

# Ephesians 5:18-21 by Wayne Barber

PREVIOUS

**Ephesians 5:18: BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, PART**

**1**

by Dr. Wayne Barber

NEXT

Turn to Ephesians 5. We are coming to that verse that I have been looking forward to, verse 18:

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."

Turn back to chapter 3 and to the prayer that I have told you over and over again has everything to do with the teaching of this book. It sums up chapters 1, 2 and 3 and sets up chapters 4, 5 and 6. You can see it bleed into almost everything Paul says in these last three chapters. In verse 16 of chapter 3, Paul says,

"that He [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory [that refers to everything they have in Jesus Christ], to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man."

Paul has told them that they have every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Now, they are to be strengthened, and we are to be strengthened, according to what He has given to us.

Verse 17 tells us the way we are strengthened is by our willingness to accommodate Jesus in all the areas of our life. How do we accommodate Him? We are willing to obey Him. It is by my willingness to surrender, my willingness to obey, that I am strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God. This thought in that prayer literally permeates the rest of the book. God lives in us. We have all of God we are ever going to get. Isn't that wonderful? Now God wants to control us from within. He wants all of us. That is the key. The key is not getting any more of God. The key is God getting more and more of us.

In Ephesians 4 he tells them to put on the new man, the new garment, a brand new lifestyle. Remember, a garment is something that people see. Therefore, what he is literally saying in the context of his thought there is if you are strengthened on the inside, it is going to show up on the outside. The garment is a lifestyle. The Holy Spirit is living inside of me, strengthening me. The degree I am willing to surrender to Him is going to show up in a difference in the way I live and the way people see me on the outside.

In Ephesians 5, he tells them to imitate God's love, and he warns them to walk wisely, making the most of the time. In verse 17 he says, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." I don't think you can miss what he is saying here. He is talking about the will of the Lord. The general will of the Lord is that we obey Him in every area of our heart. But that willingness to obey gives us the ability to have wisdom from above in order to make wise decisions to redeem the time as we live as children of light in a world of darkness.

Paul continues the thought of walking wisely in a world filled with darkness in verse 18:

"And do not get drunk with wine,... but be filled with the Spirit."

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit of God? There are two things I want you to see, and they are in stark contrast to each other. The first part of the verse says, "And do not get drunk with wine." The verb there is in the present tense. It means, "Don't ever allow it into your lifestyle." It is an imperative mood, which means it is a command. There is no option. It is also in the middle voice. We all have this responsibility. Never, ever, ever be drunk with wine.

Now why would Paul bring that out, especially in contrast with being filled with the Spirit of God? I love to look at historical settings and the culture of an area and what is going on during the period a person is writing his letter. For example, if you don't know anything about Gnosticism when you look at I John, you miss the whole reason why John wrote the letter. It is helpful to know what is going on their time. What do they associate with pseudo-spirituality and those kinds of things? If I understand the setting and the culture of the time, "drunkenness" was a word used in religious circles. As a matter of fact, they thought drunkenness was a means of communing with their spirits and gods. In worshiping their "gods" in the pagan temples of that day, they would start with a wild frenzied dance and work themselves into an emotional peak. Then they would begin to drink wine. The drunker they got, the more they would act in all kinds of wild ways. Sexual orgies would break out and somehow, in their perverted way of thinking, they thought that when they got into this state of mind, totally influenced by the wine, totally intoxicated by the wine, far beyond clear thinking, that somehow they were moved into a realm to where they could communicate with their gods.

That was typical theology of that day. It had nothing to do with our God. It has nothing to do with true worship. That is what they were used to. The pagan cults, the pagan temples of that day, were filled with this kind of idolatry and immorality and debauchery. Let me give you an example of what was going on at Ephesus. You know that Artemis was their goddess. They had a huge temple

for her. As a matter of fact, it was one of the seven wonders of the world at that time. People came from all over to see that temple. But that was just one of the pagan cults that was there. There was another heresy that many scholars think affected the Ephesians in Ephesus, and Paul had a lot to say about it. It was the Dionysian heresy.

