

Sermon Transcript from 27th July 2025 – Filled with the [Holy] Spirit

Reference: Acts 9:1-31 & 1 Corinthians 2

Speaker – Denis Golden

Sermon TLDR

Titled "Filled with the Spirit," this sermon explores the essential nature of receiving the Holy Spirit for believers. The speaker emphasises three crucial prerequisites for this reception: **humility, openness, and expectation**. Drawing on the apostle Paul's example, the address highlights that true spiritual understanding and the ability to effectively share God's message come not from human wisdom or persuasive words, but from the **demonstration of the Spirit's power**. Ultimately, the purpose of being filled with the Spirit is to comprehend God's wisdom, pray with divine guidance, and courageously communicate spiritual truths to others, even when faced with scepticism, thereby possessing the "**mind of Christ**" to perform His work on Earth.

Link to the Start of the Sermon (on YouTube)

<https://youtu.be/q3R93G4NiYs?t=2049>

Sermon Transcript

Well, good morning and thank you for asking me to come and share with you again.

I know that you have been looking at the Holy Spirit over a number of weeks now.

The session today is called filled with the spirit. Last week Geoff looked at the story of Philip and the eunuch and he challenged you not to condemn or judge people, not to debate theology with people, but to show them the truth of Jesus. He challenged you to be guided by God and to talk to others about Jesus.

I wonder, have you prayed this week the prayer that he challenged you with? Lord, here I am. Send me.

You know, to do those things, to be able to talk to people about God and about Jesus. To do that, you need to receive the Holy Spirit.

What does it look like? If you're filled with the Holy Spirit. How do you know if you're filled with the Holy Spirit? Perhaps most importantly, do we have a right to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Or perhaps for many of us, do we deserve to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

The letter this morning, the passage we heard of course comes from Paul. And Paul is an intriguing character to me. Peter is a much easier person for me to relate to. Impulsive, full of good intentions that don't quite seem to come to fruition. Although, as the years roll by and he becomes this important leader in the church, he does become a bit of a tough act to follow.

But Paul, was he a sinful man? Well, he did try to kill Christians, so I think that qualifies. He was also a man with quite the temper on him. He was a man who got angry. And I'm not talking about righteous anger. He didn't like it when people disagreed with him. Now, I don't think I'm someone actually that that gets angry that easily. Just don't say that to my wife, particularly when I get behind the wheel of my car.

So often in his letters, Paul is a man with absolute confidence in his faith, and that is not me. He's a man absolutely unshakable in his convictions, and that isn't me.

So, what do we do us mere mortals? How do we get some of the Holy Spirit into our lives?

Well, Paul shows us a different side to his character in the passage that we've heard this morning.

"And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him and crucified. I came to you in weakness, with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the spirit's power, so you so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."

You know, this is a different side to Paul. And perhaps it's a side that we can relate to a bit more. You know, when we try and speak to people about Jesus when I'm up here talking to all of you. Paul was a leader, a founder of churches. We may not aspire to that, but you can also see in this message, in this particular passage, that he is just a man, that he has his own weaknesses and frailties.

And so in the passage this morning, we see an example of how to receive the Holy Spirit.

Firstly, we need to be humble.

Second, Secondly, we need to be open.

And finally, we need to be expectant.

So firstly, we need to be humble. What does that mean? We often think that we know what words mean, don't we? And the Bible talks about being humble all the time. I mean, surely we know what that means.

Well, a dictionary definition of humble would be as follows. To be humble is to have or show a low or modest opinion of oneself.

As I've said, the Bible has a lot to say about humility. Not to put too fine a point in it. You could possibly have an even longer series than the one you're currently having on the Holy Spirit, just talking about humility in the Bible. See, all these things are linked. Humility comes before receiving the Holy Spirit.

And as is so often the case, I find with the words that we think we know the meaning of, the biblical meaning is, well, it's slightly different. Humility in a biblical sense is not thinking less of oneself, although that may well be a part of it, but thinking of oneself with sober judgment and putting others needs and interests before our own.

Humility is a virtue that pleases God and attracts his favour.

James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up." Humility is essential for maintaining healthy relationships. Philippians 2 verses 3 and 4 say, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others."

Humility is a path to wisdom, to God's wisdom. When pride comes, then comes disgrace. But with humility comes wisdom. And of course, the ultimate example of humility is Jesus Christ himself.

