

## NOT LIKE THE MARINE LAYER

27<sup>th</sup> in a Series on Ephesians called, "Messages to the Misfits"  
**Ephesians 5:18**

I really like the new keyless entry and ignition systems that a lot of the cars have. They do have a potential downside. We found that out with the first car we had with that system. We brought Michael and Carissa to church with us one Sunday when he was still in the Marines. We got to church early to set up and have band rehearsal. So Michael went to the Starbucks not too far away to get some coffee. A few minutes later he called. He'd gotten his coffee, but now the car wouldn't start. The reason was, we had just unloaded at the chapel with the car running and he got in and drove to Starbucks, but I had failed to give him the key. Without the key you can push that ignition button all you want, but the car will not start.

I like the convenience of those systems, but I also think I kind of like them because they give me a little sense of power. You just walk up to the car and touch the handle and the doors all unlock. They don't just unlock for anyone. They unlock for me. Something about me says to the car doors, "Open Sesame" and they unlock. It's my aura, my powerful persona, I think. Of course, we all know the truth. The key fob has a little transmitter in it that sends a signal that tells the doors, "Unlock now." So anyone with the key has the effect.

Maybe someday they'll have cars that just recognize their owners and respond to their commands. But I want you to think about that idea that there is something in me that causes things to happen. Actually, if you are a believer in Jesus that is true of you. There is a powerful force at work in you, and that force can do amazing things. We will learn a little about this today as we look at Ephesians 5:18.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN YOU

To understand this business of being filled with the Holy Spirit we must start with the fact that if you are a believer in Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit is inside you. Yes, astounding as it sounds, somehow God has made a way to put his Spirit in his people. This is a mystery, in the sense that it is beyond human understanding. We don't know how he can do that, but it should not surprise us that God can do things we are not able to fully comprehend. He's God and we're not.

Why would God do such a thing? Our human tendency is to see everything through self-colored glasses. It is crucial for us to pay attention to God's purposes in putting his Spirit in his people. In Exodus 31 God was giving Moses instructions for making the tabernacle, the place where the people would meet with God. In verses 2-4 he said, "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills, to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze." Why did God fill Bezalel with the Spirit? To enable him to carry out the work on the tabernacle that God had chosen him to do.

In 1 Samuel 16 God sent Samuel, the priest, to Bethlehem with the specific purpose of identifying and anointing the next king of Israel. To the shock of everyone, God selected David, the youngest son of Jesse. Verse 13 says, “So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David.” Why did God put his Spirit in David? To empower and enable him to rule Israel.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus told his disciples, “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.” Jesus said he would give them the Holy Spirit to do the work he had assigned them. Do you see the pattern? God gives us his Spirit so we can do the work he gives us.

Let’s return to the idea that God has put his Spirit in us. Probably most of us, down in our deepest hearts, have trouble believing that’s really true. We tend to have a persistent thought that it just doesn’t feel true. We don’t feel any different. We don’t feel the Holy Spirit. It doesn’t feel to us like the Holy Spirit is there in us. While staying with Carissa we were watching the old TV show *Friday Night Lights* that revolves around high school football in a town in Texas. As is true in that part of the country, Christianity is a presence in a way that it is not here. That is reflected in the show. Several scenes take place in church services. In one of them the speaker is whipping up the sizable congregation into an emotional frenzy. At one point he asks them, “Do you feel the Spirit?” They shout that they do. It was a reasonable representation of what goes on in a lot of churches. And the truth is, people do feel something in that kind of situation, but what they feel in that context is the emotion of the moment. They don’t actually feel the Holy Spirit. If you asked them – the next day in the midst of their routine at work while they are dealing with the demands of an unreasonable boss and annoying fellow employees who do everything they can to shirk their responsibilities – if they felt the Spirit, they would honestly answer no. They just feel frustrated, weary of the routine and irked by the people around them. If the Holy Spirit is just there to make us feel some emotion when we’re in a church service designed to create feelings, but he doesn’t do much when we are in the real battle, he doesn’t seem to be of much value, does he? And yet Jesus told his disciples in John 16 it was better for them to have his Spirit than for him to physically be with them!

