

Being Filled Effects Singing and Speaking

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[0:00] That we're going to look at, and I would summarize it this way by saying, spirit-filled saints are scriptural saints.

! Look at the passage. Spirit-filled believers are identified first by what comes out of their mouth. I do confess that the translation is a little bit confusing, a little complicating in the Greek, in that the word that is used here is a word that is commonly used to reference speech.

But then, after having said that we're to speak to one another, it goes right on and it uses three different terms that clearly reference music, doesn't it? Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

So, I would say at the very least what this passage tells us is that a spirit-filled person communicates using Scripture. A spirit-filled person, let's say it slowly because this is important.

[1:20] Remember, you're supposed to be able to pick out spirit-filled people, am I right? And is it important to pick out spirit-filled people? What do you think? You have to have situational awareness.

You have to know what's going on. You have to be able to discern character. What's a spirit-filled person identified by? For one, spirit-filled person communicates using Scripture.

The thing that marks their speech is the wholesome and blessed nature of the Word of God itself. Face it.

Tongue's a hard thing to handle. How many of you agree with that? I have probably labored and grieved more over what I have said than almost any other thing in my life.

And James chapter 3 verse 7 references the battle we have with the tongue. Isn't that right? It says, hey, who can control the tongue? It says, no human can tame the tongue.

[2:20] Now, sometimes people try to tame their tongue by just stifling it. How many of you found that eventually what's inside comes outside?

Even when you have tried after a long and arduous process to keep it all stuffed inside, eventually someone jostles you and guess what comes out? You give away what's inside because you say things that have been thought.

If you go to that passage in James for a minute, we're going to look at verse 17. And it's going to look at verse 17 and 18 in James chapter 3 because it helps us understand a little more about this issue of the tongue and its power.

And particularly in relationship to the matter of the Spirit of God. Look at what it says there in verse 17. But the wisdom from above, in other words, hey, spirit-filled individuals.

The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

[3:30] Now, I want you to understand this morning that Christians are more than just courteous. They're more than individuals who have been through a Dale Carnegie course in how to win friends and influence people by compliments and flattery.

They're more than people that have attended one of these positive mental attitude seminars and come away with just a whole bag full of bromides.

You know, statements that everybody says. Be positive. You know, have you ever noticed, a little sidebar note here, have you ever noticed that football commentators have a whole bag full of common, largely irrelevant statements that kind of go along with, you know, you got to bring your A game.

It's like, yeah, they say it a thousand times. It's like, that was really creative, you know. Well, you know, positive mental attitude and all the baggage that goes. Let me say this again so you don't miss me here. Christians are more than people who've just learned a certain set of conversation pieces.

There is more to the tenor of spirit-filled conversation than those things. Spirit-filled conversation, I want you to understand, is weighted and colored by the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit has given to us for our blessing through inspiration.

[5:12] And so when you think about, well, how do you pick out someone who's actually spirit-filled? What you recognize is you can pick them out by the way they talk. Now, let's go back to Paul's reference earlier in verse 18.

He says, Any of you ever been around a person who's drunk? Have you noticed that their speech begins to be impeded, slurred?

We're not talking about how they walk. We're talking about that their speech is just a little messy. And not only is their speech a little messy, but they, at the end of the day, really do say some pretty dumb things.

I think I referenced a couple weeks ago the fact that characteristic of the Christmas holiday season will be that on the Internet, whether it's Fox or MSN or whatever else I'm looking at, there will be a whole series of articles that come out on what not to do while you're at the Christmas party.

And most of them have some kind of cross-reference to the fact, don't drink too much so you say dumb things that then curtail your career. Telling the boss that he is one of the dumber people that you know is really not a way to move up the food chain.

[6:30] And so don't be filled with wine because you say dumb things. Oh, be filled with the spirit. You can spot a drunk by their speech.

And you can spot a spirit-filled person by their speech. As a practical note in relationship to this, I want you to understand that the Spirit of God is not going to take a blank and uninformed mind and sprinkle Scripture over it so that's what flows out.

I think this is very important to understand. I want you to get this. It is the expectation of God that believers are spirit-filled. This is given to us as a command, an imperative.

Do this. But you will not be a person who speaks scripturally if your mind is not informed by being in the text.

Let me note two passages in relationship to this. One is over in John chapter 14, verse 25. I do want you to look at this text. In John chapter 14, 15, and 16, Jesus gives in the fourth gospel the most extensive discourse on the ministry of the Spirit of God in the believer.