They believed that the greatest of the gods was a god named Zeus. Zeus was his Greek name, and Jupiter was his Roman name. You can look through history and see how Satan has always tried to counterfeit anything that God has done, whether it be in myth or any other way. All he can do is pervert, counterfeit and deceive. This seems to be an evident counterfeit of the immaculate conception of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus being born of a virgin. Mary had never had any physical contact with Joseph. Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit of God. Well, isn't it ironic that during that time, part of the mythology was that Zeus impregnated a goddess by the name of Samila? This goddess, without any contact whatsoever, all of a sudden became with child. One day she wanted to see the father of her child. So she approached Zeus. The mythology says that she got too close to his apparent glory and was incinerated to ashes. But before the unborn child in her womb could be burned up, Zeus reached into her womb, took the child out and attached it to his thigh. The child grew up and was born out of the thigh of Zeus. The child's name was Dionysius.

Now this infant god named Dionysus was destined by Zeus to rule the earth. The legend popular at this time went on to say that the people that inhabited the earth at that time were not human beings. They were Titans. When they heard that Zeus had a plan for his son, Dionysus, to rule the earth, they stole the child away and ripped him apart, limb from limb. But Zeus, always on the spot, the mythological god, somehow took the heart of Dionysus, swallowed it and in some miraculous way they thought he recreated Dionysus. Then he took his vengeance out on the Titans and with lightning, he smote them and they were burned to ashes. Now listen to this! Out of the ashes came the human race! You ought to take that to school next week and say, "Oh, you think you've got something? Let me tell you this one. Creation? Evolution? Hey, we came out of the ashes of the Titans on this earth. That is how the human race came into being."

Dionysus now is the god over the earth, over the human beings on this earth. Dionysus came up with a form of religion of ascendancy. In other words, a man can rise to different levels of divine consciousness. This mystical system that everybody thinks is so new today, New Age, is not New Age. It has been going on ever since time has been here. You see, when God does something, Satan has to pervert it. People would rather believe his perversion than the truth of what God says. This mystical system that he devised was comprised of wild music, frenzied dancing, sexual perversion, bodily mutilation, eating of the raw flesh of sacrificial bulls, and drunkenness. Dionysus became known as the god of wine, and the intoxicating drink became the integral part of the pagan religion that surrounded him. Just as Zeus was known as Jupiter in Rome, Dionysus was known as Bacchus in Rome, the same god but just a different name. The worship of him was celebrated with wild dancing, singing, drinking, and reveling that has for over 2,000 years been synonymous with drunkenness and sexual orgy. In Rome, they had a temple of Bacchus and it had huge columns that were profusely decorated with carvings of grape vines, which were symbolic of the excessive use of wine in their pagan worship.

Now this is some of the paganistic thought that was going on in the days that Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians. You see, these Ephesian believers had come out of all this. Paul knew that drunkenness used to be a part of their religious ceremony, just like immorality, just like idolatry had been a part of it. They had come out of this. In 4:17, he said,

"This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,"

In other words...

"You can't go back. You can't live now as the Gentiles live. Look how they live and look what you have in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul knew it would be a temptation, so he brought the command to them never, ever be drunk with wine. The bottom line is as believers we don't ascend to God by some intoxicating beverage. God has descended to us. He has sent His Spirit to live in us. God is in us. We don't need anything from the outside to control us. We have everything on the inside to control us. The believer is to be controlled and influenced from the inside out, not from the outside in. So paganism is the exact reverse of what God has done. God came within us and gave us of Himself. Yet, they would still listen to the deceptive messages that said they needed to go back into this intoxicating type of lifestyle.

You see, when we are controlled from the inside it will produce a life that is holy. Remember what the word "holy" means? It is not as sanctimonious as you think. It simply means to be set apart in a class that is unique all by itself. Remember back in Acts at Pentecost when the Spirit came and they spoke in different tongues? Those tongues could be understood by all the people who were there regardless of their dialect or their particular language at the time. The people said,

"Oh, I know what is wrong. They are filled with sweet wine. They are drunk."

Simon Peter...

"... taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words.<sup>15</sup> "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day." (Acts 2:14-15)

In other words Peter was saying that...

"These men are not drunk with wine. Listen to what they are saying and watch how they are behaving and you will see that when you are controlled by the Spirit of God."

Your whole life edifies Christ. When you are controlled by anything else, it is easily seen in stark contrast. So you see, when you are controlled by something from the outside, you are nullifying the message.