If you think that maybe the Holy Spirit isn’t in you because you don’t feel him, ask yourself exactly how do you think you would feel if he were there? How would you feel different? When I ask myself that I usually come up with, “I don’t know. I guess I’d be more spiritual or closer to God or something.” If we don’t even know what it would mean to feel the Holy Spirit, how would we ever know if we were actually feeling him?

The more pertinent question is, can you believe that what the Bible says is true? It says almost nothing about what you would feel when it comes to the Holy Spirit. We don’t know what it would feel like to have the Holy Spirit in us because the Bible never says anything about it. But it has a great deal to say about the fact of the Spirit being in us.

Not long after Toby graduated from medical school and began working as a doctor in emergency medicine I asked him, “How does it feel to be a real doctor?” He said, “It feels really good to be

done with med school. But as for being a doctor, I don't feel any different. I'm still the same guy." He didn't feel any different, but the fact was, he was different. He is a doctor, whether he feels like it or not.

Here is what the Bible says about the fact that the Holy Spirit is in you if you are a believer in Jesus: In this letter, in Ephesians 1:13, Paul wrote, "When you believed, you were marked in him (Christ) with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit." He claimed that when you believed in Jesus you were given the promised Holy Spirit.

The promise he referred to was in Ezekiel 36:27. There God said he would give his people a new covenant, and as part of it, "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." God promised he would put his Spirit in those who become a part of the new covenant. Do you think God keeps his promises? If you do, then he has put his Spirit in you. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body." Romans 8:9 says, "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ." If you belong to Christ, you have his Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" God said repeatedly and clearly that he puts his Spirit in those who believe in Jesus. So the big question is, does God lie? Can you trust what he says?

Well, yes, but I don't feel... Stop right there. The question is not about what you feel. It's about whether God tells the truth. Is God reliable? Yes, 110% at all times. Are your feelings reliable? Not so much. In high school one year I played with a guy who thought he was the best baseball player in our school, maybe in our league. He felt offended and upset when the coach did not treat him with the respect he felt he deserved. As a teammate who was pretty objective about him, I can tell you he wasn't particularly good. His statistics, hard data, backed up my opinion pretty definitively. But that didn't change how he felt. His feelings were not reliable.

God tells us in Christ we are totally forgiven, past, present and future. At times I most of us still feel not completely forgiven. We feel unworthy. What should we believe, what we feel or what God says is true? God says he loves us and nothing can separate us from his love. We feel unworthy of that too and don't feel like he really could love us unreservedly. What do we believe, what we feel or what God says is true? God says he put his Spirit in me when I put my faith in his Son, the Lord Jesus. But I don't feel like his Spirit is really there all the time. What do I believe, what I feel or what God says is true?

I am not saying God is anti-emotion or doesn't care about our feelings. But I am saying our feelings are not always a reliable guide to what is true. In fact the lives of people all over the world are being turned inside out, even made a living hell, by feelings that are not true.

Contrary to what our feelings might say, there actually is evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in you. Do you believe that God hears your prayers and answers? Do you believe that despite the fact

that there have been occasions when there has been no answer? Do you believe that God is real and present even though you have never seen him nor heard him, and despite the fact there have been times when you've asked him to just show himself in some way but nothing has happened? Do you believe that God exists as one being yet has three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, even though that is incomprehensible? Do you believe that God became a man and existed on this earth for a time as a helpless human infant? Do you believe that Jesus Christ was given birth by a virgin girl? Do you believe that Jesus, after being executed by crucifixion, came back to life? Do you believe that Jesus ascended into heaven and lives there today, but someday he will physically return to earth? Do you believe that just because you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior you are going to go to heaven and live there eternally?

Would you say that most of the people you know also believe those things? No? Do you believe, even though they don't, because you are smarter than them? Or because you are more spiritual than them? Or is it because you are just more gullible than most and you'll believe almost anything? 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."

They are discerned *only through the Spirit*. Listen to those words. We discern these things, we understand them and believe them through the Holy Spirit. They aren't believed by people who are unscientific and way more gullible than others so they'll buy the most ridiculous ideas. They aren't believed by people who happen to have some religious gene in their DNA. They are understood, accepted and believed for one reason and one reason only. That is the Holy Spirit is at work in that person opening their eyes and enabling them to see and believe what others just shake their heads at. No Holy Spirit, no belief in these truths.

