CITYLIGHT
CHURCH

SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

Filling the Spirit-Filled Life

Four Simple Ways to Nurture a Spirit-Filled Life

Your life is going to be filled with something. Be mindful of what you fill it with, and fill it with things that nurture a Spirit-filled life: worship music, Spirit-filled preaching, serving others and generosity.

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DATE
March 8, 2026

SERIES
We're Openly Spirit Filled, Week 5 of 5

MAIN TEXT
Ephesians 5:18-19

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01

Sermon Transcript

Amen. Now, I'm excited to preach this message today. I want to let you know that when I started the week, I had a plan on what I was going to preach. I've had a plan on what I was going to preach this weekend for a long time. I've known since I got here what I was going to preach this weekend, and I got into Monday, and I felt in my spirit like I wasn't supposed to preach it. And then I spent the week in the lift, which ain't the best sermon-writing position in the world.

But I think I've got a word from the Lord for you today. I've been processing this all week long. We're closing out a series we've been in called "We Are Openly Spirit-Filled." How many of you know we're an openly Spirit-filled church? I've said this a couple of times. We're not closeted Charismatics or private Pentecostals.

We're an openly Spirit-filled church. But I preached a few weeks ago that we're not obnoxiously Spirit-filled. Just before you fill a Jericho march, come on you while I'm preaching this morning. Amen. But we are openly Spirit-filled here at Saraland Church. And I wanted to close this series with this topic of what it looks like to fill a Spirit-filled life.

So that's what I want to talk to you about this morning: filling a Spirit-filled life. And just because I'm Southern enough, I should clarify that's F-I-L-L-I-N-G. Not feeling a Spirit-filled life — but hey, I'll tell you what, you're in a good church to feel it too. Amen. But filling a Spirit-filled life. So if you will, turn in your Bibles with me to Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5. I'll give you just a moment to turn there. Ephesians 5. This will be a familiar passage of Scripture to you. Ephesians 5 and verse 18. It says...

> **EPHESIANS 5:18-19** ESV
>
> 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Now, I want to talk about this this morning.

I'm not talking about drinking alcohol today. But I will let you know that I am a teetotaler. Not only do I not drink, I've never drank, I've never tasted alcohol. I'm curious — when I'm like 89 or something, I might have me a bourbon or something. Just to quench my curiosity, amen. I don't know.

But I've just lost 10 people in the church over that. People are going to go take their offering back now. No, I'm joking around. I probably won't do that. But I am a teetotaler. I don't endorse the consumption of alcohol.

I'm not oblivious to know that some of you do drink. Hopefully it is not in excess. I want you to know that there is no condemnation for you in that. The Bible is very clear and unclear on that particular topic. You know, and that's the issue — there's a lot of... Sorry, my phone is starting to go off here.

The preacher can't even turn his phone off while he's preaching. There are a lot of different opinions on that when it comes to social drinking. There are whole denominations that are cool with it. In the Assemblies of God, we're not fond of it. And in my opinion, your life will be better if you avoid the consumption of alcohol. Now, all that to say, the reason I say that is because I am going to talk a little bit about what this passage is really talking about.

And I don't want you to think it's a backdoor for me to tell you that your preacher drinks and it's cool to drink. And, you know, do you want to go have a Budweiser when church is over? That's not where I'm headed. And unfortunately, as a 40-year-old... That's a little cold drink of water to say that. Amen.

But as a 40-year-old preacher in our denomination, right now, that's actually very important for me to state. I don't know what it is, but I've learned that preachers that don't read the Bible and pray argue over frivolous things. And one of them is whether or not you can drink alcohol or not. Like, that's the most worthy thing for us to talk about 24 hours a day. Sorry, I'm having a little therapy moment up here. Amen.

But I'm not talking about alcohol today. But when I was reading this passage, I don't know if I was drawn there by the Spirit or if it was just the obvious verse to go to when I felt like I wasn't supposed to preach what I was going to preach. When I turned to this, this idea of being filled with the Spirit, juxtaposed to not being filled with wine, that makes sense on the surface level. It makes sense when you read the passage without much explanation. Don't be filled with wine, but be filled with the Spirit — especially if you juxtapose it to Acts 2.

> **ACTS 2:13-15** ESV
>
> 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." 14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice
> and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my
> words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

I mean, it makes a lot of sense. What doesn't make sense in the passage to me, and what kind of got me thinking earlier this week, is the singing thing.

It doesn't make sense to don't drink, but sing. They don't seem to have anything to do with each other. They seem disconnected. Well, I started to look into this passage a little bit more in a way that I had not done in the past, and come to find out Ephesians 5, which I had mentioned in our marriage message that we did a few weeks ago — Ephesians 5 is actually a very subversive chapter of the Bible to the culture that Paul was in. When he talks about wives, submit to your husbands, and slaves, to your masters, and children, to your parents, a lot of people use that as a very dogmatic version of how order in society ought to look in the family. But actually, Paul was writing in a way that was liberating to people in the culture, because in this time frame in Rome, in the Greco-Roman world, women had no rights. No rights at all.

In fact, women — listen here — were considered property to their husbands. Some of the men are looking at me like, that ain't a terrible idea. Y'all ought to knock that off before y'all get in trouble today. Amen. You get messed up before church is over. You're going to get the elbow of the Spirit.

Amen. So when he writes Ephesians 5, he's not actually saying, "Wives, submit to your husbands." That's not what the point is. The point is, he's talking to the wives. Wives, women, were not addressed in the Roman world, because they were property. You don't talk to property.

Well, some of you do. Y'all be kicking your lawnmower and stuff. Turn on. But you don't talk to property. You don't address property. There was no legal mechanism that addressed a woman.

And Paul, in the book of Ephesians, says, "Wives," comma — I have something to tell you. To talk directly to the child, also considered property. To talk directly to the slave, also considered property.

> **EPHESIANS 5:22** ESV
>
> 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

> **EPHESIANS 6:1** ESV
>
> 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

> **EPHESIANS 6:5** ESV
>
> 5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

It's actually subversive. It's not overtly subversive, but it's subversive to the culture. Well, here in Ephesians 5, verse 18, Paul is also doing that. He is subverting the culture.

