

Title: The Abundant and Fruitful Life

Text: John 7:37-39

Date: November 23, 2014

Place: DCOG

Theme: The Spirit Filled Life

The Sunday before Thanksgiving is one of my favorite days of the year. It is a Sunday for reflection, thanksgiving, and potential redirection.

We are a church family that seeks to be led by the Holy Spirit, and we are thankful for every step that He guides us to take. Now, as to redirection, what do you think He is saying to us?

Bill Bright, of Campus Crusade fame, tells us that...

- I. Jesus promised the abundant and fruitful life as the result of being filled (directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit.
 - The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life
 - Christ lives His life in and through us
 - According to John 15, in the power of the Holy Spirit
- A. Now, we know that a person becomes a Christian through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

John 3:5-6 (Nicodemus)

[5] Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. [6] Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

- a. Only by the influence and work of the Spirit can we experience new birth.

John 1:12

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--

- b. And though all Christians have known this influence of the Spirit, called Initial Sanctification, not all Christians are filled (directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16-17

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- [17] 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.

*When I was little, as a follow-up to those depression years, a number of families took in boarders to help meet their expenses. So it was with my grandparents.

There was a man who live with them named Eb. I was very small and didn't know him very well, but when we went to Grandma Ruby's we knew that Eb would be there. He lived there.

When people get around us, will they recognize that the Holy Spirit dwells in us?

- B. The Holy Spirit is the source of the overflowing life.

John 7:37-39

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. [38] Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." [39] By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

*Everybody wants the good things of life. Some think it is money in the bank, an excellent stock portfolio, a big house, some nice cars, designer clothing, and gourmet foods.

Those who think more long range realize that the good things of life are: deep interpersonal relationships, a loving family, a giving lifestyle, and a relationship with Jesus that lasts for eternity.

Which ones do you think grab the Holy Spirit's interest?

- C. We know that the Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ.
 - a. So, for him to dwell in us means a connection with Christ.
 - b. He will only dwell in those who are, or who are seeking to become, a true disciple of Christ.

*This past year our small groups studied some insightful material. Some did "Not a fan" and others did "All In". Both encouraged a life of Christian discipleship that involved a fully devoted life to Christ.

The Holy Spirit is seeking out people who make that kind of choice.

*I once went to a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game with my brothers. They always went early to try and manipulate the players into giving them a baseball.

I can remember one of my brothers, hanging over the outfield wall shouting, "Hey, number 22, you're my favorite player."

My response, "Hey, brother, why would he give you a ball when you don't even know his name?"

Why would they Holy Spirit touch our lives if we don't truly know Jesus?

- D. It was one of Jesus' last promises that the Holy Spirit give us power to enable us to be witnesses for Him.

Acts 1:4-5, 8

[4] On one occasion, while he (Jesus) was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. [5] For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

[8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN FOR US?

II. We are directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit by faith.

You can receive that direction and empowering **right now**.

- A. Sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- B. Confess your sins and thank God that He has forgiven all of your past and present sins – because Christ died for you.
- C. Present every area of your life to God.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. [2] Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

D. By faith claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit according to:

1. HIS COMMAND – Be filled with the Spirit.

Ephes. 5:18b

... be filled with the Spirit.

2. HIS PROMISE – He will always answer when we pray according to His will.

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

Conclusion: Faith can be expressed through a prayer.

Maybe this morning you might want to seek God's Holy Spirit filling into your life.

You might want to express a prayer something like this...

“Dear God, I need You. I acknowledge that I have been directing my own life and that, as a result, I have sinned against You. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again

take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as you commanded me to be filled, and as you promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus, as an expression of my faith, I now thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit.”

Don't depend on feelings? The Promise of God's Word, not our feelings, is our authority.

And, now, being filled with a Holy Spirit presence we are enabled to genuinely reflect, exhibit great thanksgiving, and live as a redirected people.

May it be so!