If you believe the things of God, it is because of the Holy Spirit in you. This is irrefutable evidence that the Holy Spirit is in you. If he were not, you simply would not believe. Years ago when HD TV's were a relatively new thing Laurie and I were in a store that had a terrific deal on an LCD TV that in the store had a picture that was so sharp we were in awe. The sales guy said they had a special deal on that TV, but it was only for that day. It would not be available the next day. We had just happened to get some extra money, and so we bought it. We assumed it was like any other TV. We took it home, set it up, hooked the cable up to it, plugged it in, turned it on, and were seriously disappointed. The picture wasn't anything like what we saw in the store. It looked exactly like our old school TV! The problem wasn't with the TV, it was with us. We were stupid. What we didn't realize is that to have HD, you had to have an HD cable signal and you had to have an HDMI cable running from your cable box to your television. Without that signal and that equipment you simply cannot get the HD picture. The Gospel of Christ is like that. If you don't have the Spirit of Christ you just won't get the picture.

One other thing I will point out. You are here today because you believe in Jesus and you want to honor him. There's not a lot of other reasons to be here in church. You could have stayed home today or gone out to brunch somewhere. The NFL season has started so you could have stayed

home to watch the morning games. Most of your neighbors are not in church today. Why are you? It is because you want to know God and do his will. It's sure not because our church puts on such a good show on Sunday morning that you wouldn't ever want to miss it. Something inside you compels you to be here. I'll tell you what that is. Remember in Ezekiel 36:27, God said his Spirit would motivate us to keep his laws and commandments. You are here because the Holy Spirit tugs at your heart. That compulsion you feel to be and do what God wants is the Holy Spirit at work in you.

### WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

For a moment let's think about what it doesn't mean to be filled with the Spirit. You may from time to time encounter a person who, upon hearing that you are a believer in Jesus, asks, "Have you been filled with the Spirit?" They might ask if you attend a "Spirit-filled church." That person likely believes that being filled with the Spirit is an event that happens when the Holy Spirit does some dramatic thing in you and there is some sort of supernatural manifestation, typically speaking in tongues. The model for their theology is Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given for the first time and there were a number of miraculous manifestations. For those who have this perspective, the supernatural element is usually crucial.

There are some important reasons we should not be swayed by those of that persuasion. First, as hard as this is to believe, miracles are not a reliable indication of true spirituality. In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

That is a frightening passage. Jesus said people would stand before him on the judgment day claiming to be his followers, pointing out that they had prophesied, cast out demons and even done miracles in his name, and he will say, "I never knew you." He calls them evildoers! Did you notice the use of the word "many" in those verses? There will be many people in this category. Not a handful. Many. Furthermore, they will claim not to have performed merely a miracle or two, but they claimed they did *many* miracles. I find it significant that in the interaction Jesus described, he did not dispute that. He didn't say, "No, you never did any real miracles. You faked some, but you never did anything actually miraculous." That suggests to me something that I have trouble comprehending. Somehow there will be people who even do miracles in the name of Jesus, and they will be the real thing, actual miracles, but those people will not belong to Jesus. Whatever they were doing, it was not by his power! The only other real power in the spiritual realm is demonic, which suggests their miracles were sourced by demonic powers. That's why Jesus called them evildoers.

Does that not suggest that we would be wise not to be enamored of what appears to be miraculous activity? That certainly does not mean that everyone who does something supposedly miraculous is

a demonically powered evil doer. It just says the supernatural is not the determining factor in whether a person actually belongs to Jesus. Miracles prove nothing, one way or another.

In my early years I attempted to be a baseball player, and as I've told you often, I met with very little success. I spent a lot of time sitting on the bench in the dugout. Spend as much time as I did on the bench and you have to find ways to amuse yourself. One thing I tried was honing my skills as a baseball announcer by using a bat as a microphone and announcing our games. Unfortunately this had a tendency to get on the nerves of coaches, so I had to be careful about that. Another thing I worked on was juggling baseballs. I got to be pretty proficient at it. Oh, you could juggle baseballs? So you must have been a really good baseball player, right? Well that would be completely wrong. The ability to juggle balls has almost zero to do with how good you will be as a baseball player. And from what Jesus said, performing miracles has as much to do with how spiritual you are as juggling has to do with how good a baseball player you are. It actually tells you nothing about how "Spirit-filled" a person is.

