

# *The Filling*

by

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*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Acts 1:4-5 (ESV)*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8 (ESV)*

Among many benefits of being part of Influencers, I have found the benefit of being exposed to different doctrinal views in churches to be a blessing to me personally. Although all Evangelical churches share the same Gospel view and core values of the Gospel, many churches have a different doctrinal view with how they live within their relationship with Christ and carry the Gospel forward. Who is right on all points? I have found that it is rare that one view is complete. But, I have found that all views, if scripturally based and seen together, seem to make a complete view. For instance, some views edify and strengthen my own doctrinal view of things. Some views challenge the embedded theology in me that believes a certain way, although I don't know why I believe those things, for I just grew up with them. This challenge to my embedded theology helps me discard a view that I cannot scripturally support, and it is good for me to know why. However, in some rare occasions some views concern me, for they have no theological basis. This last view is something I avoid agreeing with and adopting as my own, for the view is based more on philosophy rather than the clear teachings from the word of God. In fact, I will say that if any doctrinal view of a church, a ministry, or a ministry leader is not scripturally based, you would best stay away from it, for it is bound to lead you astray. However, if there is one view that challenge's most people with their "embedded theology" that they may have grown up with, it would be a view that concerns the filling of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. Therefore, I believe the Lord would have us not just believe what a specific doctrinal view teaches, but ask what scripture teaches, and based on this research, determine for our self what we believe is true. So, let me challenge your view, if I may.

I guess I am getting too old to shy away from my normal approach with discipleship, which is to do my best to speak from personal experience on things people want to discuss. When I answer their questions, I want to draw from wisdom I've found from the Bible, and what I have discovered by following a point of view derived from it. But, I want to challenge a seeker of truth to find answers to their questions not by what I say, but rather by what I repeat and apply from scripture. More than spoon-feeding this information, I want a person to find answers through their own pursuit through scripture. With that said, let me share my thoughts on the subject.

I read in the passages in Acts 2 about a *sensational and a supernatural* occurrence at Pentecost. It was *sensational* in the way the Holy Spirit came upon the people as Jesus said He would. But, the result of it was *supernatural*. It was *sensational* when the Spirit fell upon the people like tongues of fire and they began to speak in foreign languages, testifying to the mighty works of God. Their testimony went out, and was heard, and it is still being heard today, and that shows that it has the ability to be *supernatural*, while not requiring the *sensational*. Now it is important to look closely at this event and its outcome to understand the filling of the Holy Spirit. If you are like me, there has always been a question when I read this account as to if I am keeping something as powerful as this *sensational* event from happening with my life. I mean, as a Christian wouldn't you love to experience something like this? Most people do, and this can make some people vulnerable to false teachings, or counterfeit impressions. But, I've got good news for you. You can still have the *supernatural*. But, this is where we need to look closely at the *sensational* verses the *supernatural*, for I think this is where doctrinal differences become divided, and they should not be, for there is truth in both. Let me explain:

In the passage above, Jesus prepared the disciples by telling them that they must wait for the Holy Spirit to come, for He would give them the power to be His witnesses. We later read what happened. We read about a *sensational* event when the Spirit revealed Himself, and boy was it *sensational*. As a result of His filling, we see the powerful testimonies of the people He came upon. Now my question to you is, what do you think of most when you think of His filling? Are you misled in being told or thinking that it must be a *sensational* event in your life for it to be real and anything less is not authentic? Some people believe this, and it is absolutely true with some people and church gatherings that He has come upon people this way. But, what is the real evidence of His filling? Is it a *sensational* occurrence, or is it a *supernatural*, ongoing fruit that comes from His filling? After all, Jesus said that the purpose for this filling was to make our witness powerful. Now this is the next big question, for if it can be answered and agreed upon by those ministries with doctrinal differences on the subject, they can find edification and be blessed by each other's view. Here it is. *Can the Holy Spirit choose to enter a life, or church, or ministry in a different way rather than a **sensational** way, and He still create people who have a **supernatural** witness and show evidence that He is present in their life?* I say this is a big question, for when I was able to look at it and answer the question, I was able to see better how broad the Holy Spirit works with His children and how His filling is not limited to one way.

I said that I struggled with the question, for I have even asked for a *sensational* event to happen in my life so I could know for sure that I've been filled with the Spirit. After all, there are enough voices out there saying that it has to be that way? Remember that embedded theology I spoke of? But I didn't get a *sensational* hit. However, while I waited for it, I embraced those things that Jesus said would welcome the Spirit. To prepare for the Spirit's arrival He told His disciples:

- Do not depart Jerusalem, but to wait for the Spirit. Jesus told them that when He came upon them they would receive His power.
- The disciples were obedient. They stayed, they prayed, they reconciled, they encouraged each other, they prepared for what would occur, and they waited expectantly. This set the stage, and He showed up.

In my own life, even though I was thinking a *sensational* event was needed, I discovered that the Holy Spirit came upon me in a different way. Like the disciples before Pentecost happened, I began to position my life to receive Him by seeking, praying, reconciling, and getting things out of the way of His filling such as bad habits and bad thoughts and unforgiveness. After a while, I found that I began to be slowly saturated with Him. Some people describe their experience like a flood coming over them. I would describe mine as a slow, methodical drip of water in a basement that you are not aware that something is happening until you look up and see your basement is flooded. I do not know when He completely filled me? Maybe I am still being filled? But I know that I am flooded with Him now. Do I have any of the sign gifts that some would say verify it? I don't know. I'm not looking much at myself and what I can do. I tend to look more at His great work that is done through me and even in spite of me. I suppose some people would say that they can identify some things that are unique for my calling? But I do know without a doubt that God has enabled my witness to have His power, and He must fill me for this to happen. I believe this is the most accurate affirmation of His filling ... the power of our witness.

I believe that some people experience a *sensational* event that creates a powerful witness when the Spirit falls upon them. Good for them, but they are unique. However, I do not shy away from saying that I believe this still happens, even though it is rare. Even though it has not happened with me, I believe the Pentecost experience is still happening around the world. But I also believe there are some people who get caught up in wanting to be part of something *sensational*, and they are not truly filled with the Spirit and their experience is counterfeit. This can be observed in a person after the event by their anemic witness and the lack of life change where Christlikeness is seen. Remember the evidence Jesus said would be seen in a life filled by Him? But, I also believe that the Holy Spirit works in people in different ways. Although their experience, like mine, is less sensational and dynamic as happened at Pentecost, there is no less filling of the Spirit. The testimony of this truth is seen in the power of their witness. It is *supernatural*, and there is no doubt the fruit being born from their life is because the Holy Spirit is anointing their testimony.

If you have been concerned, or asking the question about being filled with the Spirit, why not follow the guidelines Jesus gave for preparing for His presence in your life, and see if that is what has been hindering it from happening? Remember:

- Seek Him.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to fill you.
- Reconcile with broken relationships.
- Forgive those who have offended you.
- Pray constantly.
- Wait for Him to come.
- Expect Him to show up. It might not be *sensational*, but if it is real, it will be *supernatural*.