

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit
Acts 2:1-4, 2:37-39, Eph 5:15-20

Brothers and sisters in Christ, for the past month we have reviewed the latter steps and stages that are involved in making disciples – because... discipling is the key to how we are able to take the Blessing Project deeper - in our lives and the lives of others

And I have to acknowledge how blessed we have been by undertaking this Blessing Project – right??

From the amazing way that it got started through one of our church signs being stolen and then returned by a good Samaritan, who then decided to call us up and give us a large donation to help people...

To the opportunities we've had each Sunday to share how we were able to bless someone so that we get to hear about what God is doing, and through we were each encouraged to do a blessing project as well...

And how this is a very tangible way that we see God's vision for Valleyview becoming real – that vision of a church with streams of water flowing out into the community, streams of blessing...

I think in many ways this Blessing Project 2.0 is comparable to the way Jesus' ministry began with his disciples.

Right now in the Prayer Team we're studying our way through the gospel of Mark – and its reminding me of how amazing, and exciting, and encouraging that time was, and how blessed the disciples would felt to experience that very tangible ministry of blessing people alongside Jesus.

Much the same way we had a tangible gift of money that we could physically give to people and bless them.

But eventually Jesus earthly ministry time came to an end – and as He was anticipating this, we read at the end of the gospel of Matthew 28:19 those words that are the mission statement of our church; *“go make disciples of all nations...”*

And then just as He was about to ascend into Heaven, in Acts 1:4, Jesus tells his disciples not to embark on this mission until they receive the gift – being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

So to for us – the initial phase of what Christ is doing with the Blessing Project is drawing to a close, but that doesn't mean we are to stop Blessing people.

The money was only ever a catalyst to get us out, to get us connecting with people to prepare us for what Christ wants us to do with the next gift that He will give us – the infilling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to make us more effective – and successful in our mission of making disciples.

Now, I believe that most of us are familiar with how the infilling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit first occurred for the disciples... After Jesus had instructed his disciples to go and wait in Jerusalem, they did - they were there, all together, just waiting...

And when the Jewish feast of Pentecost arrived, where the people were to praise God by giving an offering of their first fruits, then the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples.

They heard a sound like a mighty wind, and what appeared to be tongues of fire came to rest on each of them and they began to speak in different tongues.

then they went out into the city – continuing to speak in tongues and the people from other nations who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover and Pentecost heard the good news about Jesus proclaimed in their own language.

And through this proclamation, the first fruits of God's plan to restore His creation came into being – God's Covenant people are revitalized and renewed and the Church was born and began to grow. The first steps of making disciples of all nations occurred.

Now let me tell you another story – which you may also be familiar with - I've shared with you a number of times before.

Fast forward from Pentecost to 1965, when an assistant coach of the University of Florida Gator's Football team asked the university physicians to figure out why so many of his players were being affected by heat and heat related illnesses.

The researchers soon discovered two key factors that were causing the players problems with dehydration: the fluids and electrolytes the players lost through sweat were not being replaced, and the large amounts of carbohydrates the players' bodies used for energy were not being replenished.

The researchers then went to their lab, and formulated a carbohydrate-electrolyte beverage that could replace those key components and they called their concoction 'Gatorade'.

Soon after the researchers introduced their Gatorade formula to the team, the Gators began winning... by outlasting their opponents in the heat, and they finished the season at 7-4.

The team's success improved even more during the 1966 season, with the Gators finishing at 9-2 and winning the

Orange Bowl for the first time ever in the history of the school.

Word about Gatorade began to spread outside of the state of Florida, and soon other college football programs across the country began ordering the drink, as playing without Gatorade was like playing shorthanded.

It didn't take long before the NFL teams began to make use of Gatorade, and from there its use spread into the other professional sports like the NBA, PGA, NHL and Major league baseball.

In 1985, the Gatorade Sports Science Institute was created to further study the areas of exercise science, hydration, and sport nutrition.

And the results of their research have produced a wide variety of Gatorade products and flavors that have been made available to us at our local grocery stores, and in case you

weren't aware of this – Gatorade also has run some top-notch advertising and marketing campaigns.

My particular favorite from a few years ago used the slogan “Is it in You?” and ever since then I’ve always thought the story of Gatorade and what it does for us was a great analogy for how the Holy Spirit fill us and empowers us as followers of Jesus.

And it’s helpful to consider the Florida Gators stats and successes before and after using Gatorade, and to have us consider how the disciples’ stats and success changed before and after the out pouring of the Holy Spirit.

And we can see how much of an empowering difference the Holy Spirit made in the ministry of the disciples – effectively turning them into the Apostles.

And then of course Gatorade’s slogan becomes the question that we need to consider regarding the Holy Spirit – is it in you? Is He in you? Are we filled with the Holy Spirit – as the scripture exhorts us to be in Eph 5:17-18?

“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit...”

