

The Portrait of the Church: Purity (Part 7)

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[0 : 00] Chapter 5, and the text that we started to look at last week and will finish tonight, is verses 18-21.

It's very important. And yet at the same time, some of it at least is very familiar to us, especially verse 18.

And I think it's pretty safe to say that all of us in this room have heard preaching and teaching out of that passage, that very key passage, verse 18. And so we know a lot about it, and hopefully we know the right thing about it.

But we want to look at that tonight and then those verses that follow that. Let me go ahead and read the text, starting with verse 18 of Ephesians 5, verse 18.

Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God, or reverence of God, really would be a better translation there.

[1 : 39] All right, so in the larger text, you know, we've looked at the believers walk differently, and believers walk rightly, and now we're kind of under that third and final section in this larger text.

Believers walk divinely is the way I've named it, verse 18 through 21. And I mentioned last week that the believers walk really is summed up in terms of the divine trinity.

It's kind of interesting how Paul does that here. And what I mean is every member of the trinity is mentioned here in this passage, only in reverse order to where we are used to seeing it.

And so he begins with God the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, filled with the Spirit, verse 18. And then God the Son, God the Son's always in the same position.

I mean, we've got three, you know, the second person's always the second person, no matter what you want to do with the order of it. But God the Son, making melody in your heart to the Lord, kurios, verse 19, reference to the Lord Jesus.

[2 : 51] And then God the Father, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the fear of God. So we have the trinity here. And so again, here is the point of the paragraph.

I think the point that we could make concerning Paul's presentation of the trinity as he gives these instructions, here's the point of the paragraph. There is purity in the church when each member is under the divine mastery of God.

I think that's the overall kind of point or point in a nutshell. Because this portion of the larger text, and I keep using that term, this portion of it is all about the purity, purity of the church.

We've looked at the unity of the church. Now the purity of the church and the purity of the church comes about when the members of the church are under the mastery of God, God in all of his persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All right, so the text consists of two commands. This is kind of getting us up to speed. Remember we talked about this last week. It consists of two commands, verse 18.

[4 : 02] Both commands are contained in that verse. And four consequences. Four consequences, that is, consequences of obedience to those two commands. Well, specifically to the second of the two commands.

The consequences of that. What comes as a result of obeying the command, specifically the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

All right, so two commands. The first command, do not be drunk with wine. We covered that last week. And so we're now ready for really what is the all-important command here.

The first command is given really by contrast and comparison. But the second command is really the thrust of the passage. And that is, be filled with the Spirit.

Be filled with the Spirit. All right, so it's very familiar. We know this passage. We've heard it many, many times. We've heard it taught on and expounded. And we've studied it ourselves, hopefully.

[5 : 05] And so, but it is a command. Be filled with the Spirit. Now, the word Spirit, though I want to cover this, even though I'm pretty sure we don't have anyone who doesn't know this already, but the word Spirit is in capital, with a capital S, right, in your version of the Bible.

And I looked at all the main versions. Of course, King James, all the modern versions, they all capitalize the word Spirit. There's very little debate about whether this is the Holy Spirit.

But that's what we have here. The Spirit is the third member of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit.

Fully God. All right? So Paul is not talking about Spirit with a lowercase s, the Spirit of man here.

All right? That really kind of goes without saying. You know, he's not talking about that. Paul's not talking, you know, kind of abstractly here about a Spirit, some Spirit of goodness of man.

You know, so we're going to be filled with a Spirit of goodness and godliness or something like that.

He's not talking about that. He's talking about the Holy Spirit. Okay? All right?

[6 : 18] We know that. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. But now, what does that mean? That's the important thing. Does it mean, for example, some second blessing that, you know, one needs in order to be fully saved?

There are those who would interpret the text in that way. Is it some spiritual event that takes place after or subsequent to conversion to salvation?

Is it some experience that is, you know, it's the same as spiritual baptism? There are those who would equate the two. The filling of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit.

Are those two things just synonymous events? There are those who believe that. Now, I don't think it's any of those things. Be filled.

You need to understand, is from a single word in the Greek text. Plerao is the word. A very significant theological word in Scripture, not just for this passage in verse 18, but many other places.

[7 : 29] Plerao, and its grammatical form, that is how it appears in the original text. And when I say grammatical form, how it is spelled, it tells us all about that word and the significance of it grammatically in the verse, which is very significant to understanding the meaning that Paul is conveying here.

And it reveals, this grammatical form reveals the meaning of the command. And we're going to get into a little Greek here, okay? And some of this I've mentioned other times in regard to other passages.