[7:51] It's a profound and valuable passage. One of the things that we can glean from that text is verse 25 in John, did I say 14?

I think I want 20. No. Let me take a look here just for a second. Verse 26. Not 25. Well, 25, we start there.

These things that I have spoken to you while I am still with you. In other words, where is spirit-filled, scriptural speaking going to come? From one, they're going to come from things Jesus said. Now look at 26. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your...

What's the word remembrance mean? Can you remember something you have never learned? Hello? Incredible logic is applied here, isn't it?

If you're going to remember something, the underlying assumption is you've already learned at some point. And so if you're sitting here as an individual who very rarely allows the word of God to have any effect on your life and has no ongoing exposure to the richness of it, the Spirit of God has a hard drive that's blank.

[9:09] Yeah, he may be able to do something with John 3.16, but incessantly it's kind of tiring, you know. Now, am I in favor of John 3.16?

Yes. But I would encourage you to pack the hard drive with more than one verse. And understand this, that the Spirit of God will bring to mind those things that you've been taught.

Isaiah 50, verse 4. It happens to be one of my current favorites. And I do like this passage. Isaiah... Why don't you look at it with me?

In fact, if you're kind of looking for some spare verses to kind of hang on your refrigerator, and I'm all in favor of the ones that are already there, but this is a keeper.

Isaiah 50, verse 4. For the Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are what? What's the next word? Taught. I have received the tongue. I've received a tongue that says things that I didn't know before that somebody taught me.

[10:22] How many of you wish your tongue on occasion had been better informed by the Spirit of God? What? Okay. Isaiah says, I have been given the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.

I love the next part. Morning by morning he awakens. He awakens. He awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.

Understand this. A Spirit-filled individual is one who speaks scripturally. So, as you're driving home in the car, here's a question that I would encourage you to ask your children.

It's not a bad question, because, you know, tell them, there's no risk involved, I'll still take you out to dinner. Just tell me the truth. I need to know. Hey, how often would you say that I'm Spirit-filled?

Would that be a fair question? And by the way, husband, look to your wife and say, hey, I'm interested in growing, and this business of being the man God wants me to be is pretty important.

[11:48] How often would you say I'm Spirit-filled? Right? Right? And all of God's people... What?

And all of God's people said what? Amen. I mean, hey, if you don't get the first point, let's just wait until it settles in. Okay, here's the deal.

We ought to be willing to say, I want to be a Spirit-filled believer, and the giveaway is that my conversation is governed as informed by the Scriptures.

Oh, let's go to the second point. Now, before I get on a roll here, I do want to throw out a disclaimer. And some of you might want to put your fingers in your ears or go la-la-la-la-la so that what comes out next doesn't just put you over the edge.

With that, I want to actually do something that's a little inverted. I want to give you application before I give you the text. Here, here's what I want you to do.

[12:58] It's not always easy to tell if someone who's singing enthusiastically and with emotion is actually Spirit-filled. I'll say this slowly so you can track me.

It's not always easy to tell if someone who's singing enthusiastically and with emotion is actually Spirit-filled. I was sitting here this morning, and any of you who know me know that I was born an emotional person.

That's just the way I am. I was over here, you know, just holding it back, doing my best as we were singing one of my favorites, and, you know, just kind of hanging on. Every now and then, I have to put my Bible up in front of my face.

Have you ever seen me do that? You know, I just can't go any further. I've got to stop and get a breath, you know. I had to say, well, Tim, is that actually Spirit-filled? Not necessarily.

My wife, you've heard me say she's the green-eye shade girl. Putt, putt, putt, straight across, you know, level. So I want you to think with me.

[14:13] It's not always easy to tell if someone who's waving their hands and just with it, you know, you don't know if that person is motivated by a charade.

How many of you know that some musicians actually lip-sync songs? Do you follow that? I mean, they sing the same song.

Let's talk, I mean, I've never seen Shania Twain in, what, at a concert or anything like that. But I mean, there's, you know, she can sing some of these really impassioned love songs, you know, 30 times in Las Vegas, one after another.

Would you guess that the 28th time she's really not in it? In fact, the truth of the matter is she burned out her voice several weeks ago, and all she's doing is lip-syncing. But you look at the facade of her emotion, yeah, she's in it!

You know, she's not. So it's not always easy to tell whether a person who's being enthusiastic is really filled with the Spirit. Actually, what you can do is listen to them after they've been bopping and jiving to whether or not they're critical.