He is speaking to the culture. In the Greek world, there were many gods. I only know two of them offhand. I know Zeus. I know Hercules. That's who I know.

Amen. And so there were many gods in the Greek culture. And in Greek culture, there was no one god to rule them all for the people. Most people in the Greek world kind of picked and chose the gods that they wanted to worship. And they'd normally have a patron god that they would devote most of their worship to. But they kind of got to pick and choose.

Well, there was a god named Dionysus. Dionysus is the god — listen to this — of wine and festival. He's the god of wine and festival. He was one of the most widely worshipped gods in Rome. And here's what's really interesting. I want to tell you a little bit about how they did this.

There was a band that traveled. And by the way, as I explain this to you, you should, in good conscience, question a little bit of what modern church looks like — which I'm all for modern church, and I'm not changing any of it. But it should make you go, "Ooh, that sounds a lot like what we do." But listen to this. What would happen — worship for Dionysus — is there was a band of people and musicians and theater actors that would travel around, and they would conduct worship services to the god Dionysus. And the way the worship services were conducted is they would sing to the point of ecstasy almost, but it was accompanied with wine because Dionysus was the god of wine.

So it was lots of consuming wine and lots of consuming music. And so you're taking in all of this alcohol, and you're singing the best B.B. King song you can think of until you disconnect from yourself and you're filled with divinity. And here's the problem. That leads to a false promise. You can worship Dionysus all you want.

You can drink as much alcohol as you want. You can sing Buddy Guy until you're blue in the face. Y'all didn't know I know all these songs, amen, all these artists. But you can do that until the cows come home. You're never going to be filled with divinity in that way. You will always show up short.

The best you get in that situation is a hangover. That's the best you end up with. That's the promise. That's the prosperity of worship to Dionysus. But here's what's more important than that, okay, is we live in a world where we think, probably more than is true, we think of our culture as primarily Christian. We think that church is normal, church attendance is normal, the name of Jesus is normal.

We've got football players with John 3:16 on their faces. Stuff ain't outrageous in our culture. The church was outrageous in Ephesus. It was an outrageous affront to normal. I mean, you know how you feel when you hear about a city in America instituting — what do they call it — Sharia law, Sharia law, whatever it's called. You know how you feel like, "My God, they're doing that?

How are they? What in the world?" In Creola? I don't think they're doing it in Creola. But we're praying for y'all up there, amen. You know, but you hear that somewhere happening in America, and you think, "My God" — that's how the people in Ephesus felt as the church is infiltrating the culture. And here's the issue: even if the people of Ephesus were not engaged, if they had been saved, sanctified, full of the Holy Ghost, and they were just in the culture, the culture was infiltrated with Dionysus worship.

So Paul is telling them, don't be filled with wine. He's not saying, "Hey, just don't do it. I thought you needed to know it." No, he's saying, "Hey, I know what was happening Friday. I know what was happening. You need to hear this.

Just because it's happening in the culture, you don't need to do it." It was easily infiltrating any believer who was not on alert. Here's what I want you to take away from this. Paul essentially is telling the church at Ephesus, he says, you're going to be filled with something. Your life is going to be filled with something. Your life is going to be filled with television.

It's going to be filled with news. It's going to be filled with the radio when you commute. It's going to be filled with the conversations you have around the table. It's going to be filled with church services, football games, baseball games, basketball games. It's going to be filled. Your life is going to get filled.

Be mindful of what you fill it with. Because if you aren't careful, you give the culture an open door. I was about to say something. In a rare moment, I'm not going to say it. We have allowed the culture to infiltrate us without even knowing it. We allow the culture to influence us in ways we are unaware of.

And today, what I want to do is I want to talk to you a little bit about how to fill a Spirit-filled life in a way that nurtures a Spirit-filled life. How to fill it with things that nurture a Spirit-filled life. Genesis — Galatians chapter 5, you don't have to turn there, talks about the fruit of the Spirit. And when it talks about the fruit of the Spirit, it says there are the works of the flesh and there's the fruit of the Spirit.

> **GALATIANS 5:16-24** ESV
>
> 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

And almost there's a juxtaposition. You're going to have something that's getting nurtured in your life.

It's either going to be the flesh or it's going to be the Spirit. It's going to be one of the two. The flesh is not always sinful. The flesh isn't just sin. Sometimes the flesh is just selfish. Amen?

And so whatever you fill your life with is going to feed these two things. There's an old Native American proverb that says the wolf that you feed is the one that grows. You know, whatever you feed will be the one that grows. If you feed the flesh, the flesh is going to grow. If you feed your spirit, the spirit is going to grow. And the church, honestly, used to be better at this by default.

There are some things... By the way, I feel like preaching today, but actually I'm just warm. Amen. It's good. You need a sweaty preacher once in a blue moon. Hallelujah.

The church used to be better at this by default. Now there are some things that I'm very grateful for about the progression of the church over the last 25, 30 years. I'm grateful that a lot of the legalism is behind us. I'm grateful that a lot of the unnecessary... I'm thankful some of y'all can play card games again. Amen.

And some of y'all can dance again. Hallelujah. I know you couldn't when you were 12 because they wouldn't let you. Amen. By the way, if y'all want to get married and have your reception in here, I'm not going to let you dance unless you play the music I like. Amen.

But we have come a long way where we've gotten away from this legalism. The issue is, though, that a lot of that legalism that we had kind of had an intrinsic consecration built into it. We used to have services. If you don't know what I'm talking about, we used to have services where you would give up your secular music. And we went from burning vinyl records to breaking CDs. I've broken thousands of dollars worth of...

I think I'm the last generation of preachers that went through this where we broke CDs. I don't know what you do now. You just slam your phone against the wall and rebuke it. But we would get away from all of our secular... Well, the built-in default to that is now you're listening to only Christian music. So there's a measure of consecration.