Paul has already prayed for them to be controlled from the inside out. Now he says that being drunk with wine is dissipation. What does that mean? That took me a while to figure out. The word is *asotia*. It has the idea of not being able to save anything, but that is really not it. It has the idea of uncontrolled actions. It has the idea of wastefulness to the very worst degree. Titus 1:6 associates it with rebellion. 1 Peter 4:3-4 associates it with sensuality, lust, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. You see, wine has no place in the life of a believer. Because you see, it is something that leads you into that which is corruptible, destructive and uncontrolled. Therefore, we are told never, ever, ever be drunk with wine. It has no place in the life of a believer. Peter says we have everything for life and for godliness, therefore, we need nothing from the outside.

In the book of Philippians, Paul said,

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am in."

The word "content" means self-contained. Paul is not saying, "I am depending on myself," Paul is saying,

"I have everything within me that I need to face anything in this life. I don't need anything out there, money or anything else. I have Him within me and I am complete in Him."

So there is a stark contrast here. First of all he says,

"Don't get drunk with wine. That is dissipation. That is corruption. That is wasteful. That is a downhill spiral."

On the other hand he says,

"Be filled with the Spirit of God."

I like that a whole lot better. We have already seen the word "filled" in Ephesians. You can't just rip this one out of context and not put it together with the other one. Look back in 3:19:

"and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God."

In other words, what he is basically saying is, "Let all of God control all of you."

The word *pleroo* has two meanings. It has the basic meaning and then sort of a sub-meaning. The sub-meaning is "to be satisfied with." When you fill up a glass of water, it could be said to be satisfied because there is nothing else that can get into it. There is a sense in which it means satisfied. But the predominant meaning of the word is "to be dominated by, to be controlled by." What fills a man controls a man.

## WHAT FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

### DOES NOT MEAN

It does not mean several things. I want to make sure you understand this.

**1)** Being filled with the Spirit of God does not mean a dramatic and sudden experience that somehow catapults you into some kind of spiritual hierarchy, into a permanent state that is called the second blessing. Forget it. That is not what he is talking about here. As a matter of fact, we have every blessing in Christ Jesus. Why are we looking for the second one? I just wondered about that.

**2)** It is not some act of our own flesh that seeks God's approval. It is not an act of our own flesh. It is not somebody saying, "Okay, God, I love you and I am going to go out there and do your work and you help me out." It has nothing to do with being filled with the Spirit.

**3)** It is not the same as possessing or being indwelt by the Spirit. You possess the Spirit because you are a child of God. You have the Spirit from the very inception of His coming into your life.

4) It is not a process of progressively receiving bigger and bigger doses of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever been around some of these pious, "I am more spiritual than you are" people? They walk around as if to say, "Man, I've got a bigger dose of the Holy Spirit yesterday. How much did you get?" They act as if what they did get more of God. That has nothing to do with what he is talking about being filled with the Spirit. You have all of God you will ever get. Remember, it is all of you that is the key.

5) It is not the same as the baptism with the Spirit. Remember, there is no such thing as the baptism of the Spirit. It is baptism with or by, by the means of. We are baptized into the body of Christ with the Holy Spirit. That is salvation. When we were baptized into the body, we received every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. In Him is the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

The verb used here in verse 18, "be filled with the Spirit," tells us everything we need to know. It is in the **present tense** as was the **command**, do not be drunk with wine.

In other words, it is being controlled, influenced by, dominated by the Holy Spirit of God. Of course, it is in the middle voice, which means each one of you individually. It is imperative. It is not an option. Do you realize that we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit of God? Before you point a finger at somebody who is in sin of one kind or another ask yourself the question,

"Am I walking filled with the Spirit of God?"

If you are not, you are in the same situation they are in. It may not be consequentially, but the sin is still there. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit of God, to be constantly being controlled by the Spirit of God.

### PICTURE OF CONTINUAL CONTROL

#### BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now how in the world do you explain this? Take a glass of water. Some people think that being filled with the Spirit means to fill that glass up and guzzle it down. But after you do that it is empty. Now you have to be filled again, so you fill it back up and drink it down. Now it is empty, so you have to fill it up again. So you are constantly being filled, emptied, filled, emptied of the Spirit. No, that is not it!

Take the glass, the same glass, and knock the bottom out of it. Make a conduit out of it, a pipe that something can travel through. Take that glass, put it into the water and let the river flow through it. That is being filled with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is already there. It hasn't gone anywhere. You can't empty yourself of Him. He is already there. However, you can clog it up. You can shut it down. You can stop the flow. So therefore, constantly in my life, I have to stay unhindered so the Holy Spirit of God can flow and minister His life through me. I can't minister to anybody. I can't do anything. It is Christ doing it through me.