So brothers and sisters in Christ, as we ask the Holy Spirit to empower us to take the blessing deeper – let’s dig a little deeper into what it means to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit.

And we’ll start with looking at the Greek word which Paul uses in the Eph 5:18 verse, which is *pleroo*, and it means to be filled in the sense of coming to completion, being made perfect, to carry something out and accomplish or finish something, especially over the long term.

So being “filled” with the Holy Spirit in this way makes sense because we know that the Holy Spirit is responsible for regenerating our spirit to be born again (John 3:5-6) so that we can know our sin (John 16:8) and come to realize who Jesus is and put our faith and trust in Him (Eph 1:13) and we will be resurrected and glorified just as Jesus was.

And as Ephesians 1:13 makes reference to, this filling, is a seal which *“is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession”*

In other words, our being filled with the Holy Spirit is how Jesus accomplishes what Paul speaks of in Philippians 1:6 where *“he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

So being filled – *pleroo-d* - with the Holy Spirit is why we believe that God’s grip on us is greater than our grip on God.

And while someone who is sealed with the Holy Spirit, may struggle with their faith – they can be assured that they will not lose their faith, nor their salvation, but will eventually be made complete at the coming of our Lord.

Now the other aspect of being *pleroo-d*, internally filled with the Spirit, is that it works its way out of us and there is external evidence of it.

So Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23; *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”*

Additionally, in 1 Cor 12:3 Paul wants us to know that *“that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”*

And going back to the initial exhortation to be filled with the Spirit in Eph 5 we see that in vs. 20-21 this causes us to *“speak 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.”*

So this all of these examples help to describe the work and result of the infilling – in the *pleroo* sense – of the Holy Spirit, and we could summarize it up as relating to our being, and who we are.

So, brothers and sisters is it in you? Is He in you? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? And as it relates to our being filled in the *pleroo* sense, are you co-operating with the Holy Spirit who now dwells in us so that He can move ahead with growing us towards completion... to become like Christ?

That's an important question to reflect on – it's really about identifying where you are personally in the steps of discipleship as you helping to make disciples. But... you know what is really interesting?

When we read about the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2:4, how they “*were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*”

This is not a being filled in the *pleroo* sense of the word – in fact there is a different Greek word, *pletho* which is used in this case.

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost it was in the *pletho* sense – of being filled. This is an infilling of the Holy Spirit to be used for a particular and specific purpose, a filling up in order to bring something to its fulfillment in a *Karios* moment.

So the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was a different kind of filling that really wasn't about the Holy Spirit working on their being. Instead, as Jesus' himself foretold, they were clothed with power (Luke 24:49) – *dunamis* – in order to be successful as Christ's witnesses, starting in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

And... as Peter notes in his message to the crowd, the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost was also a fulfilment of a prophecy from Joel – which is another whole sermon in and of itself, but I bring it up to show you how being filled in a *pletho* sense connects with a specific instance of something being fulfilled – in this case Joel's prophecy, and also the Great Commission.

Let me give you a few other examples of some times when people are filled with the Holy Spirit in the *pletho* sense of the word.

John the Baptist was *pletho'd* with the Holy Spirit before He was born... (Luke 1:15) His mother Elizabeth was *pletho'd* with the Holy Spirit and prophesied over Mary when Mary was pregnant with Jesus and had come to visit her. (Luke 1:41) When John the Baptist was born, his father Zechariah was *pletho'd* with the Holy Spirit and prophesied about John's ministry preparing the way for Jesus. (Luke 1:67)

And Paul was *pletho-d* with the Holy Spirit, not when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus as Saul, but when Ananias prayed for him to be able to see again. (Acts 9:17)

And when the early church chose Stephen and the first deacons to distribute food to the widows, and they are described as a spirit-filled men... it is in a *pletho* sense. (Acts 6:3)

Now, this kind of infilling of the Holy Spirit also works its way out of us with external evidence – but because it an infilling for a different purpose than the *pleroo* filling, it is a different kind of evidence.

In the case of Elizabeth and Zechariah, they speak prophecies... In the case of John the Baptist, he spends his life as a prophet calling for repentance.

In the case of the disciples at Pentecost, they speak in tongues... which sets the stage for Peter to speak the gospel, with power, because over three thousand people are convicted and ask what they should do.

In the case of Paul, he ends up spending his life as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Preaching the gospel to them, planting churches among them, and overseeing those churches by training up pastors like Timothy.

In fact most of the signs and wonders, miracles, healings and demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's power in the book of Acts

and elsewhere in the New Testament are the external evidence of being filled with the Spirit in the *pletho* sense.

Additionally all the manifestations of what we call spiritual gifts are also the external evidence of the *pletho* infilling of the Holy Spirit.

And we can summarize it all up by saying that it primarily relates to what we do in terms of ministry, service or kingdom work, and that this type of infilling of the Holy Spirit needs to happen repeatedly as we continue in our ministry.