You're naturally filling your life with something differently. And I'm not going to have anybody burn their CDs today. Amen. But if you're still using CDs, that's pretty cool. Good on you. Amen.

I hope they stay working much longer. Hallelujah. But we also used to have multiple services in churches. We used to have a lot of time that we spent in church. I came up in that — Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night rehearsal, Tuesday night prayer meeting. I saw the school the most, the church second, and then my house third.

We just had a lot of church. We had a lot of times where we were in there and we were filling our spirit. We were filling our life with things. I also think it's worth noting that 20 years ago, this was on the horizon. We had cell phones, but all you could do was play Snake on it. Any of y'all play Snake on the Nokias?

Y'all went out and got the different covers for it? Anybody? Some of the young people are looking at me like, "What are you talking about?" Yeah. There wasn't no app store. You went down to the cell phone guy and got you a new case every week for $5.

Hallelujah. And so this is what I want to talk to you about this morning. I want to talk to you about some things that you can do to fill a Spirit-filled life. These are things you can do to nurture a Spirit-filled life. This is going to be very practical, very helpful. Now, I do want to just note that my go-to on this message would have been, you need to pray and you need to read your Bible.

That is my go-to. And if you have never heard me preach before, I would refer you to any message I have ever preached, and I've probably talked about that for at least 10 minutes in it. I think there is a cure-all for every person.

And it's like epoxy flooring. It's a two-step process. Okay?

You need to read and pray. Amen. And your life will change. But this morning, I'm not going to teach that. I believe it, but I'm not going to teach it today. I'm going to give you some things that are a little lower on the shelf to help you nurture a Spirit-filled life.

Amen? Because I've been talking about reading and praying for six months. I know some of you still aren't reading and praying. Amen? I'm just teasing at you a little bit. You're the one not praying.

You ought to give me a courtesy laugh. Amen? My God. So number one, here's the first thing you can do: worship music on the radio. Worship music on the radio is the first thing you can do to nurture a Spirit-filled life.

I just mentioned it a moment ago, and again, I'll tell you, we're not going to burn your records today. But what I like about this is it's a simple swap. We've taught people over the years that sometimes if you just can find a product that will work for you with your health, you can just make a simple swap. If you'll swap your lemonade for some kind of drink that might actually be good for you, you can make a simple swap. Though I had a buddy who had a kidney stone, and his doctor told him, you can drink as much Chick-fil-A lemonade as you want — but I think it's because it's anointed. Amen?

So this is also a direct tie-in to the text. The direct tie-in to the text is rather than being filled with the culture, rather than being filled with wine and singing, be filled with the Spirit and address each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. There is some value that comes from filling your life with Christian and worship music. Even though you may be choosing and making the choice to reject the culture, this is one of those areas that when you constantly intake certain types of music — and let me just say this, secular music is not sinful unless it is. But you can listen to secular music. You're not going to go to hell for this, but there is something about taking an inventory of what you're allowing in all the time.

Because when we listen to songs — and this is where the church gets messed up, especially in the South, because we think country music is Christian music — but when we listen to all these songs about fishing and drinking and having problems with my woman and losing my job, and then all of a sudden, every time you go fishing, you start drinking and you start having problems with your woman, and you lose your job and you go, "Well, I don't know what happened." You're taking it in, amen? You're taking it in, so you have to evaluate what you're allowing in. You have to evaluate what you're letting in to what has been called the ear gate. You have to evaluate that, because you can actually do simple swaps that encourage you and build your spirit up. This is a small adjustment that can nurture your Spirit-filled life.

And some of you, listen to me, some of you feel oppressed, and you're actually not oppressed, you're just depressed because you listen to music that is bad for you. I know some of y'all are sitting here going, "It's 2026 and he's preaching against secular music." Yeah, well, not really, but yes. Sort of, kind of, amen. I'll teeter that line today, amen. So yeah, I mean, you just got to be mindful of what you're taking in.

And the church, in days gone by, we were really bad about this, because we painted all secular music as Marilyn Manson. If you were saved in the late '90s, my God, we loved talking about Marilyn Manson. And if you're watching today, we're just going to pray for you. Right now, Lord, touch Marilyn wherever he is right now, in Jesus' mighty name, amen. But we did, we talked about it. So it's all Ozzy Osbourne, and it's all Black Sabbath, and it's all this.

No, some secular music is bubblegum pop talking about stuff that doesn't need to get past your ear gate. And can we also just say this? The days — and young people hear me, okay? — the days of music being innocent are long gone. Go

home today and read the lyrics to some Michael Jackson songs. He's talking about healing the world and starting with the man in the mirror.

Go home and read some of the newest pop songs out on the radio right now. You'll be going, "My God, I'll read it. I won't say it out loud." It makes me feel uncomfortable, you know? I mean, really, it's getting bad. And so you have to be — I'm just telling you, you want to be mindful.

There are things that will nurture your spirit. And secular music isn't sinful. It isn't sinful. I just want to say this again. I'm not telling you that if you listen to secular music, you're sinning. That's not what I'm saying, but you just have to be mindful of what you fill your life with.

In fact, I want to just say this to you. If you listen to a lot of negative music, you're actually hurting your faith. This is something we don't talk about very often, but positivity builds faith. Positivity nurtures faith. Positivity makes you go, "Hey, something is possible." Positivity — possible.

And when you believe things are possible, it's easier to believe that God will do what He said He will do. So there's something about positive music coming in and rejecting negative music. Whatever you consistently speak and dwell on will shape what you actually believe is possible. And now my kids will tell you — because I'm not going to get up here and I will never preach something that makes me look one way when something else is actually going on. Now I want to tell y'all, I listen to secular music. I could play some of it right now.

Y'all are getting worried. I saw some of y'all going, "Don't you do it, preacher." I do listen to secular music. I have a playlist on my phone. And Ali the other day goes, "Why do you have a playlist called Bruce?" Because I've got Bruce Hornsby on my playlist, amen.

