

FILLED

(πληροῦσθε = 'pliroosthe')

To be filled, to make full, to fill up, to fill to the full, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to make complete, to render perfect.

Ephesians 5:18,19, "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The Greek word translated "be filled" literally means "to fill to the full", and implies "always having a perfect measure of something." It is also used when referring to the 'joy' and 'peace'. Romans 15:13 states, "***I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.***"

We are "filled" with a perfect measure of joy or peace because we trust in Him. However, these are fruits of the Holy Spirit! Can you see something here? When we have the fruits of the Holy Spirit overflowing in our lives, (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control), we are able to "*speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord.*" What an encouragement!

"And do not be drunk on wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Note the contrast between wine and the Spirit. This is the most basic point of the verse. There is a direct parallel drawn between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. What precisely is the point of the comparison between wine and the Holy Spirit? The issue is influence or control. A person under the influence of wine experiences altered behavior. He may say or do things he would not ordinarily do. Emotions may be heightened for a brief period, causing the person to experience anger, followed quickly by elation, followed quickly by depression. If the person drinks enough wine, his mental processes will be affected and decision-making ability radically altered - almost always with a negative result.

Likewise, the filling of the Holy Spirit produces a change in behaviour. In the Book of Acts, the once timid disciples became bold evangelists for Jesus Christ. In this passage the apostle Paul mentions three practical results of the filling of the Spirit: (a) Singing, (b) a thankful heart, and (c) an attitude of mutual submission. The last result is most significant because true submission always involves giving up your right to be in control. That's why the New Living Translation says, "*Let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.*" When we submit from the heart, we are saying, "I don't have to have my way all the time." Only a heart touched by the Holy Spirit can maintain such an attitude in every relationship of life.

In the Greek language, this verb "***be filled***" is in the imperative mode. This means the filling of the Spirit - whatever it is - isn't an optional part of the Christian life. Every Christian is to be filled with the Spirit all of the time. If you aren't, you are out of God's will. Also, the verb is in the 'present tense'. This insight is particularly helpful because the Greek present tense has the idea of continual action. You keep on doing something. It's not a one-time event.

This phrase could easily be translated, ***“Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit,”*** or, ***“Keep on being filled constantly and continually.”*** That is why the filling of the Spirit is not primarily an experience. It’s supposed to be the normal way of life for the Christian – lifestyle!

Note, ***“be filled”*** is in the passive voice. This is a distinction many people would miss. In Greek, as in English, commands can be either active or passive. However, we’re much more used to active commands: “Go to the store and pick up some milk, please.” That’s an active command. If I say, “Fill that hole with dirt,” that’s also in the active voice. But this entire verse is in the passive voice. Paul doesn’t say, “Fill yourself with the Spirit” but rather ***“Be filled with the Spirit.”*** That’s a bit harder to understand. It’s like saying to someone, “Be loved.” How do you do that? How do you “be loved?” However, this is the key to everything.

To ***“be filled”*** means that the filling of the Spirit is a work of God and not man. God intends for us to be continually filled with His Spirit. At any given time, He is ready and willing to fill us to overflowing. The only thing we can do is to make ourselves available to Him!