[15:28] Does that make sense? Huh? If they're sarcastic. If they're embittered. If they're not thankful.

Would you say that's fair? Give it time! Here's what the Bible says, and we have to rely upon the Bible, don't we? In 1 Timothy chapter 5, it said, Hey, some men's sins are right up front. You can spot them easy. Others, give them time. It'll come out. And so, now, remember, I'm dealing with application. You don't know for sure if someone who's being enthusiastic is Spirit-filled. Now, let's go to the second part. The part that irritates you. On the other hand, it's far easier to tell when someone isn't filled with the Spirit if they're not singing. Now, do I have any textual authority upon what to make that premise? Do you follow my question? Does the Scripture expect believers to sing?

[16:35] What do you think? Well, I just don't sing. I, you know, I didn't grow up in a singing family. I have a voice that stinks.

I'm not talking about dental hygiene. I'm just talking about I can't sing. You know? And so, why should I bother everybody else within the immediate proximity of me, you know, as I'm dropping these off-colored notes?

Huh? Because the Bible says that a person who is empowered by the Spirit of God sings. Okay? And here's what I'm saying. When someone isn't Spirit-filled, they don't sing. They're dour. You know what dour means? I mean, some people look like they have a permanent grump. It's kind of a practice state. I imagine that they look at themselves in the mirror just to be sure they got it right before they go out publicly.

[17:47] Some people, you know, they are just kind of... Show me.

Pastor, you've got 17 minutes and I'm out of here. Okay. Well, here's the deal. Let's go to the text. Singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.

Now, in a Catholic service, after the pastor has read the Word, do you know what the people say? And I'm not proposing that we do that in the future, but they say, Thus saith the Lord. That's what I just did. I said what God said, right? So, let's put it this way.

Spirit-filled saints have music come out of their hearts. Let me just reference very quickly just a couple different passages in relationship to this. Turn back in your Bible to Psalm chapter 33.

[18:57] We're going to look at a couple passages that give us illustration. Psalm 33, verse 1 through 3. Shout for joy to the Lord.

Hey, stop just for a second. And I'm going to go over time if anybody's wondering about it. What does it say there again?

What does it say? Shout for joy to the Lord. Well, I don't want to do that. Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with a lyre. Make melody to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song. Let's go to another passage.

Psalm 95, verse 1. O come, let us sing to the Lord.

[20:01] Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Psalm 100, verse 1 and 2.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into His presence with singing. Singing is a powerful testament to what we deeply care about and what we really believe in.

And it is fitting for saints, when they sing together, to sing enthusiastically and to sing textually. I remind you of a passage and just mark it.

Colossians chapter 3, verse 16 says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. And that word richly, pleroma, is actually talking about occupying the full space.

It's have the whole room. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Now, notice something else here in the passage.

[21:03] Our singing is directed to the Lord. And it is with our heart. I love how pointed the instruction is. Our singing is to be for Christ and about Christ as our Lord and Master.

And it is to be heartfelt. You know, I have to admit, we all struggle with what other people think of us.

And that sometimes makes it very problematic or troublesome when we decide to pray. Because you know what we're really thinking about? We're not thinking about what Jesus thinks about our prayer.

We're thinking about whether or not we put the King James phrasing together properly. Oh, thou ubiquitous God. You know, what does that? But I heard someone use it. Okay. And we sometimes are that way with our singing.

We don't want to embarrass ourselves. We don't want to be too emotional. You know, whatever. One of the things that I care deeply about with our fellowship is that we are singing people whose songs reflect the Scriptures and who Christ is.

[22:12] Why is that? Because I am deeply persuaded by the text that believers who are Spirit-filled are singing people. Now, I have to confess that there was a time in my life where I used to be overly cautious about engaging my emotions when I was in worship with others of God's people.

I had no problem when I was at a hockey game or a soccer game or a football game or a basketball game with going bonkers. I mean, I was with it.

But when I was in the house of God, I'd stifle it. And I began to think, you know what?

And, you know, I was actually informed by the Scriptures. The Scriptures were saying, Tim, get with it. I mean, I stopped to thought, you know what? In the scope of eternity, whether OSU won or lost last night is really irrelevant.

I actually went to bed before 10 o'clock. I did check the score before I did my devotions.

[23:33] Oh, so let's come back to the practical issue. Evaluate how you are doing at being Spirit-filled by what you sing about and what you sing like.

Third, Spirit-filled saints are thankful saints. Oh, and the text really digs it in, doesn't it?