What do I do? It involves several things. First of all, it involves a confession of sin. Confession is the *wordhomologeo*. It means to say to God, "You are exactly right. I want to agree with you. Everything in my life is a result of me. It is not the result of you. I've missed the mark, which is what the word sin means, and God, I agree with you." The more I confess sin, the more I am aware of the old garment. The more I am aware of the old garment, the sicker I am going to get of it and the more I want to wear the new garment. Confession of sin is very, very important to the believer's life. Moment by moment, day by day, it is constant.

I guess Romans 12:1-2 helped me more than anything else, when you think of being filled with the Spirit as involving confession of sin, surrender of will, surrender of intellect, surrender of body, surrender of time, surrender of talents, surrender of desires, and surrender of possessions. Romans 12:1-2 drew a picture of what it meant to be constantly "be being filled" with the Spirit of God. In this passage Paul writes...

12:1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

It is a process folks, day by day, constantly being broken, constantly yielding. It is not an arrival. It is a pursuit.

"I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice."

Think of this as a blank sheet of paper. You sign the bottom of it and give it to God. It is like going to a surgeon who says,

"I am going to do surgery on your life. Here is a blank sheet of paper. Sign it."

We say,

" No, I am not signing it if it is all blanks. What are the blanks for?"

He says,

"That is what I may have to cut out of you when I do surgery on you. Everything I cut out of you is keeping you from being everything you ought to be."

I am going to go home and check this guy out. God says to do the same thing for Him. Give Him permission to your body. Give Him permission to your life. Present yourself afresh day by day and moment by moment.

"God, cut out of me anything that is hindering me from being everything you want me to be. I give you full rights to myself. I want nothing but what you want in my life."

Let me ask you a question.

### **Have you laid everything at the altar of Jesus Christ?**

Are you being filled with the Spirit of God? Are you so full of yourself that somehow you have meshed the two garments together to the point that you don't know the difference from one or the other? You see, being filled with the Spirit is a constant, fresh, surrendered attitude to Jesus, constantly. He wants whatever it is that usurps His authority and right to be Lord and king of your life and of my life.

What is it in your life? I want to tell you, folks, when you start letting Him control you, the garment comes on, the strengthening starts and it is all the same thing. He said the same thing three different ways. You need nothing from the outside. Oh, no. That is dissipation. You already have it on the inside. Be strengthened from the inside out, not from the outside in.

#### **Ephesians 5:18-21: BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, PART**

#### **2**

by Dr. Wayne Barber

Ephesians 5:18 says,

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."

The question came to my mind, "What else would we want to be filled with?" A man can be filled with many things. He can be filled with rage. He can be filled with jealousy. He can be filled with envy. He can be filled with a lot of things, but Paul says,

"Be filled with the Spirit of God. Be under His control. Be satisfied with Him and only Him. Be dominated by the presence of the Holy God that lives in your hearts."

He is saying,

"This is the way to walk as wise men in a world filled with darkness. Be filled with the Spirit of God. Don't be influenced by anything on the outside. Be influenced by the person who lives on the inside. Constantly, moment by moment, be controlled by the Spirit of God in your inner man. It is a moment by moment choosing to say, 'Jesus, just be Jesus in me. Lord, I don't want anything else. I just want you.' It is a constant yieldedness to Christ, whatever He desires for us."

So often our choices are between what the world offers and what God offers. But being filled with the Spirit of God is always turning to whatever it is that He offers and whatever it is He wants to do in your life. It is loving His Word and loving His will above all else. I want you to know the effects of being filled with the Spirit of God as seen through the rest of the book. From 5:19 on, you see the effects of being filled, of being controlled by the Spirit of God. But I believe the Apostle Paul gives us the three major effects, the three major symptoms of a person being filled with the Spirit of God in verses 19-21. That is what I want us to look at.

### **THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE: SINGING**

There will be three symptoms that will come upon an individual who is constantly being filled, controlled by, the already indwelling Spirit of God. The first one is found in verse 19—singing is a result of being filled with the Spirit of God:

"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

That's a Spirit-filled life. What does that mean? That means a life where every room of the heart, where the Spirit lives, has been opened up. Jesus in His light and love and life has permeated those rooms. Out of that heart, that has been cleansed by His blood and filled with His presence, comes a song to the lips and to the mind. It is always there. Singing is just something that erupts in a

person's life who is filled with the Spirit of God. Something about the Holy Spirit produces that music in a person's heart. That doesn't mean you can carry a tune, it simply means that you can make a joyful noise. There is a song in your heart.

