**Series**: Immeasurable Greatness of His Power

**Ephesians** 5:15-6:9

**Title**: 9. Places of Power - Walking in the World (Part 1)

**Description**: The Third battle-ground where God's Power is experienced: The World.

# Intro

A Series on the Holy Spirit - *the Immeasurable Greatness of His Power toward us who believe*, that we would "Desire the Ministry of the Holy Spirit" - Busy in ch4-6 looking at What that Power looks like in the life of a believer. Today we come to this instruction in 5:18 "be filled with the Holy Spirit"... but before we see HOW TO BE *filled with the Spirit*, we have to answer: ***WHAT DOES IT MEAN*** *to 'Be filled with the Spirit'*. ... because false teaching has led to much confusion... and wound up with people doing exactly the opposite of what God has produced -> Portrayed as an experience granted to lucky or faithful believers; a mystical ecstasy (which often includes healing); a sudden and limited supernatural anointing of special closeness to God. Such an experience may occur - but that is not what the Teacher is commending here. **It is something far more powerful than that.**

# Read 5:15-21

# "be filled with the Spirit". 3 key observations

* 1: *'filling'* is not A New Idea in this letter! Therefore our interpretation of filling is firstly understood by what he's already written about it: **Filling** is the one-word summary of God's Grand Plan for this Aeon and the one to come in Heaven.
  + 1:21b-23
  + 3:19-21 - This FILLING is BY THE SPIRIT - not TEMPORARY, but GLOBAL
* 2: addressing the whole congregation, *Plural Verb* - to be the corporate experience of all; and not just in corporate worship but in all of life, a FILLING most particularly powerful in our most critical relationships: husband and wife (22-33), parents and children (6:1-4), masters and workers (5-9). This is an instruction for something far more powerful.
* 3: Far more grave - Might be experienced in agony and not ecstasy: The **reason** it's critical to be filled with the Spirit is in**(v16)** "*the days are evil"*. This is the one motivation for the entire section. Being filled by the Holy Spirit is *urgent*, for *all*, because *the days are evil*. All these instructions, right up to 6:9, are motivated by this fact. After which in 6:10, we're told to put on the Armour of God... see 6:13, *that we may be able to stand in the evil day*. So far from ecstasy, the filling may very well be in turmoil, physical or spiritual.

## "The Days are Evil" - What does that mean?

* well, this phrase is pinned up like a backdrop for the stage on which our life plays out. And he's reminding us that the time that is passing us by, day by day, 24 hours of 60 minutes of 60 seconds, is **FILLED** with... **evil**. And that every moment passed in evil cannot be reclaimed.
* So there's this **image** in **v16** of "*the fullness of the Spirit*" replacing "*the fullness of evil*" and it happens by (16) "*making the best use of the time*"...or... more literally, "redeeming the time". **To BUY UP the time**.
  + **ILLUS**: in PnP, food with a shelf-life, on special as the expiry draws near. To quickly **buy it up** from the baskets and enjoy it, before it rots.
  + > We're all "walking" down the trading isle, passing baskets of days; The days are evil, and left to themselves, rot.
* **! Our Habitat is the World.** The *'Great* *Restoration under Christ*' is taking place *in the world*. Amid evil days.
  + (cf 'battlegrounds where the Power of the Spirit working power: **A.**ch 4:1-16,The Church!; **B. ch4**:17-5:14, Our Sinful Flesh! **C. Now, ch5:15-6:9, The Broken World!**
  + A collapsing spiritual economy; **Handed over to decay** (Rom 1) in lieu of New-creation (Rom 8). The KINGDOM is growing, but the Habitat is Crumbling - because the days are evil, default to evil... and your walk ('the path of your life') will be at the mercy of evil days if you're not *Intentional -*BUYING UP THE TIME! *Intentional in your Christian Walk*. cf **v15**: "*Look Carefully*"

Now we can understand 5:15-18 - **READ.**

**So what does "Be filled with the Spirit" mean**? If you read carefully, you'll notice it's the last of 3 instructions, actually saying the same thing, Instruction, explanation, image. You can see the 3 'BUT's.

Walk not unwise **but wise**, not foolish (mindless) **but 'join the dots'**, ... not *drunk...****but filled****.* Image:Drunk people are mindless. Sober people have the mind engaged.