And I think it's just important that we at least have kind of a rudimentary understanding of some of these things. I'm going to share a little of that with you.

So here's the first thing that's obvious. And that is, be filled is a command. Alright, that's stating the obvious.

Because that's the way it appears in the English, okay? Very clearly it appears in that way, be filled.

I mean, that's a command. I mean, if you say that to someone, be filled with the Holy Spirit, then they would understand, as English speakers, they would understand that that is a form of a command.

[8 : 52] Not a request, it's a command. Alright, so maybe that's obvious. But again, we're kind of analyzing that one word. We get a lot from that one word. And the verb there, it is a verb, is imperative.

In mood. Now there's where we get into a little Greek grammar. Mood. Greek verbs have four moods, by the way.

And I didn't put this in your notes, because, well, it just doesn't really... But let me throw them out there to you. Because, you know, the mood, and how do we discover the mood of a word?

It's in how it's spelled. It's prefixes and it's endings. They have all kinds of implications on the meaning of a word.

And so there are four moods. One is indicative, and it's a mood of certainty. And so we could translate, you are filled with the Spirit.

[9 : 55] If it was an indicative verb, then that's how it would be translated. You are filled with the Spirit. It's indicating something. Then there is subjunctive, kind of, if you think about subjective kind

of things, you know, kind of possibility, maybe kind of thing.

That's another mood. You might be filled with the Spirit. It's a mood of possibility. And then there is oblique.

How about that one? Oblique. And it's a mood of desire or wish. So we might translate it. I hope you will be filled with the Spirit. It's the same word.

Okay? O-B-L-I-Q-U-E. And it's the same word, but spelled just a little bit different to tell you about its mood.

Its mood as a part of its grammar. And then the final one is imperative. Imperative. And that's the mood of command. All right?

[11:03] We didn't have to think real hard about that. An imperative is a command. Excuse me. I made a mistake. It's optative.

O-P-T-I-M-I-S-T-I-C. All right. So, be filled is a command. All that to say that. And we already knew it, didn't we? Second, be filled is a command that is common.

Common to all. And we understand that from the fact that the verb is second in person and plural in number.

Is it always easy? Can you always tell if you is plural or singular? You can't just by looking at the word. You can be plural.

You know, I might say, you just wait a minute. I've got to change my microphone. And I meant all of you. All right? I could say you all and be a good southerner.

[12:10] Y'all. Y'all. Yeah, just one word. That's right. In English, I guess we could say that. But it's second person and plural in number.

Second person, you. All right? I, you, he, she. First, second, third, you. It's you, all right? But it's not you singular. It's plural.

And we get that from the word. The form of it is in such a way that we understand that it's plural. That is if you study Greek. But it's important in the understanding of the verse.

Now, most versions of the Bible, in fact, none that I even looked at, even translate the person and number. They don't even put the you in there. It's implied in English.

We don't have to put it in there in English. Well, they didn't put it there separated in the Greek either. But you is implied. It's contained inside the verb.

[13:08] So the point is, the filling of the Spirit is for every believer. Every believer. Not just for select few special believers or special saints or super saints or whatever we might call them.

It's not just for pastors. It's not just for elders. It's not just for, you know, the mature of faith. It's for the young and old, immature, mature, brand new baby Christians, long time Christians.

It's for every believer. Be filled with the Spirit. So it is common. Common to all. Third, be filled is a command to be controlled.

Not the control of the command, but it's a command that you and I be controlled. We need somebody to control us. Some people more than others.

Do I get an amen out there? I thought I'd get one from Diane. She's not listening. Just missed your opportunity there. Anyway.

[14:13] Excuse me. The verb is passive in voice. All Greek verbs have voice. That's a grammatical term.

It's passive. And in the passive voice, the subject of the verb is being acted upon by some outside force.

All right. So the action of the verb is kind of this way to the subject. The subject of the verb.

In this case, the object is actually doing the action against the subject. And the object is God the Holy Spirit. All right. Now, Greek verbs have three voices.

Active. And that's more times than not. The verb will be active in the Greek text. The subject acts upon the object.

[15:11] Okay. He hit the ball to his brother. That's just the subject doing the action against the object. He hit the ball to his brother. Middle voice.

The subject acts upon himself or herself. He hit himself with the ball. Okay. So the action, the verb is, the subject is acting upon himself.

All right. And then the passive, and that's what this is here. The subject is acted upon. This is important. If you forget all about the other, you know, points of grammar with the Greek.

It's important we understand the effect the voice has on our understanding what Paul's point is. It's passive.