Look at it. What kind of things are we to be thankful for? All the time for everything. All the time for everything.

All the time for everything. Thankfulness is the least a person can do in response to the undeserved kindness of God. And it really reflects a view of self that is not inflated with entitlement or arrogance. When we are Spirit-filled people, we are thankful always and for everything. We're thankful always and for everything. Kind of carry this forward a little bit, and I want to be cautious here, but yesterday the search committee met.

[24:47] We are continuing in the process of looking for a family youth pastor. And one of the things that the committee did, we kind of evaluated, so what has God done for our fellowship in the time that we have been prayerfully and diligently looking for a man to come and be a family youth pastor?

And all five of the men in that room could consciously and deliberately think of things that God has done in providing leadership, in helping people grow spiritually, in encouraging our relationships in the body of Christ, in helping us work through challenges that we wouldn't have faced.

You know, am I thankful for this past year? I am.

A great deal. Do I pray that God will provide? Yes. But I look across the landscape of His ministry in our hearts, and I'm thankful.

Let me give you a couple reasons to be thankful, and I'll close. And I want you to turn to Romans chapter 8 as we bring this to a practical conclusion.

[26:12] I'll spell them out, and you can track them at your own leisure. We can be thankful because we can rest in the love and wisdom of God.

Does He know what He's doing? What's the answer? Yeah? We can be thankful because we remember that God has affirmed His love in Christ. There are a lot of hard things that happen in the life of every single believer.

But I want you to remember this. There is no question as to His unconditional love, and He's proved that to you with the Lord Jesus Christ. Third, He's demonstrated His goodness to you, and you can trust in that, even when the moments are dark and despairing.

It follows, then, that a grumbling and moody believer is bearing witness to nothing other than a low view of God and is evidencing a lack of the Spirit.

I was speaking during the Thanksgiving season with a young lady who was studying law at one of the premier universities in Washington, D.C.

[27:33] She's a first-year law student. She's a believer. And she is studying at a university. The cost that just is mind-boggling, she's studying with some exceptionally brilliant students.

And she says, you know, the thing that I find most difficult in that environment is not the academic expectations, but the incessant unhappiness of all the people.

She's around! She's around! This is the upper crust of the world. They're the ones who are smarter than we are and ultimately will solve all our problems given time.

And they're very unhappy. Not a single one of their professors is worthy of their thanks. Every one of the students that come to class and sit with them are absolute boneheads and shouldn't be there. And the people that they know in their family structure and the community that they inhabit are all miserable examples of humanity.

[29:01] Are they spirit-filled? What's the answer? No! And what's to give you away? Here. The way you speak is Scripture-structured.

The way you sing is affectionate and powerful. And the way you view life as you face the adversities and disappointments and heartaches and difficulties and the uglies is thankful.

I had a chance yesterday. Unbelievable opportunity. The Lord opened up a door of ministry in a person's life that I have prayed for periodically over many, many years.

And God opened up the door. I end up in there. And I said to this individual what I say to you. The purpose of preaching, I said, well, when a pastor comes, actually a pastor doesn't come to talk about his own thinking.

He comes to give what? The Word of God. And I said this, God sent me here to put you on the spot of saying yes or no to God. Does the Father in heaven expect every one of you here who know Christ to be spirit-filled?

[30:20] What's the answer? Come on, say it with me. Say it out loud so I know you get the memo so I don't have to keep you here for another 15 minutes. Does God expect every one of you who are believers to be spirit-filled?

The answer, in case you're wondering, is yes. So it's appropriate if you kind of think, well, I'm not consistently very happy.

Singing I don't do, unless it's my favorite. And being scripturally informed as I speak to one another, I've only got one or two verses in the battery, and after I've used those, we're done.

Okay. Lord, let's get with it. I need your help to be spirit-filled.

Yes. Nah. Let's close in prayer. Let's close in prayer.

[31:26] Father God, it is not enough for us to endure the teaching of the Word of God. In fact, it's a dangerous thing to sit here and consciously and deliberately harden our heart in the face of the authority of the Almighty.

You call us to be spirit-filled people. And only the arrogant and stubborn will resist the speaking of the Spirit and the power of the Word.

And I'm reminded of what it says in Habakkuk, that an arrogant man has only troubles. We want to be humble. We want to be humble. We want to grow.

We want to be conformed into the image of Christ. And we consciously and deliberately yield to your work this morning. Let's close in prayer.