**Be Filled with the Spirit MEANS to nurture the fullness of Christ in the evil day through transformed thinking,** cf Rom 12:1-2. And I hope that this sermon will produce such transformation today.

**ILLUS, videos**: Know what your life will look like without the filling of the Holy Spirit? (15) 'walk'ing will be stumbling. ~~See VIDEO 1 "man" Debases Humanity. See VIDEO 2, "lady" - this Debases the instruction to be filled with the Spirit![[1]](#footnote-2)~~

# PROPOSITION

**How to redeem the time? The answer is in v18-20. *Be filled with the Spirit*** - and then 4 participles describing what that means: **Addressing, Singing, Giving Thanks, and Submitting**

Now one could argue that these are not how we become filled with the Holy Spirit, but rather, what being filled produces. IE - is it: "I will become filled by doing these things" OR "God will fill me so that these will take place"? It's an important question because of the command to *be* filled - Are these the things we redeem time with?

The answer is: Both! Remember, the Power of God at work in us as we step forward in faith (col 1:28). Again here, Eph 5:18 : a surprising grammar: the "Passive Imperative": Filled = passive: God does it. Be = imperative - it is our responsibility!

It will be sufficient to call these the **4 essentials of Being Filled with the Spirit**: 4 Essential Labours for us to do; and at the same time, 4 Essential signs that God is Filling us!

**ILLUS**: Long shopping list, walking down the isle of time: much demanding attention; Far too much to fit into one week let alone one day... **What are THE ESSENTIALS?**

# 4 essentials of being filled with the Spirit (4th left for next week)

Paul instructs:

## Be filled with the Spirit, (19) addressing one another in Psalms, hymns and Spiritual Songs

* imagine you're there, 55AD. What's the first thing you miss? Your Cellphone?! The information and communication superhighway. No podcasts,.. but not even radio; No photocopies... no printing of books... We're trying to save the planet by going paperless information, virtual information. Imagine we got that 100% right - no printed information, and then all electricity disappeared! That's the 1st century AD
  + so in v19 - ***Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*** were their primary source of Christian Confession. Very few had access to scrolls, and letters like Ephesians had to be hand-copied to be shared with other churches!! ***Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs* were** **Confession** - **memorised in song**. (Music is powerful for that, isn't it? "And can it be"..."In Christ alone")
  + Ex: 1Tim3:15[[2]](#footnote-3), Php 2:5-9[[3]](#footnote-4) : Concentrated Confessions about the Christ - the word they believed about Christ
* Of course, now we are super privileged. We have God's Revelation in print. Spiritual Songs on demand. Preaching from anywhere in the world at a button. Commentaries and Systematic guides to theology. **But the Instruction still stands today as it did then**: The Truth about Christ (the Word of Christ) still needs to be cycling through your mind, like a song you can sing in the shower.
* **How is time redeemed? Being filled by the Spirit by being filled with His Revelation!** cf Col 3:16a!!

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Col 3:16)

* We're doing it today, literally in Song! But not only song. (LIT: "***speaking***"). But the point is that every Evil Day is redeemed by the mind constantly being filled with the word of Christ
* ILLUS: A library-on-call: neither on paper, nor the Internet, but in the Head, available as the need arises. Actually LIT: "***speaking to yourselves***". Put your mind to redemption: 15,17'***not as unwise but wise, Do not be mindless but understand what the will of the Lord is***'.
* **APP:** So fill your mind. With the knowledge of Christ. Get a good Internet package and stream as you drive. Put a worship CD in your player. Read the sermon notes during the week. Watch good videos that explain scripture. **Read Scripture, Stream it as you go**. (And be aware that there's a lot of false teaching out there - so choose not as unwise! cf Arius [[4]](#footnote-5) Ask me if you need recommendations or are unsure, as some of you have.[Maybe one day a conference on how to discern reliable material]. But essentially, everything not Scripture, is processed at best.

## Be filled with the Spirit (19) singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Jesus)

There's a link between speaking the Word of Christ to yourself in the mind, and singing to Him.