Well what can tell us whether someone really is Spirit filled? Now you're asking the right question. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus gave us a glimpse of it. He said it is a person who does the will of the Father. So someone who really belongs to Jesus and has his Spirit in him, will obey God. That makes sense because Jesus said he always did only what the Father told him to do. If we have his Spirit in us and are filled with that Spirit then we will naturally do what Jesus did, which is the will of the Father.

This idea becomes even more clear in Galatians 5:22-23. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." We have several fruit bearing trees in our yard. We have a peach, a lemon, an orange and a tangerine. Even if you don't know anything about trees you can tell what they are by what they produce. The peach tree only produces peaches. No tangerines, no lemons, just peaches. The lemon tree only produces lemons. Paul says there is something that when a person is filled with the Spirit it will inevitably be produced. It's not miracles, it's not speaking in tongues, it is a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. That is the mark of being filled by the Spirit.

Isn't that what everyone wants? Just those first 3 are the things that define fullness of life. Love, joy, and peace. If you were totally at peace and your life was filled with joy, and love was the motivating factor in all you do, wouldn't you be satisfied and happy with your life? Everyone wants peace, and exceedingly few have it. The philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal said that everyone wants to be happy. He said the driving motive of every person in everything they do is to be happy. Paul says the Holy Spirit will produce joy. That's the happiness that we really want. If we had joy, real joy, continual joy, we'd all be happy with life. And this is what the Holy Spirit will produce. He's like a joy tree.

Yes, we want that, but how do we get it? What do we have to do to be filled with the Spirit? Laurie and I recently bought a new work out bench. It is a very simple affair. But of course, it didn't come in one piece. This is a very small object, so why is assembly required. I have this nightmare that

some day we're going to go try to buy a new car. We'll find one we like and make a deal for it, and they tell us they'll deliver it to our house in two days. Cool. But two days later a truck shows up and delivers large boxes marked, "Made in Indonesia." I open them and find thousands of car parts and a huge instruction manual that starts, "Step One." Our bench wasn't that bad, but it did have instructions in how to put it together beginning with "Step One." This raises the question, what are the steps for being filled with the Holy Spirit? What's the method for doing that?

Did you notice in this verse that the steps are missing? Uh oh, this is one of those no manual things where you have to go online to find the instructions, right? No. It's weird, but you will find step by step instructions for how to be filled with the Spirit exactly nowhere in the Bible! So is this classified information? Hey if it's on a need to know basis, I need to know, so what's the deal? The deal is, contrary to many preachers, writers and scholars, there is no secret, no steps, or formula for being filled with the Spirit. It's a very simple thing and pretty obvious if we just don't get hung up on what the steps for being filled are.

Did you notice that Paul began this verse by commanding that we not get drunk with wine? That's kind of random. He's explaining to us how a follower of Jesus should live in a hostile world, what we should be like, and kind of out of the blue he says don't get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. Are those two things kind of similar? Is this like a deal where if you get drunk the alcohol takes control of you and removes your inhibitions, so instead of that the Holy Spirit kind of does the same thing? That's not quite right.

Paul had told us in verse 16 to make the most of the season, of our lives, because the days are evil. We live in a broken world, and life is difficult. There is a lot of stress and fear. It is demanding and full of disappointment, even full of pain sometimes. A common response to the hardship of life is to turn to alcohol or other intoxicants. That was definitely the case in ancient Ephesus.

The use of alcohol and drugs is widely prevalent in our society, but this is nothing new. It has been this way for thousands of years. I read an article a couple of years ago by a sociologist who, after studying the pursuit of drugs and alcohol across cultures, had developed a theory that the natural state of human beings is to seek some sort of relief through intoxication.

A number of years ago while on an exercise bike I watched part of the movie *The Last Samurai*. In it, Tom Cruise played a former US Army officer named Nathan Algren. He was plagued by guilt and burned out, and the movie has him going to Japan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to help them build a modern army. He is captured by a group of samurai and taken to their village. There he recovers and gets to know the samurai and their people and to appreciate them. Near the end of the movie there is a battle in which Algren survives, but all the Samurai are killed. He returns to the samurai's isolated village. The narrator says, "I like to think he returned to the village to find a measure of the peace that we all seek, but few find."