So I'll be listening to Bruce because I like the way he plays the piano, amen. Y'all got tight when I started telling y'all who I actually listen to. I also listen to Marilyn Manson and Ozzy Osbourne. No, I'm just playing. I'm just kidding. But I do listen to secular music.

I mean, I'm a musician. I'm pretty broad. But my kids will tell you that in the morning I'm real touchy about music. Ali would be getting in the car with me and go, "Can we listen to my music?" No. No, right now we're going to listen to Lindell, amen.

Lindell is going to take us where we need to go. And I'm very careful in the morning. Why? Because I want to order my day in a direction of the Lord. And you go, "Preacher, does it really matter?" It matters more than you think.

Let me just say this. There's a good chance I'm out-Bibling and out-praying everybody in the room. I just want to just put that out there. Occupational hazard. It's no judgment. Occupational hazard.

If I'm telling you I'm making sure I'm not listening to secular music in the morning, maybe it's time to shut Ice Cube off at 8 a.m. Praying for you too, Cube, amen. We're praying for all of you. If I mention you, we're going to pray for you, amen. Number two, number two. Man, I feel like having fun today all of a sudden.

Number two: Spirit-filled preaching during the day. You need to take in some Spirit-filled preaching during the day. You say, "Well, how do we do that?" Well, if you find one of them channels that's always begging you for money, they've got some Spirit-filled preaching on there in between those commercials. Amen. They've got some Spirit-filled preachers on there.

This is another just simple swap. You can take in Spirit-filled preaching throughout the day. You are constantly filling your ears with talking. And you go, "I don't know if I want to do that." Men, listen to me. If you've got ESPN on in the background, it ain't hard to put on a preacher in the background.

I'm not saying don't be into sports. There ain't nothing wrong with sports. But you've got to make sure you're nurturing a Spirit-filled life to some degree. So take in some Spirit-filled preaching throughout the week. This 30 minutes to 90 minutes that I preach every week. Nobody?

Okay. This 30 to 90 minutes that I preach every week — this is not going to get it done. You need to take in some preaching throughout the week. You can take one message that some preacher somewhere that ministers to you preaches and break it up and just listen to a little bit of it every morning on the way to work. And your spirit is nurtured.

You're filling a Spirit-filled life in a way that your spirit is nurtured. Romans 10 says this: "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

> **ROMANS 10:17** ESV
>
> 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

At some point, you've got to hear the Word so that faith can infiltrate your life. I will even say this: as powerful as my time in the Word is every day, there is something about when I turn on preachers and I just kind of hear them say something. And sometimes I don't even hear what they're saying, but they said something that made me hear something. And you know what I'm talking about, right?

And so you take in a little bit of that, and all of a sudden your faith gets stirred up. And you'll find yourself growing in the Lord just by making a simple little swap. So rather than having the news on 24-7 — which by the way, they only change what they're talking about about every three weeks. If you watch 24-hour news, I need you to know it's 24 hours of the same thing. They tell you the same thing over and over again. And hey, guess what?

If you flip over to the channel with the people you don't like, it's crazy. They're saying the exact opposite thing of the people you've been listening to. Amen. I saw something this week about headlines for news. And I don't know what had happened, but the president had done something, and they showed a concern. It basically said the same thing, but the adjectives they used were positive.

They showed what a conservative newspaper wrote and what a liberal newspaper wrote. It was the same thing. They said the same thing. I don't know what it was. He ate a cheeseburger. I don't know.

But in one of them he ate a cheeseburger for his nutrition, and the other one he ate a cheeseburger for his debauchery. Amen. I don't know. You don't know which way it's going. So turn off the news. You don't need 24-7 of news.

Get some good news in your life, some good preaching. You don't have to give Joe Rogan five hours a day. You don't have to have some podcast about some conspiracy theory. By the way, if some of y'all would spend as much time in the Word as you do researching your conspiracy theory, you could have this job and do better. Amen. And I would even dare to say this, and I might regret this someday, but I would say bad preaching is better than no preaching, because at least you get a little bit of the Word.

You know, one of the reasons that — normally I didn't do it today, but normally I read kind of big chunks of Scripture — is because I figure if the message goes off the rails, at least you heard the Word. Amen. So bad preaching is even better

than no preaching at all. There's an intrinsic value to keeping the Word in your ears. In fact, I'll tell you this, you make better decisions when you're full of the Word. You make better decisions when you're full of the Word.

How many of y'all remember Sully Sullenberger? He was the airplane pilot who — they had a bunch of geese hit the plane, and he landed it in the Hudson River. He landed the plane in the Hudson River. You remember this? You've seen the movie. That's why you remember.

That's right. Yeah, it was a great movie. And Tom Hanks played him. Tom Hanks is going to play me in the movie about me too. Amen. We thought about Brad Pitt, but I'm too good looking.

Amen. And Tom, Brad, we're praying for you too. Amen. And so I was thinking about Sully Sullenberger when I was writing this message. You know, when they initially started to look through his landing in the Hudson, every time they ran it through a simulation, they came to the determination that he had made a wrong decision. And so they were going to take away his pilot's license.

They were going to charge him. Because every time they ran it through a simulation, the simulation was able to get back to the airport, which he said there was no way to get back to the airport. And every time they threw it in a simulation, it was able to get back to the airport. And he asked in his hearing, he said, "Have you figured in the human factor?" And they said that they had not — the human factor being the time it takes for you to make a decision under pressure, such as, "I'm going to land this airplane in a river." And so what they did is they added 35 seconds to the simulations.

They said 35 seconds was enough for a trained pilot to be able to gather their thoughts, compose themselves, and make an emergency decision. And when they threw 35 seconds on the simulator, none of the simulators made it back to the airport. Every single one of them crashed because of the human factor. You are living a life under the human factor. You have things happening in your world every day that require decisions that need to be made quickly, that have consequences attached to those decisions. Some days all you've got to figure out is what you're going to eat for dinner.

And then someday something shows up that is of critical importance and you have to make a decision. But you are operating under the human factor. I'm telling you, when you're full of the Word of God, you make better decisions. Because when you make a decision, and even if unbeknownst to you that decision can bounce off somewhere where you have the Word of God built up inside of you, I'm telling you, you're going to come out with a better quality decision every time. Somebody give the Lord a praise right there. Amen.

