**Ephesians 5:15-21**

I. The Context (v. 15-17)

A. The context is sobering

1. v. 16: the days are evil (we’re in a spiritual battle)

2. v. 16: we need to be making the most of every opportunity

3. v. 15: we need to be very careful how we live

= Life as Christians requires intention, care, and purpose

B. Paul gives 3 commands in this context

1. v. 15: don’t live as unwise but as wise

2. v. 17: don’t be foolish but understand what the Lord’s will is

3. v. 18: don’t get drunk on wine but be filled with the Spirit

II. Be filled by the Spirit: what does this mean? ( v. 18)

A. Talking to Christians who already have the Spirit

1. Does not mean we need a second filling of the Spirit

2. Means we need to come more under the Spirit’s control, influence, guidance

So that his values, priorities, passions are shaping how we live

B. Paralleled with being drunk

1. When drunk you are controlled by alcohol (“under the influence”)

2. When filled with Spirit you are controlled by Spirit (under His influence)

C. Paralleled with Col 3:16-17

Being filled with Spirit is very similar to letting the word of Christ dwell richly in you (The Spirit is a spotlight shining on Christ and his word)

III. Be filled by the Spirit: What does it look like when we are filled with Spirit? (v. 19-21)

One command with four particles that follow and explain what happens in our lives when we are filled by the Spirit

A. Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (v. 19)

1. The big idea is we are to encourage one another by reminding each other of who God is and what he’s done, and praise songs are a great way to do that.

2. Speaking songs was probably more natural in that culture (oral culture) than ours

B. Singing and making music in your heart to the Lord (v. 19)

1. Notice “in your heart”: not necessarily singing out loud, but having hearts that are full of music and worship to Christ

2. Songs are a great way to remind ourselves of who Christ is and all that we have in him

3. Memorizing songs can be a great way to respond to life’s challenges

4. Most of the great Christian revivals came with revivals in music

C. Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (v.20)

1. = A life of gratitude, thanksgiving

2. So radical! We are called to be grateful in all of life’s circumstances

a. Because God is our “father”: he holds all of our life circumstances in his hands and he will work them all for our good.

b. Because we do it “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”: we have been saved by him and now have access to the Father through his death and resurrection.

3. This doesn’t mean we don’t grieve and mourn at times, but it does mean we are not to be complainers, grumblers, pessimistic people

D. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (v. 21)

1. Phil 2:3-5

a. Do nothing out of empty glory (that part of us that wants to be acknowledged, recognized as great that causes competition and quarrels among us)

b. Consider others better than yourselves. Put their needs ahead of your own

2. = treat people as if it’s their birthday every day

3. We submit to each other “out of reverence for Christ”

Not because people necessarily deserve our submission but because we are being faithful to our Lord

IV. Conclusion

A. This challenges our cynicism in life

1. It’s easy to be tempted to be cynical about life and Christian culture.

2. Cynicism can feel cool, witty, and nuanced,

3. We fear appearing naïve or cheesy, and Paul’s sing-songy optimism might feel that way

4. But Paul is clear that cynicism is not of the Spirit. We are called to be grateful, humble, joyful people, not because we are naïve to reality but because we understand reality in the deepest sense

5. “Be joyful though you’ve considered all the facts” –Wendell Berry)

B. This challenges our view of God

1. When the Spirit of God fills our lives the result is singing and joy.

2. God’s Spirit is God himself living within us, producing his own character in us

3. This must mean that God himself is a God of joy, mirth, and celebration

4. Jesus himself was a man of great joy (see John 15:11)

**Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss in your own words what Paul means when he says “be filled with the Spirit.” Specifically, what does it mean to tell Christians to be filled with the Spirit since they already have the Spirit in their lives?

2. As you consider the four examples of Spirit-filled living Paul mentions in v. 19-21 which one is the easiest to come by for you, and which is the hardest to come by?

3. As you consider the four example of Spirit-filled living, which one do you think God would want you to pursue more intentionally at this time in your life? If possible, give some specifics.

4. Is your God a God of joy, mirth, and celebration? How did you respond to that idea offered on Sunday?