The subject, that's you. Hit. He is hit by the ball. Or the subject is, be filled. The Holy Spirit is doing the action against us or to us.

[16:14] So the subject in the verse is you, or actually you all. You all. And so the idea is that the command is to submit or to yield to the control of that outside entity or person, the Holy Spirit.

So the action is being done to the subject. And the point is, let it happen. Let the Holy Spirit fill you. Let yield to his control, his influence in your life.

And so that's the idea here. You all, plural, be or let the Holy Spirit fill you. All right.

Number four. Let's see. Did I skip something? I may have skipped over a page.

All right. Yeah. So, again, the idea, submit, yield to the control of an outside entity or person. That's the Holy Spirit. So the verb is be filled. The subject is the verb.

[17:31] The subject of the verb is you. And the object of the verb is the spirit. So, therefore, the passive voice says you yield yourself to the filling of the Holy Spirit.

All right. Pretty clear. And this is where the command helps us understand the meaning of this second command. Be not drunk with wine means do not subject yourselves to the controlling influence of wine.

But be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, do not, or do rather, do subject or submit yourselves to the controlling influences of the Holy Spirit of God.

That really gets us down to the meaning of the text. It's pretty clear, I think. And now we're ready for number four. Be filled is a command to be controlled continuously.

Continuously. The verb is present in tense. It's a present tense verb. All right. There are a number of verb tenses in the Greek text, Greek grammar.

[18:33] It's present tense, aorist tense, perfect tense, imperfect tense. But we're not going to get into that, all those tall weeds there. Suffice it to say that the present tense conveys the idea of a continuous action.

Continuous action. So, literally it is, you all be always being filled with the Spirit. Now, that's kind of redundant.

We wouldn't... Go ahead, Albert. We'll let you get seated before I continue to wax this elephant. That's all right.

Continuous action. Action. Be, being, always being filled with the Spirit. In fact, I heard about a man who was praying that way.

He said, Lord, fill me. Fill me. Lord, fill me. Fill me. And this little lady sitting next to him, and she started praying, Lord, don't do it. He leaks. All right.

[19:38] Had to throw a little humor in there, you know, all of this really weighty stuff. But actually, it's true. But actually, it's true. We, this filling of the Holy Spirit is a continuous thing.

And so, the idea is, be continuously. If we take what we've already discovered here, it means to be continuously submitting, subjecting your life to the control of the Holy Spirit of God.

And so, the issue then is what? It's not how much of the Holy Spirit one gets. Or one has. The believer has. And we've got all of him that there is to have.

He didn't come, just part of him, come and reside in you and dwell you when you were saved. You have all the Holy Spirit there is to have. He's not a divided personality. He's a split person. You've got all of him.

The issue is not how much of the Holy Spirit the believer has. The issue is how much of the believer the Holy Spirit has. That's really the point, the main point of the command.

[20:44] And so, what do we have in this single word, this verb? We have be filled as a command. Be filled as a command that is common. Be filled as a command to be controlled. Be filled as a command to be controlled continuously.

And really, we could add one more, and this takes us on into the next main point of my outline. Be filled is a command to be controlled constructively.

There's a purpose in all of this. There's a fruit that comes from this. There is a result of this, or as I've used the word, consequences. So, that leads us to the second main point, four consequences. Four consequences to obeying the command be filled with the Spirit. So, there are two commands and four consequences. And grammatically speaking, the four consequences are kind of identified for us in the next few verses by participles, four present participles.

Speaking, verse 19, first part of verse 19. Singing, second part of verse 19. Thanking, verse 20. [21 : 57] And submitting, verse 21. Those identify for us the four consequences of being filled with the Spirit. Speaking, singing, thanking, submitting.

All right, so here are the four consequences, and I'll use some other words to describe, kind of help describe the meaning of these participles, or the idea that's being conveyed.

Four consequences. The first conveys the idea of fellowship. Fellowship. We could use the word worship, but this is very specific in the context of worship.

It's a fellowship. We could even say fellowship of worship if you want to do that. But verse 19, first part of verse 19, says, Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual psalms.

Now, if you've grown up with King James, then you might remember that it says, it's translated speaking to yourselves. And that kind of sounds like some kind of psychological problem.

[23 : 07] Become filled with the Spirit, you go around talking to yourself. I would recommend that. I do remember, now I guess a lot of years ago, when cell phones were just becoming popular, and people started wearing these little ear things.

And so you'd be at Walmart, and I'd hear somebody talking, and I'd look, and there wasn't anybody around, just talking to himself. And now it's just so commonplace, except some people talk too loud. But anyway, speaking to yourselves is a literal translation. King James is not wrong there.