Number three. Serving others is nurturing to a Spirit-filled life. When you serve others, you fill your life with things that nurture the Spirit-filled life. Romans 8 says this: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit."

> **ROMANS 8:5** ESV
>
> 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Let me just tell you right now that the culture is feeding your flesh, and the flesh is constantly thinking about its own self-interest.

It is funny how you can watch TV and come away from a television show thinking about you. It's funny how you can listen to certain songs, come away from those songs thinking about you. You can watch the news and come away from the news thinking about you. Bombs going off in Iran and somehow it's about you. Should I have said Israel, or are we one-sided here? I'm trying to get some people who think about all people.

For all people. For all people. That's what we're building here. But we walk away — when we're feeding the flesh, we're constantly thinking about ourselves. We're constantly thinking about what's going on with us.

And it's not always sin. Sometimes again, like I said earlier, it's just selfishness. You can find yourself obsessed with your own desires and you can get trapped into thinking about your circumstances, which I understand. They're your circumstances. People will always say, "Well, you're not the center of the world." I am, from my perspective.

It's all around me, man. So I do think about what goes on, you know, in this 210 pounds. I know I don't look a bit over 205, amen. That's because I'm from Birmingham. Shout out 205. I'm feeling goofy today, amen.

I'm having a good time, amen. Y'all are kind of like, "You preach a little heavy. We kind of like this. We need it this week." Amen. But there's something about getting outside of yourself, getting outside of what's going on with you, that does help you to gain some perspective. This is actually one of the reasons I'm really excited about the Neighbor Box, which we're starting in the fall.

If you didn't see this on Vision Sunday, the Neighbor Box is a box that looks like a little house that we're going to fill with food to feed families for weeks at a time. And so people who've come up on hard times, we're going to be able to help them and at least sustain them with food. There's a lot that we can't do, but we're going to do what we can do. Can I get a good amen in the house? And so the thing I'm excited about with the Neighbor Box is not just helping people. It's that I know that for every person in our church who gets involved with that program, when you help someone who is going through a more difficult time than you, it can be the wake-up call that you need.

Sometimes we get so worried about our circumstances. We were going through something. I don't remember when. It was in the last few years. And Ashleigh goes, "I remember when I would have been jealous of my problems." When I got COVID and they threw me in the hospital, I remember people asked me, they said, "What did the Lord teach you in the hospital?"

I said, "Nothing. I was in the hospital, man." I went in there praying. I was in the hospital. I was laid up in the bed, and I watched Golden Girls and the Real Housewives of Beverly Hills every day. It wasn't good for my soul, but it was good for the moment.

Amen. And I remember I'm watching these ladies in Beverly Hills bickering at each other about stuff, and I'm laying in bed thinking, "I'd just kill someone to have your problems." Amen. I would. I'd love to have these problems. And so when you get around people who are in a worse situation than you, it reminds you how your situation might not be as bad as you think it is.

And it causes you to either do one of two things. You're either going to become arrogant or you're going to become grateful. And I believe, because of who you are, that you're going to become a grateful person. When you see that, hey, maybe it ain't the worst thing in the world. Maybe I am going through something. And I'm going to talk to y'all in a few months about how the grace of God can help you to sustain your situation.

I mean, I'm telling you right now, there's some stuff we walk through that God's enabling power will cause you to be okay with. It's not as bad as you might think that it is. Proverbs 11 says this: "Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and the one who waters will himself be watered."

> **PROVERBS 11:25 ESV**
>
> 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

There is something about doing something for other people that creates a flow of reciprocation in our life. It nurtures a Spirit-filled life, but it also creates a flow of reciprocation. I have a friend who is a business owner, and he buys a lot of properties to rent.

And I asked him one day what kind of houses he would buy. Because in Florida, the big thing to buy is three-bedroom, two-bathroom houses. Everybody's buying 3-2s. You're 3-2 all the time down in Florida, 3-2. I said, "What kind of houses do you invest in to rent?" He goes, "Everything I do is Section 8."

And I thought, "What?" So I said, "Why? Why do you do everything Section 8?" He said, "Oh, it's easy." He goes, "The government writes me my checks." He says, "I don't wait on checks from any individual.

All my checks come from the government, and they all show up on time." Well, I'm here to tell you that when you serve other people, your reciprocation doesn't actually come from people. It comes from the Lord. And when the Lord pays your rent, when the Lord pays for your services, when the Lord reciprocates, it always shows up right on time. Somebody say amen today. Hallelujah.

And I just want to let you know, we do have an opportunity for you to serve coming up. I don't know if you've ever heard of this, but we have something happening in just a few weeks called Easter Sunday. And I'm telling you, it's right around the corner. It is sneaking up on us. Your pastor has a few things happening right now. And I'm only doing this square right here, right now.

And it's a lot. And so we need your help. We need you to join the team. If you have not joined the team, we need you to join the team. We need you to jump in. I shared this in a message probably four or five months ago that says this.

It says, "Studies from Lifeway and Church Answers show that first-time guests often base their decision to return on how they're greeted, treated, and seated." Because first impressions matter. And here's what I want you to know. I need your help. Your pastor needs your help in serving other people, because we need to make sure that on Easter Sunday people are greeted, seated, and treated in a way that leads them for a life-transforming encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ, because Jesus makes life better. Amen?

Hallelujah. Number four. This is the last one. And I'm not going to preach much longer. Number four is generosity. Generosity.

When we fill our lives with generosity, we promote Spirit-filled living.

> **2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8 ESV**
>
> 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful
> giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you
> may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9 actually says this. It says, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." And listen to this: "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." I'm telling you, when you tithe and you sow financial seed, you enter into a cycle of all grace abounding for you for everything that you need.

I don't know how it works, but I know that it works. I don't fuss with the Lord over this stuff, because it's treated me real good over the years. There is something about sowing seed and tithing that causes all grace — not some grace, but all grace — to abound to you. It releases something. It unlocks something. And let me just say this boldly this morning.

