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FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Is that box of donuts we talked about last week all gone? You may want another to personally understand the depth of today's topic. Recall how the donut glaze illustrates the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit. At the moment of salvation He immerses believers with God's grace, bringing spiritual life to dead sinners.

The Holy Spirit doesn't just wash over you, He indwells you - like the filling inside a donut. The Spirit engulfs believers both inside and out. Different aspects of the one Spirit. "Baptism" is an unrepeatable one-time experience when a believer is born again. But "filling" is repeatable and ongoing, as a believer experiences the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Lets look at some "ABCs" of this filling.

A- is for ALL = filling of the Spirit is for all believers. John 7:37 says "*if anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'* Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive." 1 Corinthians 12:13 echoes "*for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; all were made to drink of one Spirit.*"

Old Testament giving of the Spirit was unusual, specific, and connected with prophecy. But God promised His Spirit would indwell all of His people, to know and do His Word. On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Jesus' disciples "*were all filled with the Holy Spirit*" and people from every nation heard them speaking in their own language. Verse 39 says the gift of the Spirit "*is for all whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.*"

And in Scripture, the filling of the Spirit involves bearing witness to the truth about Jesus. That's what He promised in John 14-16, Acts 1:5,8. Throughout the book of Acts, the equipping of the Holy Spirit fills believers with boldness, courage, wisdom, faith, and joy, as they proclaim God's Word with power. In contrast, nuances of resisting, quenching, grieving help us better understand the filling of the Spirit.

B- is for BEWARE = beware disobedience regarding the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 says "*do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" This quotes Isaiah 63:10 about rebelling and resisting God. In context, Ephesians 4 says the Holy Spirit empowers your new self in Christ, so put off the old self - and lying, anger, bitterness, wrath, clamor, slander, malice, impurity, corrupting talk and sensuality. Instead, speak good things that build up others in every occasion.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 says "*do not quench the Spirit.*" It's a picture of extinguishing a flame. The Holy Spirit illumines God's Word, and He spoke through the prophets and apostles as the Bible was being written. Today, His ministry enables you to compare God's Word to what is said, in print, on radio, TV, internet, etc - like the Berean believers in Acts 17:11, using Scripture as the yardstick for truth.

In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit. In Acts 6-7, Stephen was full of the Spirit, grace, and power. As he preached before being stoned to death, he wove together several Old Testament quotes about how the people "*always resist the Holy Spirit,*" stopping the proclamation of God's truth. What about you? Do you resist reading the Bible, or listening to it preached in church or via media?

C- is for COMMANDED = be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5 shows how when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you express positive and uplifting speech, in keeping with the light of the Gospel. This includes worship, thankfulness, and right relationships - not empty and unfruitful words and deeds of darkness. Verse 18 issues an imperative command, "*do not be drunk, but be filled with the Spirit.*"

You are to be controlled by the Spirit, not the flesh. "*I might be under the alcohfluence of incohol*" said the guy pulled over by the patrolman. When you give in to default desires of the flesh, you're not living in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-26 spells out the difference. If you're not controlled by the Holy Spirit, you're living in the flesh. This leads to grieving, quenching, resisting the Spirit - and deeds of the flesh.

You receive the Holy Spirit when you become a Christian. All believers have all of the Spirit. But in a practical sense, He doesn't always have all of you. Being filled is like air in a balloon or filling in a donut, expanding into every nook and cranny. You talk the walk and walk the talk of a believer - by His power.

There's no command to seek Spirit baptism or ecstatic experiences. But you are charged to be filled with the Spirit. Trust and obey - and you will glorify Christ, moment by moment in thought, word and deed.