I just read from Philippians. Those verses go on. on to say in your relationships with one another have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross.

You know God doesn't want passive people. He doesn't want people who walk around thinking, "I'm nothing. I'm nobody." He wants those who would put somebody higher than themselves. God, he wants people who would follow the example of Jesus and put others above themselves.

And to do that, you might have to be bold.

To do that, you might have to be courageous.

In those opening verses again this morning, Paul says, "I came to you in weakness. with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

You know, there was a belief in those days amongst people that the oratory, you know, being able to stand up and talk and to speak was a kind of magic. Say the right words in the right way and you could persuade people. You could convince them, you know, almost against their own better judgment. You could influence, you could change their character almost.

You know, if you aspired to this, you took time. You crafted your words. Again, to people, it would feel like someone was casting a magic spell with what they were saying.

Paul is drawing a distinction between those great speakers with what he was doing. He wasn't using his own words. He was using spirit filled words. Words that were taught to him by the spirit of God.

So, how does that apply to us? How does that apply to you?

Well, I don't think you'd find a preacher, and I and I really hope you wouldn't, who would claim credit for the sermons that they preach. It should be their prayer. And hopefully without a hint of boasting, it is always my prayer that the Holy Spirit would speak through me. It's not about what I'm telling you today. It's about what I hope the spirit is saying through me.

Paul in this passage is saying he humbled himself so that it wasn't him who was trying to persuade the Corinthians of the reality of Jesus of God was not himself but that it was God speaking through him. You know that's my prayer that God would speak through me. In which case why should I bother preparing a sermon at all? Why don't I just stand up at the front of the church and ask God to anoint me with the Holy Spirit and I can speak whatever I feel that God is telling me at the time. Zero preparation, which would have been great. It would have saved me a lot of time this week, let me tell you. And that has happened to me once or twice, but not without having prepared a sermon first and then felt that God was saying something differently to me on the day. And I prepare because I feel that the Holy Spirit is in the preparation of the sermon as well.

The Holy Spirit isn't just talking to me today. He was talking to me through this week as I was writing this sermon. You know, I rarely start a sermon knowing how it's going to end. I rely on the spirit to help me put those words down on paper.

But how does that apply to me, Denis? I don't preach.

Okay, but do you talk to people about God? What do you say to them. You don't have to be spontaneous in that moment. We can all prepare the things that we're going to say. We can ask the spirit. We can think about it. You know, we can be prepared. We can be rehearsed. We can ask the Holy Spirit for guidance as we prepare for that.

Prepare for those opportunities. We don't know when they're going to come. And if they come out of nowhere, we have to be prepared, prepared with what we're going to say. We have to be filled with the spirit. But of course, also look to the Holy Spirit in that moment when you're there and somebody's asked you a question and you have to answer it.

Hopefully, you would have prepared beforehand. You'd have looked for the Holy Spirit and then in the moment itself, trust that the Holy Spirit will talk through you.

Do you pray out loud when there is a time of open prayer. When you're here in church on a Sunday morning and whoever is standing up here says, "We're going to have a time of open prayer." Are you willing to let yourselves be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Then be guided by what you say. Maybe for the first time, maybe you're thinking, "There's no way I could ever pray out loud." Trust to the Holy Spirit to guide you, to prompt you, to convict you to say something. When you're singing, do you let yourself be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Does that help to guide your worship? Because that's the second point.

You must be open to receive from the Holy Spirit. We have to make ourselves humble first. We have to have the right attitude, but then we have to be open for the Holy Spirit to come in, not to resist it.

I don't know if you saw in the news this week that uh the Girl Guiding organization launched 72 new badges. The press release uh says the following. Girl Guiding The UK's largest youth organization dedicated completely to girls has today launched 72 new badges, offering even more amazing opportunities for girls aged 14 to 18 to grow in confidence, learn new skills, have fun and adventure, and to know they can do anything.

Amanda Aziz, Girl Guiding acting CEO said, "The launch of these new badges is a huge moment for Girl Guiding. They be designed by girls for girls, which is so important to make sure we are staying relevant to girls. sponsor needs. The response from girls and volunteers during the consultation process was incredible and really inspiring. My personal favourite is the bee rescuer badge for rainbows. I just love it. There's something for everyone among the new badges, and I'm looking forward to seeing the impact these activities have on girls, building their confidence and helping them know they can do anything.