While I feel like everybody's running in the other direction on this, I'm just not going to do it, because [worship] And if the Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it. And I just want you to hear this, that prosperity is a defining mark of a Spirit-filled believer. It is not something that you find everywhere. You do not find this in the church at large.

But prosperity is something that defines Spirit-filled believers. Listen to this, because I know y'all wonder if that actually adds up. This is statistical stuff right here. Spirit-filled Christians — I compared Pentecostals and Charismatics against mainline Protestant religions and Catholics. But listen to this.

Spirit-filled Christians are nearly three times more likely to give at biblical levels than mainline Protestant Christians. And I will tell you this. That does become a chicken-or-the-egg situation. And I don't know which one comes first. I don't know if we sow seed and get Spirit-filled, or if we get Spirit-filled and we sow seed, but I'm going to tell you what, they go together like this. Amen?

Start talking about money. Y'all got quiet. All them jokes just didn't mean anything, the whole service. Here's what I want to let you know. I want to prepare you for the next two weeks. We're finishing our sermon series today on being openly Spirit-filled.

But for the next two weeks, I'm going to preach on the topic of generosity, and I'm going to talk with you about our next value. And the next value is that we are passionate about giving generously. I do not want you to miss this series if for no other reason than I will prepare you for something. Maybe this was a preview today, because I am in a little bit of a rare form. I want y'all to know there is another side of my personality. Y'all get Pastor Jason a lot.

When I talk about money, I don't know what it is, I stop being Pastor Jason. I will become coach. I'll become a consultant. I become business person. And let me just tell you right now, all that Pastor Jason stuff that tries to keep me from saying things I shouldn't say — oh, it's going to go out the window. So if nothing else, you will be thoroughly entertained over the next two weeks, because God knows what's going to come out of my mouth while I'm preaching on this stuff.

So you want to be here. We're going to talk about generosity. We're going to talk about money. I'm going to tell you what the Bible says about it. And I just want to be clear. I'm going to tell you exactly where we're at financially next week so you don't think that I'm doing things to try to manipulate you to give.

I had figured out I was going to preach this stuff way before I got here. I already knew what the eight values were before I got here. I already knew when I was preaching them before I got here. This stuff ain't stuff I'm throwing out because of our circumstances. I'm really not fazed by our circumstances. Amen.

I was telling the team this morning, we had a group huddle. See, the team gets together every Sunday morning at 9:45, and we have a quick huddle. And I was telling them this morning, I like when we go into updates to the building like

we're going into — in the sanctuary, kind of having this moment in here where I just play the keyboard and I just have a microphone. I mean, we ain't got nothing. Nothing good is happening in this room right now. Amen.

We ain't got no technology. An eight-year-old could have set up this sound system. There ain't nothing advanced in here right now. Okay. I like that. You know why?

Because if we get in there, I'm not going to get dependent on that stuff. If the devil wants to come to me and say, "Oh, well, you've got to have a computer to lead worship. Oh, and you've got to have a ProPresenter." No, I don't have to have anything, devil. I'll get up there and sing and preach, and we'll just have a good old time in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I say that to say I don't get fazed by situations and circumstances. I'm not going to manipulate you to give. I have no need to do it. The Lord will meet my needs. The Lord will meet the needs of this church. And if He doesn't, that's His business.

I'm not building the church. The Lord's building the church. We're building the church, but the Lord's building His church.

> **MATTHEW 16:18** ESV
>
> 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Amen. So I just want you to know, I'm going to be preaching on that for the next two weeks, but there is something about generosity that nurtures Spirit-filled living. I think to one degree, it's probably because it's near impossible to part with a large sum of money with nothing in return other than to be obedient and to act in faith, and then be unchanged.

That is something that takes a measure of faith. If you've ever wondered how to have more faith, write a tithe check. Because I'm going to tell you right now, that first one is a real bridge you've got to cross over. First time you write a tithe check... I've got a church right now, and I don't know, I might do it if I ever get into the fundraising mode and feel like I need to do something. So, you know, I may regret saying this later, but they're doing a thing where they're doing 1%. If you'll just start with 1%, go 1, 2, 3.

And I get that a little bit if you need to do it personally. I'm never going to do it as a church, and this is the reason why. I think it's good when you feel that first tithe check. Feel like you did something. Feel like you gave up a little. I'm not preaching on giving this morning, but I get off into stuff I shouldn't say already.

I told y'all. I start talking about it, and I lose my inhibitions. Amen. That's why I don't have to be filled with wine, but filled with the Holy Spirit. Amen. So there is something about giving that nurtures a Spirit-filled life.

I'm going to come back to that next week, and we're going to do a two-week series on it. I believe it's going to bless you. Next week, I'm really going to teach you some things that the Bible says. The following week, I believe I'm going to teach you some keys to prosperity that you've probably never heard said in a pulpit — which sounds like I'm just trying to get y'all to show up for church, but I'm serious. How many of y'all know I ain't afraid to get up here and say what needs to be said once in a blue moon? Amen.

So the next two weeks is going to be fantastic. So you're going to fill your life with something. You're going to fill your life with something, so you might as well fill it with things that nurture Spirit-filled living. Simple things I gave you this

morning: incorporating Christian music. It's a simple swap. You can change what you turn on on Apple Music, Spotify.

You can click a different station on the radio, whatever it takes. You can do that. You can do the simple swap of Christian music. Use some good Holy Ghost preaching in your life throughout the week. Find you a preacher that you like, that resonates with you, and turn off the news for an hour a week. Listen to somebody preach the Word.

Serve others. Get outside of your own situation, because when you're dwelling on your circumstances, you're feeding the flesh. But when you see how good God has actually been to you, you're nurturing your spirit. And then live in generosity. These activities will pay huge spiritual dividends, and they're very easy to incorporate. If you receive the Word this morning, give the Lord a hand clap of praise. Amen.