But it has led some to interpret this as a reference to personal or internal worship. Now, that's part of it, but that comes next. This is something different.

You're not talking about your private devotional life here. But in the Greek language, it could just as easily be understood as speaking to one another. And all of the modern versions of the Bible translations have translated it that way.

[24 : 15] Speaking to one another. All right? I think that's the correct understanding there. Now, Paul does not mean that if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we stop speaking to one another in words and we just sing all the time.

You know, I might think you a little strange if you come to my office and say, you know, in musical tones, I want to talk to you, and then start singing your communication.

It's strange. I might have to find some help for you. You know, now, I have accused my wife on many occasions of being a, kind of living her life as if life is a musical.

You know, she'd just sing all the time, and everything would remind her of a song, and she'd sing that. It's kind of like a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. But that's not the idea here.

The idea is worship. It's worship within the context of fellowship. It's a little, kind of specific. I mean, this is something, well, more specific.

[25 : 33] A specific type of, or element of our worship. And it's really just God's people coming together. And when they come together, speaking, singing of the greatness of God, you know, the grace of His salvation, the hope of His glory that will one day be revealed.

It's speaking to one another. It's singing to one another. And it's a fellowship and kind of mutual praise and worship.

But it's not directed toward God. It's directed toward one another. And, you know, many, maybe even most of our songs that we sing, I've mentioned this before.

In fact, in here, I don't remember why I did. It's been a while. But many of the hymns that we sing, and even choruses that we sing on Sunday morning are hymns of exhortation.

And who are we speaking to when we're exhorting? We're certainly not exhorting God. Although, you know, prayer is in some sense an exhortation to God.

[26 : 46] But hymns of exhortation are songs that we sing to one another. And really we ought to think of it in those terms next time we do. In fact, I was looking at our hymnal and kind of under the category.

You know, the back of the hymnal, it has various categories of songs. And they have a category of praise and worship. And so I was just kind of looking down through them and hear some of the names of some of the more familiar hymns.

Oh, worship the King. We could sing that, but I'm not going to. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him.

Praise Him. That's another hymn. All hail the power. That's a familiar hymn. And bless the Lord, O my soul. These are old, I know.

But they're familiar to most of us. Crown Him with many crowns. Or His name is wonderful. I stand amazed in the presence. Or this is the day the Lord has made.

[27 : 49] And it could go on and on. I mean, the hymn book is full of songs like this, hymns like this. Now, most of these, well, all of these, well, I would say most of these are strictly hymns of exhortation.

We're exhorting one another. You know, Jan, worship the King. That's what we're doing when we sing it. You know, Jerry, praise Him, praise Him.

We're speaking spiritual songs and so forth. These are exhortations. Some of these hymns that I mentioned are testimony. They're hymns of testimony.

You know, His name is wonderful. Now, that's my personal testimony. It's an exhortation, but more so my own personal testimony. You know, I stand amazed at the presence.

Those are testimony. And so to whom are we singing? I know when we're singing those kind of hymns up there in the sanctuary on worship time on Sunday mornings, I don't know what we're all thinking about necessarily when we sing those things.

[28 : 57] We may be thinking, well, we're just singing praises to the Lord, but actually these songs are designed to encourage one another, exhort one another.

So we're not so much singing or speaking to the Lord as we are speaking to one another. And that's the idea here. And, you know, there are examples in the Psalms. I think I included this Psalm, Psalm 95, in your notes there.

You know, oh, come, let us sing to the Lord. Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving.

Let us shout joyfully to Him with thanksgiving. Who is David speaking to here? Well, not to the Lord. To His fellow brothers and sisters.

For the Lord is the great God and the great King above all gods. That's testimony. In His hand are the deep places of the earth, the heights of the hills are His also.

[29 : 56] The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Oh, come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Now, these were written to be sung.

Isn't that right, Jonathan? I mean, these were Psalms. Book of Psalms. They were sung. We don't know the tunes and so forth, but they were meant to be sung. And this is meant to be sung, but to whom?

To God or to one another in fellowship, in unity of the Spirit, in our corporate, our unified, our fellowship of worship.

All right, so that's number one, the first consequence. And then the second one is worship. All right? You say, well, I thought we've already covered that. Well, this is a different aspect or feature of worship.

Verse 19, second part of it, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Here, it's very clear that this is what we direct to the Lord.

[31 : 04] And so the singing is not to one another. It is to the Lord. Now, it may be jointly, corporately, we're praising the Lord, singing a song to Him, praising Him.

