

When I think about children being Spirit-filled, I'm not quite sure what to do with that yet. I know that young people can be Spirit-filled and they can say, "Lord, I want you to just fill me up." What does it mean for a child to be Spirit-filled? I'm not sure yet. I'm still kind of working on that. But I know the audience Paul is writing to includes children because he's talking to children. In chapter 6 – *Children, obey your parents in the Lord*. He's talking about kids, so they are part of the audience here. And now he's saying *be Spirit filled*.

I think it's a very important question that we need to address and ask ourselves if we're working with kids. Can children be Spirit-filled? I think they can. There's a process of learning and growing that's involved in that.

It's plural. It's for everyone, not just for the leaders. It's not just for people who are holy people. It's for everyone that God has made this key to success in the Christian life. It's a gift that He's given to us. The Holy Spirit is a gift for us and we can take advantage of that.

Let's look at some other words. While we're on this subject I want to talk about the difference between the filling of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Might as well take it all in here and address it all as we're trying to cover this subject.

Some have the impression that the Holy Spirit's like a fluid and that you're a container and you need to be filled up somehow. The Holy Spirit is not a fluid. The Holy Spirit is a person. We believe in the Trinity. The Trinity acknowledges the fact that there is one God, the Bible talks about one God, but it also talks about persons of the godhead. We see God the Father as God, we see God the Son Jesus as God, we see God the Holy Spirit is God. We see all three of them. So even though the word Trinity is not in the Bible, we use that word to describe what we understand the scriptures to say that there is one God that has three persons and the Holy Spirit is that. He is God.

So we believe in the Holy Spirit as God. He's a person. That means that He has intellect. He has emotions. He wants to have relationship and we can have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, an interactive relationship with the Holy Spirit.

When we use the word *filled*, the Greek word is *pleroo* which means to be filled. Not too complicated. But the idea is it's being controlled by. Let me show you a couple Bible stories that illustrate this idea of be controlled by, using the word in a different context than be controlled by the Spirit.

There's an interesting story in Jesus' early ministry where Jesus opened up the scriptures in Nazareth. He opened up the scroll and He read in the passage there about prophecies about the future, that someone is going to come and heal the sick, cause the blind to see, and minister to the poor. Then He shuts the scroll and He says, "This has happened today." In other words what He's saying is, "This is me." They were so mad in the synagogue that they took Him to the side of the hill. They were going to push Him over the side. The Lord somehow did something so He was able to sneak through the crowd or somehow get out of that situation.

But the Bible says they were *pleroo*, they were filled with anger. Their anger was controlling them in that situation. Same word. Being controlled by. Being filled with anger. That's pretty relevant for us because there are some people who are filled with anger. If you have an anger problem, big or small, you want to transfer from being filled with anger to filled with the Holy Spirit. Those two are different.

In fact, I think that Paul as he's writing this instead of saying, "Don't be drunk on wine. Be filled with the Spirit," he could've said, "Don't be controlled by anger. Be filled with the Holy Spirit." Because being filled with the Holy Spirit helps us deal with some of those other control issues that somehow get us into trouble in our lives. So that's one story that we see in the gospel that's using the word *pleroo*.

Another one has to do with in Acts 13 Paul and Barnabas spoke to the crowds and they were invited to come back the next week and people really loved their teaching. The Bible says that the Jews were filled with envy. They were controlled with envy.

You can be controlled by a lot of things. The Bible's talking here about specifically being controlled by the Holy Spirit. That's what we mean when we say filled with. We're not talking about pouring something into a container; we're talking about being controlled by.

At any moment are you being controlled by the Spirit or are you being controlled by the flesh? Those are the questions we want to ask ourselves. Regularly we want to be saying, "Lord, fill me up now. Lord, I don't know if I'm controlled by the Holy Spirit or the flesh right now, but I want to be controlled by the Spirit." It's a continual process that we're involved in a relationship with God every day. The question isn't how much of the Holy Spirit do you have in your life? The question is how much of you does the Holy Spirit have? We want to allow the Holy Spirit to control us.

The other word used to describe this relationship that we have with the Holy Spirit is baptism. Let's talk for a moment about what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is. Here's a verse where it's used, this description of baptism of the Spirit. *For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to*

form one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

The idea here is that if you look at that don't you get the impression that all Christians, everybody who's a Christian has been baptized in the Spirit. It seems to be that this baptism of the Spirit takes place at salvation and that when you get saved the Holy Spirit has this relationship that He engages with you in that does a number of things. He baptizes you in the Spirit so that at that moment you've got the power of the Spirit in your life, you've got the relationship where the Holy Spirit is pointing out and convicting you of sin, where you've got this affirmation that you're a child of God. All of that takes place in this baptism that happens when you get saved.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit had a different kind of relationship with people. The Holy Spirit would come on a person for a particular time for a particular action and then would come off of the person. Now in the New Testament we have the Holy Spirit living inside of a person. That's different.

Some people when they look at the book of Acts say, "Well, the book of Acts seems to have them happening at different times. You have the first salvation experience and then you have a subsequent baptism of the Holy Spirit experience with the Gentiles over here and so on." I just want to suggest that we not build doctrine based on the book of Acts which is a transitional book.

