

A Challenge to Live a Holy Life
Ephesians 5:18

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INTRODUCTION

1. At this time of the school year, I usually go through a process of evaluation:
 - a. What were the highlights of this year?
 - b. What were the low points?
 ...our successes?
 ...our failures?
 - c. What should have been done differently?
 - d. What are my parting words for students as they come to a close of the academic year?

I must say I have a concern for what I perceive to be a growing irreverance on the part of some in the chapel services. As a courtesy to me, will you listen to my words today and prayerfully consider what I say?

2. Today, I want to focus on the last of these "reflective" questions.
My deeply felt wish and prayer for every one of you is for you to leave the campus in several weeks with a commitment or recommitment to live a holy life before God and others.
3. *A holy life? Yes.*
 - a. In the broad New Testament perspective, you should know, the holy life is a Spirit-filled life.
 - b. Eph. 5:18
Understand what the will of the Lord is... Be filled with the Spirit.
 - a familiar verse
 - a profound thought
 - a life-changing experience if we truly grasp the depths of its meaning.

TWO QUESTIONS

Question #1

I. What does it mean to be a Spirit-filled person?

A. May I be so bold as to share my personal testimony?

Something significant happened to me on January 17, 1962. I remember the date. It was revival service on our campus. I remember the speaker. I remember the person who was singing...a good friend of mine even today. In some way the service touched me. I remember going to my room that night. I made a little altar out of a box. I really believe that I was sanctified through and through that night. I came to the point of saying to God, "If I am going to be a Christian, I want to be the best Christian I can. I don't want to play games. I don't want to go halfway. Here's my life."

A passage came to me that night that has truly been my life verse. You will find the verse in Matthew 16:25, *Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it.*

B. Let me be more specific. Being filled with God's Spirit means that we have entered into a vital, dynamic trust-relationship with God

1. in which the Spirit of God indwells within us (takes up residence and comes to live...in us).

2. In this trust relationship:

a. He interprets for us the Word of God

He interprets for us ourselves

He interprets for us our situations.

b. He reminds us of Jesus' words,

Teaches us new truths,

Creates in us new purposes, goals, values.

c. He shows us our successes, our weaknesses.

d. He deals with us individually, and collectively.

- C. This vital, dynamic trust-relationship with God through His Spirit is established when we...
1. ...realize our own inabilities
inadequacies,
weaknesses
failures...in our efforts toward
Christlikeness or being like Christ, and we
fully surrender,
fully consecrate,
fully give...ourselves to God.
 2. This trust-relationship with God is established when we covenant with God to give Him our lives for use for His purposes, and for God to take responsibility for the results.
 3. This trust-relationship with God is established when we pray from the depths of our being...
We trust you, Lord, to make us,
in Your way, in Your time,
into what You want us to be.
 4. This personal trust relationship with God...
does not mean that we know all there
is to know.
does not mean we will be free from
anger, mistakes, and errors in
judgment.
and it does not mean we withdraw from the real world to live a
hermit-like existence.
 5. But this vital, dynamic trust-relationship does mean that
 - a. there is a singleness of purpose and purity of motive.

- b. It does mean that our plans,
priorities,
values,
responsibilities,
and hopes...are now viewed and
evaluated from God's
perspective.
- 1) Now He takes our life and cleanses it from its self-seeking, destructive motives, and points us toward a Christ-centered, holiness lifestyle.
 - 2) Now the Christian is
freed,
equipped,
motivated, and
empowered to live the holy life.
 - 3) For the Spirit-filled person--the Christian who has entered into this vital, dynamic trust-relationship with God--
 - a) the question now is not, *will I do His will?* The question is now *what is His will for me?*
 - b) Once this question is asked, and an answer discovered, we gladly obey.
6. A chorus captures this vital trust-relationship with God, through His Spirit infilling our lives:
- Little by little He's changing me,
Line upon line He is changing me.
Precept upon precept until I am free,
Jesus is changing me.
Day after day He is changing me,

In every way He is changing me.
When I am yielded He sets me free,
Jesus is changing me.

- D. In this trust relationship, the Christian gladly submits ...
1. To His changes, correction, and conviction. Confession is frequent.
 2. He is recreating our lives, as He molds and leads us, into more fully becoming what He wants a Christian.
 3. As a Spirit-filled person, we continually yields our rights to God
 - a. believing He knows us better than we know ourselves
 - b. believing that He can do with us far more than we could do with ourselves.
 4. And, we trust Him with the results of our lives.

Question #2

- II. You may ask, "How can I receive God's Spirit in His fullness? How can I become a Spirit-filled person?"
- A. Scriptural statements about the Holy spirit and His sanctifying work tell us.
1. It is our responsibility in entire sanctification to offer ourselves, to consecrate, to dedicate, to yield ourselves completely to God.
 2. It is God's part to take our total offering -
to cleanse us of selfishness and pride
and empower us for service.
 3. We must trust Him to do His part.
- B. We can be sanctified "wholly" - filled with God's Spirit - by radical faith in God--a vital, dynamic trust-relationship with God!
1. We must be ready to:
 - a. Be completely His in our relationships,
abilities,

priorities, and
plans.

- b. And to completely trust Him...
 - to use us as He will,
 - to place us where we will be most useful,
 - to give you the success He wants,
 - to make you more and more like Christ.
2. And then leave the results of our life to Him.

CONCLUSION -- Personal testimony

- A. I look back upon my few years of experience since 1962, and I think I've learned a few things about saying, "Here's my life, Lord."
 1. One of the things that I've learned is that saying, "Here is my life" is really a once-for-all response with daily implications.
 - I said it and I meant it for all eternity in 1962, but I've had to come back and say it again as new issues have come across my path, and as different people have confronted me with questions and situations never before encountered.
 - Every decision, however, has been pursued from the point of view of God's will. I've not always known God's will. I have not always known God's way. But the answer was already made once I discerned His will and His way. It would be "Yes, Lord. My life is yours."

2. I've also discovered that God's way is much more beautiful than any way I could have mapped out by myself. I could have never planned my life the way it's unfolded.

- I remember reading a career book in the ninth grade about being an airplane mechanic. That was the direction I was going and could have enjoyed it, I'm sure.
- But when I really began to allow God to lead and to guide and I began to be responsive to His promptings in my life, His paths have led me in ways that I could not even conceive of when I said the simple, if not naive, "Here's my life, Lord."

3. I've also come to understand that my response did not mean that I had to become a cross-cultural missionary and go around the world.

- I think some people feel that if they really enter into this vital, dynamic trust-relationship with God, and give up their right to chart their own course, the only way to prove their commitment is to go around the world. But that is not true.
- God calls you to go around the corner, or around the block, to a nearby city, or maybe to become actively involved in this community.
- And in your obedience you will experience the same dimension of meaning and purpose as I have experienced.

B. Filipinos are very poor people economically. Filipino Christians are beautiful people. I'll always love them.

They have a song which they sang and they sang it with joy even after a typhoon. They were beautiful as they sang the little chorus, *I'll say yes, Lord, yes, I will trust you and obey. When the Spirit speaks to me, with my whole heart I'll agree, and my answer will be yes, Lord, yes.*

I deeply desire for you, and for me, that these words will be more than just a song, but a reality and a conviction in our lives regardless of where God leads us next year.

- C. I ask you to reflect on this sermon as you continue through the week. I pray that you will find a quiet place before God so that you can settle some issues for eternity by giving Him your past, your present, and your future, and enter into this vital, dynamic trust-relationship with God through His Spirit about which I have spoken today.

May it be so, Lord. Amen.