A person says,

"Well, I have a great ability to sing. That must mean that I am filled with the Spirit."

No. People who can't carry a tune can make a joyful sound. It doesn't mean that you can sing as well as other people. It means that you've got a song in your heart. It means that somehow music now fills up your life and there is something that makes sense in your life. There is just that song that erupts out of your heart. Psalm 40 says,

"I waited patiently upon the Lord. He heard my cry of distress. He lifted me out of the miry clay, put my feet upon a rock and put a brand new song in my heart."

That is always the way it is. It is a new song, a fresh song. It is something that God puts within your soul.

Now Paul explains among whom, how, from where and to whom Spirit-filled believers are to sing. Let's work our way through verse 19 and see what he has to say.

First of all, he says among whom: "speaking to one another." Do you realize that the literal means "speaking to yourselves," referring to believers as a community? I want to share something with you. All through Scripture you are going to find that music, music that exalts God, music that exalts Christ, music that praises Him is never, ever meant for the unbeliever. It is always meant for the believer. So often we use music as an evangelistic tool. That doesn't mean it can't be used that way, but that is not its original purpose. It was intended to be amongst yourselves. It was for believers when we come together.

Folks, what goes on when we come together is unique to any other gathering on the face of this earth. Do you realize that? There is not one single thing you can go to outside of a church gathering when brothers and sisters are together singing praises to God, celebrating the Lord Jesus Christ, that is anything close to that. You see, this is what it's for. That is why we sing. I hear people say sometimes,

"Well, we ought to have less singing and more preaching."

Are you kidding me? There is a balance in this thing. Folks, I want to sing, don't you? I want to get with brothers and sisters singing the praises unto God. It was intended for believers and it was intended for praise and exaltation of our Lord. So among whom are we to sing? It is among ourselves.

Secondly, how are we to sing?

Well, the term "speaking to one another" needs to be understood. The word "speaking" comes from the verb *aleo* which simply means to make a sound, to break the silence. It came from the word "chatter" or "babble," possibly like when a child is learning to talk. It was also used for the chirping of birds in secular Greek. It was also used for a grunting of animals when they made those animal sounds. In its most basic sense it simply means to make a sound. So here in our text, the text is speaking of singing. Is that not a sound? That is all he is saying. The speaking is the singing. It is making sounds. It is sounds that come from a spirit-filled heart. So, the sounds that please the Lord are the sounds that come from a spirit-filled heart.

Now he refers to several ways in which we can sing together and he mentions three of them in this verse.

First of all he mentions psalms. Obviously, of course, there is the book of Psalms and it is a hymnbook. The book of Psalms is wisdom literature, and they were songs that were sung back to the Lord. We have hymns that exalt God. The word "psalm" has the idea of playing music with strings. In other words, it is with an instrumental accompaniment. The word "psalm" means to sing songs to the accompaniment of music, stringed or whatever else, instrumental music. That is the way they would sing the psalm. That was a part of their worship in the early days of the church at Ephesus that has evolved right into today. It usually reflected the nature and the work of God especially in the life of believers. They were sung again with musical accompaniment.

The word "hymns" however, was a little different word. The hymns, from all the study that I could do, refer primarily to the songs of praise which, in the early church, did not just exalt God, but exalted His Christ, the Son of God, the One who is the embodiment of the Godhead fully. They exalted Christ, whereas the psalms evolved from way back and exalted the Godhead. The hymns would lift up and exalt the Lord Jesus. There are many people who think that a lot of pieces of the New Testament, a lot of things that are said, are taken right out of some of the early Christian songs or hymns that were sung in the church. Colossians 1:12-16 is one example that I came across as I was studying. No, it doesn't mean that God didn't inspire it. It doesn't mean that God didn't have a thought there, but some of the thinking sometimes was married with some of the early hymns that exalted the Lord Jesus Christ.

So you have psalms, like a psaltery, which exalted God always to a musical accompaniment. You have hymns primarily on exalting

the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, this was very appropriate in the early church. But then you have spiritual songs which were probably any music that expressed spiritual truth and were inspired in the heart of the spirit-filled person. It appears to be that which was sung to Him, not just about Him and had everything to do with what His Word has to say. When your heart is filled with the Spirit of God, there will be singing. Among whom? Among believers. How? Making joyful sounds from a Spirit-filled heart to the Lord, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Where does this song come from? Look in verse 19:

"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

The word for "melody" is again the word "psalm." In other words, making melody, like you take an instrument and make music with it. It is making music out of something. Psalming with the heart, singing perhaps to the accompaniment of an instrument, but what Paul is saying here is it is from the heart.