* See in v19 "singing" is the verb form of 'spiritual songs', and "making melody" is the verb form of 'Psalms'
* "in your hearts" - and that's the hidden but authentic person.
* So where the Word of Christ dwells richly in my mind, I still NEED: to face to Him directly. The sense is an authentic love for Christ!
  + (ILLUS: I love the tone of this - 'singing and making melody to'... When do we ever sing to someone? Only birthdays, otherwise it's insanely personal and vulnerable - serenading: Like the Song of Solomon: which the groom and bride sing alternately to each other.
* **How is time redeemed? Being filled by the Spirit by being filled with His Love** - cf Eph3:apex in 3:14-21, *strengthened by the Spirit, to be able to comprehend.. the breadth, length, height, depth, of the Love of Christ... that you may be filled with all the Fullness of God*.
* **APP:**What do I choose from my list of demands in the passing day? It's an evil day: Working AGAINST the fullness of Christ in me. Every passing minute will whistle for attention to earthly treasure. So I leave what Martha chose, and do what Mary chose. and You will experience Ps 84:10, " *For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere*"
* ILLUS: Date Night, out of bounds to others, spares our marriage. Turn off the Internet, quieten the radio. And then WORSHIP Him. 15 minutes parked in the car, 30 minutes before sleep, 45 minutes walking around Leisure Isle... Singing and Making Melody in your heart to the Lord

## Be filled with the Spirit (20) giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

* The most surprising MEANS of redeeming the time: *Giving Thanks*?!
* The answer to our surprise, though, is found in the next 4 words: "*always and for everything*"...because we've already agreed we live *in evil days, a crumbling world*. **Giving Thanks always and for everything!** Hmm.
  + One of the reasons false teaching on "being filled with the Spirit" is so powerless, is it advertises a spiritual high and physical abundance: Like we can live in Heaven now. But that is not the normal experience of a person filled with the Holy Spirit. The same apostle who wrote this, himself had to learn contentment with poverty; and live years with what he called a grievous thorn in the flesh. ...to learn, to give thanks to God for these too, always.
  + Being filled with the Spirit can involve deep grief. ILLUS: "*Trust and Obey" to a person suffering depression: ...; Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear, can abide while we trust and obey"-* oops.
  + Yet, in the poverty, pain and sighs... the time is redeemed, being filled with the Spirit by Thanking God
* It's not blind-minded-ignorance of the World. It's (20) "*in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" spiritual-eyes-open-mindedness >> thanking God for "EVERYTHING" - **God's Grand Purpose**. [**PICTURE DRAWN**]. ***Thankfulness*** based on ***A deep-seated confidence*** in the EVERYTHING of 1:11 (No 911 - but 1:11)

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

* You can legitimately thank Him, and you must thank Him. If you're a believer, in the world, you need to redeem the days with this - or you will become sick on the rot. Things which can be a victory for Satan, is redeemed as a victory for Christ.
* But it takes a conscious practice of remembering and then declaring His victory.

# Summary

* **APP:** It's a Rotten World. Every passing minute presents the opportunity for Doubt, Despair, and Sin... doesn't it? How do we **BUY UP THE TIME**? SO PRACTICAL. START WALKING. Paul says, *Be filled by the Spirit...*
  + **filled with the Word of Christ running through your mind**.
  + **filled with increasing Love for Christ**
  + **filled with thankful Confidence in Christ**

Isn't it incredible what Christ has done. 5:8 *at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light* (Eph 5:8). Picture: In the shop of Time, Walking down the Isle of Days - comes the Bride, aglow, and BUYING IT UP. Christ's reclaiming all under Himself through His body, which is the Fullness of Him who fills all in every way

1. (PS, his website quote: 'Satan may try to rob you of your healing by putting doubt into your mind about your healing, causing your symptoms to return. Be aware also that doubt from other people, who are sceptical that you have been healed by God, can rob you of faith and your healing. Or, the enemy may bluff you with a return of symptoms that cause you to doubt that you have been healed. Reject this doubt. If you feel symptoms returning, refuse to accept it'. John Mellor, Oz) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory (1Ti 3:16) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phi 2:6-11) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. In the 4th century, Arius believed the Son was a creature of the Father; his writings and beliefs were condemned as heretical by several church councils. Arius wrote songs popularizing his ideas with the common people. Since church buildings were forbidden to them in the capital city of Constantinople, on worship and festival days the Arians would meet in public places, singing their songs antiphonally all night long. The tunes were catchy, and soon everyone was singing the songs, whether they believed Arius' doctrines or not, (<https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1-300/sing-and-make-melody-to-god-11629579.html>) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)