02

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This message closes a five-week series on being openly Spirit filled. The earlier weeks taught what it means to be filled with the Spirit. This one is practical: once you are Spirit filled, how do you fill your life in a way that nurtures it?

Say up front that this is not a message about alcohol. Ephesians 5:18 is often preached as a temperance verse, but Paul is speaking into a culture shaped by the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine, where drinking and singing went together as a way to reach the divine. That background explains why Paul moves from "do not get drunk with wine" straight to singing.

The four points are deliberately "lower on the shelf." The go-to answer is always read your Bible and pray, and that stays true, but this message hands people simple swaps they can make this week. Keep it light and practical. It also sets up the next series on generosity, so land the fourth point with energy.

Introduction

We are closing out our series on being openly Spirit filled. We are not closeted Charismatics or private Pentecostals. We are an openly Spirit-filled church, though not an obnoxiously Spirit-filled one. Today: what it looks like to fill a Spirit-filled life. That is F-I-L-L-I-N-G, filling. (Though you are in a good church to feel it, too.)

> **EPHESIANS 5:18-19** ESV
>
> 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

THIS IS NOT A MESSAGE ABOUT ALCOHOL

Make the clarification early, because some will assume the verse is headed toward a lecture or a loophole.

- Personally, I am a teetotaler. I have never tasted alcohol, and I do not endorse drinking it.
- Some of you do drink. There is no condemnation here. Sincere believers and whole denominations land in different places on social drinking. In the Assemblies of God we are not fond of it, and in my opinion your life will be better if you avoid it.
- Preachers who are not reading the Bible and praying tend to argue over frivolous things, and this is one of them. That is not where we are headed today.

THE STRANGE PART OF THE VERSE

Being filled with the Spirit instead of with wine makes sense on the surface, especially next to Acts 2, where onlookers mocked the Spirit-filled disciples, “They are filled with new wine” (Acts 2:13), and Peter answered, “these people are not drunk, as you suppose” (Acts 2:15).

What does not seem to fit is the singing. Do not get drunk, but sing? They look disconnected, until you see the culture Paul was writing into.

Paul Is Subverting the Culture

Ephesians 5 is quietly subversive. In the household instructions Paul speaks directly to wives, to children and to slaves: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22); “Children, obey your parents in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1); “Bondservants, obey your earthly masters” (Ephesians 6:5). Many read that only as a rigid chain of command. But in the Greco-Roman world, wives, children and slaves were placed under the authority of the head of the household and had little legal standing of their own. The surprise is that Paul addresses them at all. He talks to them as people who matter to God.

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul is doing the same thing. He is speaking into the culture.

THE WORSHIP OF DIONYSUS

The Greek world had many gods, and most people picked a patron god to devote themselves to. One of the most widely worshiped was **Dionysus**, the god of wine, festivity and religious ecstasy, worshiped by the Romans as Bacchus. His worship was not on the edges of society. It was woven into daily life across Greece and Rome.

His followers traveled in organized bands (the *thiasos*) of devotees and musicians, moving from city to city and bringing the worship with them. You did not have to go to the temple. The worship came to you. They sang, accompanied by wine, until they reached a kind of ecstasy, trying to lose themselves and be filled with the divine.

Pause here and let the congregation hear the echo: a traveling band, music, a crowd chasing an encounter. It should make us ask what we are really filling ourselves with when we gather.

That road leads to a false promise. You can drink and sing until the cows come home, and you will never be filled with divinity that way. The best you get is a hangover. That is the prosperity of worshiping Dionysus.

EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT PARTICIPATING

We tend to think of our culture as mostly Christian. In Ephesus, the church was an outrageous affront to normal, and the culture around it was saturated with Dionysus worship. Even believers who were saved and full of the Holy Ghost were surrounded by it. It could easily seep into anyone who was not on alert.

So Paul is not just passing along a rule. He is saying, “I know what is going on around you. You do not have to be shaped by it.”

Paul's point: you are going to be filled with something. Television, news, the radio on your commute, conversations at the table, church, ballgames. Your life is going to get filled. Be mindful of what you fill it with, because if you are not careful, you give the culture an open door, and it influences you in ways you never notice.

Feeding the Flesh or the Spirit

Galatians 5 sets the works of the flesh beside the fruit of the Spirit. Something is always being nurtured in your life: the flesh or the Spirit.

> GALATIANS 5:16-24 ESV
>
> 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The flesh is not always sinful. Sometimes the flesh is just selfish.

Whatever you fill your life with feeds one or the other. There is an old saying, often told as a Native American proverb: the wolf you feed is the one that grows. Feed the flesh and the flesh grows. Feed your spirit and your spirit grows.

THE CHURCH USED TO DO THIS BY DEFAULT

We can be grateful that much of the church's legalism is behind us. But some of that legalism had a measure of consecration built in.

- We burned vinyl records and broke CDs, and then listened only to Christian music. It filled our lives differently by default.
- We had a lot of church: Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, a prayer meeting and rehearsal. We were constantly filling our spirits.
- We had far less incoming noise. Twenty years ago, the only thing a phone could do was play Snake. Now the noise is in your hand all day.

Nobody is burning CDs today. But we have to be intentional about what we used to get by default.

Today: four simple ways to fill a Spirit-filled life.

The go-to answer is always to read your Bible and pray. It is like epoxy flooring, a two-step process, and it will change your life. That remains true. But today, here are four things a little lower on the shelf.

1. Worship Music

This is a simple swap, like trading a soda for something that is actually good for you. And it comes straight from the text: instead of being filled with wine and the songs of the culture, be filled with the Spirit, "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19).

Music is part of daily life, and it is one of the main ways the culture makes its way into us. Even when you reject the culture, it is pervasive enough to get into you, with your consent, if you are not intentional.

- **Secular music is not sinful (unless it is).** You are not going to hell for listening to it. But take an inventory of what you are allowing in all the time.
- In the South we can treat country music like Christian music. But listen to enough songs about fishing, drinking, trouble with my woman and losing my job, and do not be surprised when your life starts sounding like the songs. Guard the "ear gate."
- The church used to paint all secular music as the darkest rock on the radio. Much of it is just bubblegum pop. But the days of innocent music are long gone. Read the lyrics of some of today's popular songs.