But it's to the Lord and not to one another. Singing may refer to the vocal aspect of this. Melody, some think, refers to the instrumental.

So singing and instrumental. I don't know what the Church of Christ folks do in this passage. Well, I do know what they do. I don't believe it means that. But so vocal, singing, and instrumental.

And now, whereas the first half of the verse refers to corporate worship within the fellowship of the body, this second half of the verse refers to private, internal worship in the heart, your devotional time and other times.

I pulled this quote from J.D. Phillips. And I thought it was pretty good. And it will help some in this room. He said, the idea is making music in your hearts for the ears of the Lord, an instruction from which unmusical people, unable to sing in tune, have always derived much comfort.

[32 : 34] And he said, in this case, it may be silent worship, although at the same time, inwardly joyful and melodious. Without doubt, spirit-filled Christians have a song of joy in their hearts, and spirit-filled public worship is a joyful celebration of God's mighty acts.

And then Robinson suggests that Paul is contrasting the merriment of wine. Here we come back to the contrast between the two. Contrasting the merriment of wine with the sober, sober not used in

any negative sense here, a sober gladness of sacred psalmody.

And so, this is worship. All right, so we're talking about the consequences of obeying, the command to be filled with the Spirit, fellowship, worship, and then third, gratitude.

Verse 20, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we need to make sure we understand to give thanks always for all things does not apply to evil.

There are those who kind of movement in that way and say all evil things we need to thank God for. But we don't thank God for sin.

[34 : 03] We don't thank God for evil. Don't thank God for rebellion against it. We're not thanking God for that. That would be ludicrous.

It might even be blasphemous to thank God for those things. I mean, a husband does not thank God for his wife's adultery. A wife does not thank God for her husband's drunkenness.

A parent does not thank God for the death of a child. So, rather, it is this. We thank God, and we know this part, we thank God for all the good things he continuously gives us and does for us on our behalf.

Things seen and unseen. We continue to thank God for those things. That's clear. We don't have any problem understanding that. But we also thank God for his loving providence.

We could say sovereignty by which he is able to turn evil to good purposes. I've got to give you an example. And I've thought about this a number of times since I was at VOM several months ago and had a speaker there, missionary from Afghanistan.

[35 : 20] And he made the point that ISIS and what they've been doing is terrible.

I mean, it's just horrendous. It sickens all of us. It makes us mad. But he said that God has worked something, his purposes through that, in that many, many Muslims that he meets, this missionary meets, are so disgusted by what these radical Muslims are doing, like ISIS.

They're so disgusted that it has caused them to question even the validity of their own religion. And that in itself is not salvation, but it has opened a door for the gospel to be at least given a hearing by many Muslims where that door was shut before.

And so it's not that we're thanking God for what ISIS is doing. I don't thank God for that. He didn't have any part of that. I mean, he's not doing that. But I do thank God that through his sovereignty and his providence, he can even take evil, bad, horrendous things like that and work them for his purpose.

And we thank God for that. And then finally, submission. Submission. Verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

[36 : 51] Now, I don't know about you. Probably I do know about you. But submitting is always difficult. It really is. And regardless, really, of the object of our submission, of the one we're submitting to, and why is that?

Well, because of our sinful nature. I mean, that's just the bottom line. It's our flesh. It's built into us to be prideful and not submissive.

And so our sinful flesh is full of pride and does not willingly submit to any person or authority.

Submission. And here's Paul's point here.

Submission is dependent upon obedience to the command of verse 18. Be always being filled or controlled with the Holy Spirit. All right.

That is, submission to others depends upon submission to God. Submitting to his influence, his control, his lordship upon our lives.

[37 : 56] That's why the command, be filled with the Holy Spirit, is the key to not only these few verses after it becoming a reality, but as we even go on, the husband-wife relationship, and parents and child relationship, and the workers relationship, the key verse, the enabler for all those things is be filled with the Spirit.

We submit to one another out of reverence or fear for God is what Paul says. All right. So in conclusion, and I'll just kind of cap it off, the consequences of being filled with the Spirit are all connected to relationships, aren't they?

And if we're filled with the Spirit, we're right with God. And so worshiping Him and thanking Him, those are the two consequences attached to our relationship with God.

And if we're filled with the Spirit, we're right with one another. Right with one another. Speaking praise to one another and submitting to one another. Those two are attached to our relationship

with one another.

And to be filled with the Holy Spirit is key. In fact, it is crucial to the whole thing.

[39 : 20] Thank you. Thank you.