Now listen, all music that qualifies as a symptom of one filled with the Spirit of God has to come from a Spirit-filled heart. If it doesn't come from a heart that is under the control of the Spirit of God, forget the talent, forget all the other things because it didn't come from a heart that was filled with the Spirit of God. What is the symptom of a Spirit-filled heart? It is that music that comes forth from that. In 3:17, remember, he said,

"Let all the rooms of your heart... "

When those rooms are all allowing Jesus to control them, then the music that comes out of it is Spirit-filled music. It is from the Spirit.

To whom are we to sing? Verse 19 goes on to say,

"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart [or out of your heart] to the Lord."

All of Spirit-filled singing is directed to the Lord. Whether it is about Him or to Him, it is all somehow directed to the Lord. If you don't have a Spirit-filled heart, then forget singing because your focus is not on Him to start with. So one of the first symptoms you have is singing in the heart.

So what is the first symptom of the Spirit-filled life? It is not speaking in tongues. It is not doing miracles. The first symptom he says is singing and making melody in your heart, singing to the Lord. Isn't that incredible? That is always a symptom of a person filled with the Spirit of God.

### **THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE: THANKSGIVING**

**Secondly, you find thanksgiving.** Verse 20 says,

"always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."

There seems to be three attitudes towards thanksgiving in our world today, especially in Christianity. First of all, thanksgiving is not even necessary because we deserved it anyway. You can see this in Scripture. Remember the rich farmer who took all of his crops and stored the produce of it in his barns, never understanding the fact that he didn't grow those crops, God grew those crops. You know, if anybody understands what God can do and what man can't do, it is the farmer. All the farmer can do is plow the soil, put the seed in it. The rest is up to God. He gave no thanksgiving to God. For some reason he thought that everything that God produced was his, so he put it into his barns and stored them up. God came to him and said, "You fool. Tonight your soul shall be required of you."

A lot of people don't thank God for anything. They think they deserve it. They think they have earned it.

"Why, I pulled myself up by my boot straps, young man. I have made a living for myself and bless God, I am going to be a survivor until Jesus comes back. I deserve what I get. I put the effort into it."

Oh no, friend, a sovereign God gave you everything you have.

Secondly, is the attitude of the hypocrite.

Now this is a person in scripture who will give thanks but his thanksgiving is like in that singer, it always calls attention to himself. He is not really giving thanks to God, but he loves to talk about it all the time. "Oh, thank God. I really thank God." Luke 18:11-12 describes a Pharisee...

"The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'"

Oh, he is a thankful fellow, isn't he? "I thank Thee that I am not like other people." Oh, brother.

"Swindlers, unjust, adulterers or even like this tax gatherer. I fast twice a week. I pay tithes of all that I get."

Well, big deal! You see, his thanksgiving was not true thanksgiving. His thanksgiving was to call attention to what he had done.

So you see two reasons already why we need to understand the word "thanksgiving." The word "thanksgiving" is not from a person who doesn't think that God deserves any of it. The word "thanksgiving" is not something to call attention to yourself.

In Luke 17:15-17 when the ten lepers were healed, how many came back and thanked the Lord Jesus? Only one.

15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.17 And Jesus answered and said, "**Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine-- where are they?**"

One leper came back. That leper knew that had God not touched him, he wouldn't have had a chance, folks. You see, gratefulness comes out of a heart that is desperate. One that has reached out to God and God has, in His love, responded to him. That is where **thanksgiving** comes from. As a matter of fact, it is the word **eucharisteo**. It comes from the word "**grace**." It means a person who is depending on God's grace moment by moment. That is a thankful person. When you live that proud hard life and you are doing it and you don't need to turn to God, you don't need to depend on God for anything. Hey, folks, when God strikes you down one day with cancer or God takes you down with a traumatic situation in your life that brings you to the very end of yourself and you cry out to God and He is lovingly there to meet you, I guarantee you will have a different idea of thanksgiving the rest of your life. Only the people who depend on Him appreciate Him and are thankful.