So, brothers and sisters, are you following along with the distinction and explanation of these two types of in-filling of the Holy Spirit? And the two types of external evidence? Does it make sense? Good.

So, I'll ask the other question again – it is in you? Is He in you? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit as the disciples were filled on Pentecost? Which is essentially evaluating how effective you are in the various stages of disciple making.

Because if we are not being effective in making disciples – we won't really be taking the blessing deeper will we...

So we need to be filled – *pleroo*, and filled – *pletho*, in order to be transformed so that we can obedient and become effective in what our Lord has saved us and called us to do.

Now, since I've drawn your attention to these two different aspects of being filled with the Holy Spirit I need to clarify how they are related to each other, because if it's not clarified properly you can end up with false teachings about not truly being a Christian until you've received a second blessing or additional baptism in the Holy Spirit whereby you speaking in tongues.

Conversely friends, it is also an incomplete and incorrect teaching to say that we don't need to ask for more infilling of the Holy Spirit in order to operate in His power and that we only need to be concerned about manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and not expect or ask for more of the gifts of the Spirit.

And truth be told – that error hits home for us far more than the previous one. We have not because we ask not!

The fact is brothers and sisters, it is not an either or situation – but rather a both/and one, as evidenced by the closing blessing in the book of Hebrews 13:20-21.

*“Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, **equip you with everything good for doing his will** (pletho-filling), and may **he work in us what is pleasing to him** (pleroo-filling), through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

So I’m praying that as we have seen scripture reveal to us what the infilling of the Holy Spirit is all about - relating to both our being and our doing - that after this message when we have some time to ask the Holy Spirit for infilling, we won’t be shy to ask the Holy Spirit to pletho us today, in a major way!

I suspect that most of us never realized there are two different workings of the Holy Spirit and while we’ve experienced the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin, giving us faith in Christ, changing our character and helping us understand that we should share the gospel and do ministry and be a Kingdom witness in our society – we’ve always struggled to do this effectively and never seen much results.

And we’ve simply chalked it up to the challenge of trying to reach a non-Christian society, or saying it’s not really about results anyways... it’s about being faithful...

But now that we see there’s another type of infilling that is given specifically for our ministry and work – something that will equip us to take the Blessing Deeper, we need intentionally come together in prayer, as a congregation and humbly ask that we will be *pletho’d* with the Holy Spirit – for more effective and fruitful ministry and witness.

And brothers and sisters it’s very important that we do this, to pray to receive the Holy Spirit for effective ministry. Because

we need to be empowered to minister effectively to those whom the Holy Spirit has *pleroo-d*, and in whom He wants to increasingly reveal more and more of that completed, once and for all in-filling. We are partners with the Holy Spirit.

You see brothers and sisters these two different types of infilling of the Holy Spirit are connected and related to each other through us being together as the Body of Christ.

Let's say you have been *pleroo'd* with the Spirit and have come to faith in Christ, but recently you are struggling with some part of the sanctifying work that the Spirit is doing in you... that's where another person in the Church who has been *pletho'd* with the Spirit is able to minister to you with some gift of the Spirit so that you are growing in Christ and showing more and more of the fruit of the Spirit.

And then as you are showing more of the fruit, you realize that you need to help out in ministry and so someone who is *pletho'd* with the Spirit prays for you to be *pletho'd* with the Spirit and you start to minister effectively to other people.

You are Blessing them! Maybe that is through evangelism which mean the Holy Spirit uses his *pletho* filling of you to accomplish *pleroo* filling in others... More Blessing, deeper blessing right??

And let's say that person who helped you by using their Grace Gift has been doing so much *pletho* ministry they've neglected their *pleroo* filling – and while they experience God's power and results in ministry they are feeling tired and drained and not exhibiting much of the fruit of the Spirit anymore.

So while they don't need to be *pleroo'd* again – what they do need is to be ministered to effectively by someone who has been *pletho'd* with grace gifts of healing, restoration ministry, to help restore that peace and joy and love which is at the center of who we are in Jesus Christ. So they are blessed by someone with that gift, who is filled by the Holy Spirit.

And when they are ready, then they ask to be *pletho'd* again and step back into doing effective ministry – you see how this works as we are the Body together??

Do you see how these infillings are related, and how they relate us and connect us together as the Body?

Do you see how this will help us to actually be effective at taking the Blessing Deeper?

Brothers and sisters, in just a moment we're going to move into a time of ministry together, where we are going to be reminded of the Grace that is given to us in Jesus Christ, and then we are going to humbly ask for the Holy Spirit to come and give us more of His grace gifts – to fill us with Himself and make the ministry we are called to do – effective in ways only God can do.

It was pretty amazing being able to bless people with some cash wasn't it – let us ask the Holy Spirit to fill us and see how we are able to bless people in deeper and more profound ways.

Brothers and sisters, let us ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
Amen.