Some of you feel oppressed when you are actually just depressed, because you keep listening to music that is bad for you.

POSITIVITY BUILDS FAITH

What you consistently hear, speak and dwell on shapes what you believe is possible. Negativity breeds doubt. Positivity, especially Word-based positivity, creates an environment where faith can take root, and when you believe something is possible, it is easier to believe God will do what He said He would do.

Personal example: Be honest with the congregation. I listen to secular music; I am a musician and my taste is broad. But my kids will tell you that in the morning, it is worship music in the car. Why? Because I want to order my day toward the Lord. If your pastor is guarding his mornings, it may be time to change what you play at 8 a.m.

2. Spirit-Filled Preaching During the Week

This is another simple swap. You are constantly filling your ears with talking. Make sure some of it builds your faith.

> ROMANS 10:17 ESV
>
> [17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

The 30 to 90 minutes of preaching on Sunday will not get it done by itself. Find a preacher who ministers to you, break a message into pieces and listen on the way to work. Sometimes you will not even catch everything they

said, but something they said will make you hear something from God, and your faith gets stirred.

- If ESPN is on in the background, a preacher can be on in the background. Nothing is wrong with sports, but nurture your spirit too.
- Turn off the 24-hour news. It is the same story on repeat, and the other channel tells you the opposite. You do not need it all day.
- You do not have to give five hours of your week to a talk show host or a podcast about the latest conspiracy theory.

Bad preaching is better than no preaching, because at least you got some of the Word. There is intrinsic value in keeping the Word in your ears.

You make better decisions when you are full of the Word.

Illustration: Sully and the human factor. In January 2009, geese struck Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger's airliner just after takeoff from LaGuardia, and he landed it on the Hudson River. Every passenger and crew member survived. In the investigation that followed, simulator pilots who turned back right away could make it to an airport. But that left out the human factor: the time it takes a person to recognize what has happened and decide under pressure. When the investigators added a delay of about 35 seconds before the turn, the simulated flights did not make it back. The 2016 film *Sully* dramatized that hearing.

You are living under the human factor, too. Most days the decisions are small. Then something of critical importance shows up, and you have to decide fast. When the Word of God is built up inside you, your decisions bounce off it, even when you do not realize it, and you come out with a better decision every time.

3. Serving Others

> ROMANS 8:5 ESV
>
> 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

The culture feeds the flesh, and the flesh is constantly thinking about itself. You can watch a show, hear a song or turn on the news and walk away thinking about you. That is not always sin. Sometimes it is just selfishness. You can get trapped in your own desires and your own circumstances.

Getting outside yourself and considering the needs of others brings perspective and makes you grateful for your own life.

- **The Neighbor Box.** A food pantry shaped like a little house, stocked to help families who have come on hard times. Helping someone going through more than you are can be the wake-up call you need. (Update the local example for your church.)
- **Illustration: the hospital.** When I was hospitalized with COVID, all I could do was lie there and watch television, including reality shows about wealthy people bickering over small things. Lying in that bed, I would

have loved to have their problems. When you are around people in a harder situation than yours, you see that yours may not be as bad as you think.

- When you serve people less fortunate, you will become either arrogant or grateful. I believe you will become grateful.

Serving also comes back to you:

> PROVERBS 11:25 ESV
>
> 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

Illustration: Section 8. A friend who owns rental properties only rents to Section 8 tenants. When I asked why, he said, "The government writes me my checks," and they always arrive on time. When you serve people, your reward does not come from people. It comes from the Lord, and when the Lord pays, it always shows up on time.

JOIN THE TEAM

Easter Sunday is coming. If you are not serving yet, now is the time to jump in. Studies from Lifeway and Church Answers show that first-time guests often decide whether to return based on how they are greeted, treated and seated, because first impressions matter. Help us greet, treat and seat our guests in a way that leads them toward a life-transforming encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Update the serving opportunity and date for your church.)

4. Generosity

When we fill our lives with generosity, we nurture Spirit-filled living.

> 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8 ESV
>
> 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

When you tithe and sow financial seed, you enter a cycle where God makes "all grace abound to you" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Not some grace, all grace. I do not fully understand how it works, but I know that it works.

Say it boldly: **prosperity is a defining mark of Spirit-filled living.** Generosity and Spirit-filled living go hand in hand. Which comes first is a chicken-or-the-egg question, but they go together.

Part of the reason, I believe, is that it is nearly impossible to part with a significant sum of money, with nothing in return but obedience and faith, and stay unchanged. **If you have ever wondered how to have more faith, write a tithe check.** The first one is a real bridge to cross, and it is good to feel it.

WHAT IS COMING

Next, we begin a series on our next value: we are passionate about giving generously. Tell the church plainly why: the values and the calendar were set long before any current circumstances. The Lord is building His church (Matthew 16:18), so there is no need to manipulate anyone into giving. Invite them to come ready to hear what the Bible says about money.

Conclusion

You are going to fill your life with something, so fill it with things that nurture Spirit-filled living.

- **Worship music.** A simple swap: change the station or the playlist.
- **Spirit-filled preaching.** Find a preacher who resonates with you and trade an hour of news for an hour of the Word.
- **Serving others.** Get outside your own circumstances. Dwelling on them feeds the flesh; seeing how good God has been nurtures your spirit.
- **Generosity.** Tithe and sow, and enter the cycle of all grace abounding.

These are easy to start, and they pay huge spiritual dividends. If you receive the Word today, give the Lord a big praise.

03

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

EPHESIANS 5:18-19	18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,
ROMANS 10:17	17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
ROMANS 8:5	5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
PROVERBS 11:25	25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.
2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8	7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

ACTS 2:13-15	13 But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.” 14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.
EPHESIANS 5:22	22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
EPHESIANS 6:1	1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

EPHESIANS 6:5	5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,
GALATIANS 5:16-24	16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

MATTHEW 16:18	18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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