Right. That's the problem. Everyone, without exception, is seeking peace, and few find it. Battered by guilt, emptiness, loneliness, disillusionment, wounds, and pain, people want to feel good. They

want it to not hurt. But they don't feel good, and the pain doesn't go away. They want peace, they long for it, and can't find it. So they turn to alcohol and drugs to help them forget, to enable them to be able to relax, to feel good at least for a little while.

The problem is, Paul says that is debauchery. Well there's a word you don't hear very often, and in our society it is often seen as something fun. I'm not a fan of that translation. The New American Standard version says getting drunk with wine is dissipation. What does that mean? Think about the marine layer so common here this time of year. The day starts out foggy and cloudy. It looks, to someone who is not used to our weather, to be a lousy day. But at some time in the morning the clouds begin to disappear. They dissipate and it becomes a beautiful sunny day.

One of the meanings of the word translated "fill" here is "complete." Here's another old Tom Cruise movie reference. There is a classic line from *Jerry McGuire* in which Jerry says to his love interest, Dorothy, "you complete me." What do you think is going to complete you? More money, better job, more status, more approval, a better marriage, more sex. All of that is dissipation, It's wasting your life chasing an illusion. Since I'm using lines from Tom Cruise movies I guess I need to find some use for "I feel the need...the need for speed." ...Still working on that one. I'll get back to you.

John Piper said, "the fundamental meaning of being filled with the Spirit is being filled with the joy that comes from God." So being filled with the Spirit means looking to Christ for our joy and peace. It is trusting in his love for us, his forgiveness and his grace. It is believing he has eternally significant meaning for our lives. It is trusting that he is with us and gives us today all we need today. It is knowing that this is the day the Lord has made, rejoicing, being glad in it, being content with whatever God chooses to do in our lives.

## APPLICATION

### THERE IS NO SWITCH

All of us, every living human being, wants to get better. We all know inside that there is something wrong with us, and we feel the lack of something, we feel there's more than what we're experiencing in life. So all of us want to know what it is we have to do to fix whatever that is. And for Christians they are pretty sure the Holy Spirit has something to do with remedying the problem.

Recently as I was driving on a warm day the fan in our car was going, but the air coming out wasn't very cool. I waited for a while thinking it had to cool off, but it just didn't get better. It wasn't helping me. I glanced down to make sure the controls were set. I turned the thermostat down from 72 to 69 thinking that would encourage it to get cooler, but it stubbornly refused to get better. I had recently had the oil changed and the mechanic said it would not be a bad idea to have our air conditioning serviced. I said no thanks, and now was thinking, "I should have listened. I hope this is not going to be a major problem." But then I glanced again at the controls and noticed a problem.



The fan was on, the temperature controls were set, but the AC wasn't turned on. I punched the AC button and within ten seconds, cool air began flowing out of the vents.

We're all looking for the switch, the button to push that will fill those empty places in our lives and flood us with peace and joy. That's why there is a plethora of talks, seminars, books and articles that are about the "key to..." or the "steps to..." or the "secret of..." There is no switch. There aren't any keys, steps or secrets that if you can just employ them suddenly you will be fixed and it will all be good.

This verse points us to a way of living. It is about finding the peace and joy we want in the presence of the Spirit of Jesus in us. It is about refusing to chase the lies that are continually dangled before us in an effort to fix it all. It is knowing that this is the day the Lord has made, and we should rejoice and be glad in it.

### THIS IS A CONTINUAL PROCESS

One of the problems with the "have you been filled with the Spirit" crowd is they fail to notice a crucial grammatical point. It is that the command to be filled with the Spirit is a present tense imperative. That means it is a continuing activity. You could translate it, "be continually being filled with the Spirit." This is not something that happened at one point in your life and now you're totally different. It is a way of life that you pursue continually every single day.