Amongst these new badges are hobbies, present maker, laughter, courage, passions, folklore, safety, book reviewer, bird watching, that would be one for me, mechanic, historian, food critic, artist, entomology, biodiversity, creative writing, wanderer, and gardening.

Now, I was in the Cubs, and I just wonder whether or not these girls, you know, any of these girls would be like me. You know, look at the look at the badges that you think you can do quite easily and go for those ones. But then after I'd done those two, I was open to trying others. And that's what's amazing about this it's important to be open to try new things to try new skills you know sometimes we have to test whether or not we are able to do something and if we are the spirit will help us Walter Rothschild I second Baron Rothschild reported he had 143 different hobbies 143 including zoology entomology stamp collecting and photography where did he find the time.

But it's important to be open to trying new things. Are you open to receiving the Holy Spirit?

Perhaps for the first time or maybe for the thousandth time because actually receiving the Holy Spirit wouldn't be a new thing for you, but maybe it's been some time. Paul was always open to receive the Holy Spirit, and he expected it. He knew it was going to come. He had an expectation that the Holy Spirit would come into him.

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power. Do you expect to receive the Holy Spirit? The Bible promises us that says we can expect to receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John,

"But the advocate, the Holy Spirit who whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment. About sin because people do not believe in me. About righteousness because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer. and about judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

You see, Jesus had to return to heaven so that the Holy Spirit would come to us. We should expect it to receive the Holy Spirit. We have to be humble. We have to think less of ourselves and more of others because how could the Holy Spirit enter us unless we knew we needed its presence.

We need to be open. You know, that's one of the great blessings of God. He doesn't force himself on us. It's our choice. But why would we not choose it?

Finally, we should expect it. So, all that remains, I guess, is why? Why do we need the Holy Spirit? Well, Paul tells us why. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God's wisdom. A mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

None of the rulers of this age understood it. For if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. There is a difference between God's wisdom and human wisdom. And that is as true today as it was back then when the rulers of Paul's age crucified the Lord of glory.

You know, I wonder if Jesus came today Would the leaders of our age crucify him if he came to the earth now? I don't know. But I do know they wouldn't want to listen to his message when there are people on the streets showing hatred to those who are coming here just to find a better life. And some of our leaders are actively promoting it and encouraging it.

When leaders of this world seek to sow division among their own citizens, when they close their borders to others, or who seek conquest so that they can take from other countries. Do you know what? I actually genuinely believe there are some leaders in this world who would crucify Jesus even today. They may do it a bit more quietly, but they would do it all the same.

That is how radical Jesus' message is. A message that is a complete opposite to the message of this world. And if we are to have the strength to tell people about it, we need the spirit.

Paul goes on, "The spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us." This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the spirit explaining spiritual realities with spirit taught words. The person without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the spirit."

You see, we understand through the Holy Spirit. How do we understand God's word? Through the intercession of the spirit. How do we pray? through the guidance of the spirit. How do we tell others? Through the spirit talking through us. You know, I've told people about God many times and some people have been open.

Other people have laughed in my face because it just doesn't make sense unless they're prepared to receive the spirit themselves. It's a nonsense. The person with the spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments. For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

When we are filled with the spirit, we have the mind of Christ. We know what he's thinking. We know what he would do if he was in our shoes. We can do his work here on earth because we have his mind.

I'm not going to ask you if you're humble this morning. morning that really is between you and God. But are you open to receive the Holy Spirit? Are you in expectation that you will receive the Holy Spirit? Will you be filled with the spirit of God this morning?

[Denis closes off his message in prayer]

Let's pray.

And just in the quietness maybe you need to receive the spirit for the first time.

You've never known what that's like to receive the spirit.

Maybe you need to receive the spirit for the thousandth time, for the hundred thousandth time.

Just in the quiet, if you are in need of God's spirit this morning for whatever may come this week, for whatever conversations you may have. Just lift up that request to God.

Ask to receive the Holy Spirit...

Heavenly Father, we know that apart from you, we can do nothing.

We can exist in this world, we can deal with its lives and its challenges in our own way, but apart from you, our life has no meaning.

We pray that you would send your spirit, Lord, so that we can do the things you need us to do here on this earth.

That we can read your word and understand it.

That we can pray to you and be guided by your spirit and that we can have the courage to tell others perfectly fine if they laugh at us.

But we can have the courage and the wisdom to tell others because it will be your spirit talking through us.

Anoint us with your spirit today, Lord.

We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.