Thanksgiving is a product of a spirit-filled heart. When you are filled with the Spirit of God, you are grateful for that which God is doing in your life. Notice **when** we are to be thankful. He says there in verse 20,

"always giving thanks."

It is a lifestyle. It is constantly having a thankful heart, just a grateful heart.

Notice for **what** we are to be thankful. He says,

"for all things."

Do you realize that God is in all things in your life? But have you ever noticed in scripture how good and bad travel on the same road? A girl gets pregnant out of wedlock and the father of that daughter says,

"That is the worst thing that has ever happened to me."

About nine months later that little baby is born and you see that granddaddy carrying that little baby around. You think,

"Oh that was bad, but oh, look at the good that came along with it."

Somehow the good and the bad travel on the same track. You see, you can thank God in all things. Thank goodness we have a God that is in all things.

Well, notice how we are to give thanks:

"in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

If it wasn't for Jesus, we would have no reason to give thanks because we would be desperate, hopeless, helpless people. But because of what Jesus did, He is the basis of all of our thanksgiving back to God. Starting with salvation and going all the way through sanctification, Jesus is His name, and we give thanks. Everything gives credit to Him and through Him because He is the means of all God's blessings in our life.

Notice to whom we are to give thanks: "to God, even the Father."

James 1:17 says, the Father, is the giver of every good gift...

"Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow."

Paul counters by saying,



"Therefore, He should be the receiver of all heartfelt thanksgiving."

He is the one we give thanks to. When I am filled with the Spirit of God, what kind of person am I? I tell you one thing, I have a song in my heart. I may not be able to sing it very well, but I have a song in my heart. I love that music that exalts and praises my God. There is just something that wells up inside me. Isn't it wonderful when we come together and you and I have sought to live the Spirit-filled life during the week and we get to come to church and get to sing together? Man, that fires me up. It is one thing to be by myself, it is another thing for all of us to sing together. That is a wonderful thing!

But I want to tell you something, you can't manipulate praise. You can only direct praise and if there is no worship, there is no praise. It is hard to get the people to sing who have no song in their heart.

So there is singing, thanksgiving and finally one more thing, submission. The word "be subject" is the word *hupotasso*. It is the word that means to place yourself up under. It is always used of two equals. It is never used of an unequal to a superior. There are several angles that you can take this word. One of the ideas is that you are willing to trust those in authority in the church. That is one of the ways you can take it. But I don't think that is all that Paul is talking about here. Why is it that elders can lead a church? Because people are filled with the Spirit. How can people who are filled with the Spirit ever submit to elders who are leading the church? Because there is a mutual respect for one another and the position God has already ordained. It is just something built into the life of a Spirit-filled believer. Are they trusting the people? No, they are trusting the Christ who lives in the people. There is a huge difference. If you haven't seen that difference yet, it will still cause you problems. That is one angle I could take. But I don't think that is all he is talking about here.

The idea that I get out of it is even better than that. He is going to take that same idea to husbands and wives. That is why I say that is one of the main angles of this teaching. Look with me in verse 22:

"Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands."

So there is a sense here of equals submitting to one another. Whether it be in the church or in the family, he is going to go that route.

But you know, there is another side to this. I give up my rights for the sake of somebody else. I think that is automatically built into the meaning of the word. I am willing to put myself in a position of lesser than it needs to be because of the need that you have in your life. The term "for one another" is the word *allos*. This is talking about believers, one another of the same kind, believers to believers.

Paul closes the verse with

"in the fear of Christ."

The word for fear is *phobos*, which means reverence instead of terror. To always be willing to give up my rights for the sake of others with a complete reverence towards Christ is an attitude of a Spirit-filled believer.

You say,

"I don't have a song in my heart. As matter of fact, I am pretty bitter tonight. As a matter of fact, I am not submitting to anybody because I am going to run the show."

What you have just said is,

"I am not willing to submit to a Holy God and trust Him. I am not filled with the Spirit of God."

Oh, how this works itself out. I can't wait until we get into the passages that are coming up. Remember, being filled with the Spirit is going to carry its weight now all through the rest of the book. You will see different examples of a person under the control of the Holy Spirit of God.

Are you filled with the Spirit of God?

Are you chained to His chariot?

Are you allowing the Spirit to give you power in the inner man that you never had before?

Are you wearing the garment of righteousness?

Everywhere you go, people are touched by an awareness that there is someone living in you that is divine and they want what you have. That is the result, you see, of being filled with the Spirit of God. You are constantly in the stream, letting the river flow through you.