This means you could conceivably start your day out being filled with the Spirit but an hour later no longer be filled with the Spirit. Last Saturday Laurie was going to make some dinner and we were going to take it over to Michael and Carissa's, because they needed a little help and we wanted to have another visit with Wesley, our new grandson. Laurie was going to make a quick run to the store to buy some of the food for dinner. But she came back in from the garage and asked if she could use my key because hers didn't work. The car wouldn't start. We tried mine, and it didn't work either. Uh oh. Maybe the little battery in the key fob is dead. We replaced it, but it didn't help. Now we knew something was wrong with the car. The best case scenario was dead battery, but there were a couple of things that made me question if that was it. We called for road service to come jump start the car. They said they'd get there in an hour. Now we were looking at some problems. It was late Saturday afternoon. If it was the battery, we had to find a place that would replace our battery. If we couldn't do that, we had no way to get to Michael and Carissa's, and we would have no way to get to church the next morning. I called a couple of places and they said they couldn't help us. It was too late in the day on Saturday. I started out that day filled with the Spirit. I was looking to Christ as the source of peace, joy and life, trusting him for it. But with the failure to find a way to fix the battery problem, I began stressing. I started getting uptight. I imagined the annoyance of trying to work around this problem. I began stressing that maybe it wasn't the battery and there was something much more significant wrong with the car. I began thinking that having a working car was the source of life, peace and joy. I was not being filled with the Spirit. I could feel the life draining out of me. Instead of love, joy, peace, patience, I was beginning to experience frustration, irritation and anxiety, the very opposite of peace. I had to mentally pause and say, "All right, Lord. This is in your hands. It's not a big deal, but it is a deal. It is a problem. This is your

problem. I ask that you solve it, and more important I trust that even if this is worse than I think, I know that you are the source of life, not our car, and you can give me peace and joy.” I was filled with the Spirit at that point and knew that whatever happened, God would get us through it. As it turned out it was the battery. The jump start got it started, and Laurie found a place that told her, “Sure, come on in. We’ll take care of it.” And it took them 10 minutes to solve the problem.

I know it seems silly and trivial to get tied up in knots over something that small, but the small details of life somehow tend to do that to me. I can get stressed, frustrated and overburdened by them. And that is dissipation. That is wasting my life. That’s me doing my imitation of the Marine layer. That is not experiencing the fruit of the Spirit. So the cool thing is when I choose to be filled with the Spirit, I don’t waste my life. I begin experiencing his fruit.

### FAITH IS KEY

Acts 6:5 says that when the apostles recommended that the church choose deacons to handle the money for widows, “This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 11:24 describes Barnabus as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith.” Note the connection between faith and the Holy Spirit. It all starts with us believing what God says and trusting him.

I am really getting old. I am so old that when I was a kid the Dead Sea was only sick. One of the frustrating things about getting old is all the stuff that happens that never used to happen. There are the obvious things like joints not functioning properly. But I’ve had some little things that have been surprising. A couple of years ago I woke up one morning and it felt like there was something in my eye. I tried flushing it out, but it didn’t get better. In the past I once scratched a cornea and this felt a little like that. I also had an infection in an eye and it also felt like that, so I thought that was also possible. I called my eye doctor and he had me come right in. It wasn’t a scratch or an infection. He told me that we have oil glands in our eyelids, and that my glands were getting clogged. The oil was gumming up and that was what I was feeling in there. I wear contact lenses. I once had a friend who also wore contacts, but his eyes started reacting to them, so he couldn’t wear them anymore. My first thought was that was happening to me. But the doctor said no. There was a remedy. Oh good, I figured there would be some medicine or a procedure. No, he said, they just needed me to put a hot compress to my eyelid for five to seven minutes twice a day. Well that didn’t sound very high tech. I was dubious. But I went home and did as instructed. Well it didn’t make any difference at all. Maybe it would take some time. I did it again the next morning and it still did no good whatsoever. I thought it was hopeless. I needed something more medical, more high tech. I just didn’t believe this was going to help at all. But I trusted the word of my doctor and stuck with it, dutifully doing the treatment that night. The next morning, wonder of wonders, my eye was better! It eventually fixed the problem!

The critical point is that we have to believe that what God says is true. We have to believe the fact that the Holy Spirit is in us even when we may not feel like it. We have to believe that when we choose to let him complete us, we will experience being filled with the Spirit and the fruit that always comes from it.