I'd rather go to the epistles to understand because in the book of Acts we have the story of the church unfolding. We have the story of the very beginnings of the Holy Spirit's new work. It does appear that it happens at different times, but it doesn't appear to be what happens in each of our lives when we become Christians. It seems that when we get saved that we are baptized by the Holy Spirit.

I would suggest that the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at salvation. It just takes place at that moment. We have the Spirit's power and availability in our lives and then something happens after that, a subsequent blessing. Some people would say, "Hey, have you had the second blessing?" What they're saying (that's often in a kind of Pentecostal environment) is, "Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit?" I'm not really concerned about the titles of these things whether they're called 'baptism' or 'filling,' but I do think there's a first and a second blessing.

The first blessing is the baptism that comes, is the Holy Spirit comes in at salvation. The second blessing is what happens along with the third blessing and the fourth blessing and the hundredth blessing and that's continually being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's that process that takes place ongoing in our lives.

Once we understand that, back in verse 18 of Ephesians – *instead be filled with the Spirit* – verse 19: *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.*

Wow. I love that. Notice first of all it says *psalms, hymns, and songs*. Different kinds of worship material. At Calvary Chapel we like to sing different kinds of songs. Some of them are songs that are more the come fill me Lord, show me your glory kinds of songs, experiential worship songs. Some of them are more focused on the word (like hymns) so that we can see that the content that's there. We try to have a variety of those things as we're moving forward through our worship time.

But notice it says there *sing and make music from your heart to the Lord*. I really like that. I'm the stand-in worship leader right now at Cavalry Chapel Living Hope while Glen is taking a break. My desire is to sing and make music in my heart to the Lord. We've spent a lot of time worshipping the Lord with these songs that we sang this morning, then we're going to continue to sing a little bit.

I used to lead worship twenty years ago when Ed and I were pastoring a church a long time ago. He led worship, I led worship. I haven't led worship in years. But this week I just had a great time worshipping the Lord in my heart and then thinking about how can I help you draw your heart to the Lord in worship using psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. What a beautiful passage that the Lord is working out even personally in my own life.

Notice verse 20: *always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. If you think of something you're not really thankful for, it says *everything* there, what can we be thankful for in the midst of our challenging situations.

And then verse 21. We'll take this verse, although I think this is really tying into the next week's message. He says, *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*. Be a servant is what he's saying. Give up our agenda. We're thinking about someone else. We're letting someone else lead. He's saying, *Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ*.

Those are things that happen when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, that's what happens in our lives. There are three kinds of people that the Holy Spirit relates to. One is the Holy Spirit relates to people who are not Christians. I want you to understand that because as we go through we're going to find that God even relates to nonbelievers. He also relates to people who are Christians just because of the baptism. There's also those who want more and that's the filling of the Holy Spirit. Three kinds of people.

There are benefits that come, lots of them. Let me just point out three benefits that come from the Holy Spirit's power. One is that He powers us to deal with the struggles that we have with sin in our lives. The solution is to be Spirit-filled. That's what he's saying. Many people go to counselors. I think going to counselors is fine. I'm a counselor myself, obviously, and people pay for advice, particularly for their parenting when I work with them. So I think counseling is great. But often what I'm saying to people is God has already given you a counselor.

He talks about that counselor in John 14:16-17. *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*

The idea here is that He is this advocate. Now the word ‘advocate’ is *paraclete* or someone who comes alongside to help. He’s a counselor in the real sense of the word. He is there inside of your heart ready to help you on a regular basis. He gives you help to deal with the struggles you face in life. He provides you guidance as you’re trying to move forward in your life. He also provides you power to witness. Those are things that God provides for us. He’s eager to work in our lives, He’s eager to provide for us what we need as we move forward. That’s God’s design.

If you’re struggling today, I want you to know that the Holy Spirit is the solution. If we go back just for a moment to those words about being drunk, let’s just go back to that for a minute because the word drunkenness there or drunk has to do with being saturated. In that case being saturated with alcohol. Don’t be saturated with alcohol but be filled with the Spirit.

This idea of being saturated with the Holy Spirit is a really interesting thing to think about. How do we do that? I think God uses His word. We want to saturate ourselves with God’s word and as we do the Holy Spirit uses that in our hearts to help us and train us. If we want to be filled with the Holy Spirit then we’re going to feed ourselves with the word of God and we’re going to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit and He’s going to do that deeper work inside our lives.

The question is, are we going to be the boss of our lives? Or are we going to let the Holy Spirit be the boss of our lives? That’s what we’re talking about.

Lord, I want you to show me. I want you to do that work in my life. I want you to motivate me. Help me to be the person that you want me to be. That comes daily, maybe hourly, every minute. We are yielding ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

I hope you’ll consider this idea. I think it’s a strategic one for our ongoing relationship with God. If you embrace this, God will do amazing things to help you deal with habits, habits of thinking, habits in your life or with patterns that you have. God will help you deal with all of those things. It’s God at work inside of you. It’s a privilege.

Let’s go back and sing that worship song that I’m trying to teach you today, the one that’s “Open Up the Heavens” where it’s an opportunity for us to say, “God, show me your glory. Show me your power. I want that in my life.” Let’s sing that song again.