**Saturated**

Acts 2:14-21

Last week we saw six practices that enable us to live in the power of the Holy Spirit:

**How to live in the power of the Spirit:**

1. Gather and Wait
2. Worship and Pray
3. Listen and Obey

Before ascending into heaven Jesus gave clear instructions to wait. He said, “Don’t just go rushing off. Stay in Jerusalem and ***wait until you have been clothed with power*** from on high. In just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

**So the disciples waited** - huddled together in the upper room they prayed and worshiped and waited. We need to learn this discipline of patient, persevering prayer. We need to learn to wait - to worship as we wait - to trust in the Lord so much that we don’t just rush ahead through our days but we pause to call on the Lord and seek to walk in His power.

As we wait and listen - as we read God’s Word and reflect on it - the Lord will speak to us and call us to take steps of obedience. That is when we will experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It’s the combination of these steps - the gathering and waiting, worshiping and praying, listening and obeying. ***It’s not a formula it’s a RELATIONSHIP.***

No two revivals take place the same way - because it’s not a formula. You can’t manipulate God. You can’t provoke Him to act like a vending machine. It’s a relationship of personal faith. We leave the details and timing to Him and we follow the principles He has given us. So we pray. We gather. We listen to God’s Word. We move forward in obedience.

Our lesson today will be an expansion and application of last week:

**As believers living in the age of the Holy Spirit we have access to the full Presence and Power of God.**

“But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ‘And in the last days… I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.’” Acts 2:16-17

**Peter is explaining** what the great crowd in Jerusalem has just experienced. They heard a loud rushing wind. They saw tongues of fire rest on the apostles. They heard 12 men all speaking at once, but understood them each in their own language. It was a remarkable miracle. And they were understandably wondering what it could mean.

Peter starts by making it clear - “None of us have been drinking. It’s only 9 a.m. - we don’t start drinking until noon at the earliest.” No - **it’s not drunken babbling**. This is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God!

Hundreds of years before, **the prophet Joel** spoke about the Day of the Lord. Joel’s book is not the most cheerful read. There had been a devastating plague of locusts that Joel interprets as the judgment of God upon His (as usual) wayward people. But Joel sees beyond the judgment to a time of restoration and renewal.

“I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten… which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God.” Joel 2:25-26

Joel’s book is **a call for national repentance**, along with the promise that God is gracious and merciful to restore those who call on Him in faith.

“Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning… return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful…” Joel 2:12-13

The nation of Israel was struggling with **a food shortage** from the locust plague - and with the fear that comes from a foot shortage. We felt a little of that when we couldn’t get toilet paper and bottled water a few months ago. Imagine if we couldn’t get bread or flour or milk or eggs or any food! It would be a full hurricane panic!

That’s what Israel was feeling in Joel’s day. And the prophet called for national repentance - he exhorted them to acknowledge their sin and idolatry and to turn back to the Lord, calling on Him to save them, to rescue them, to help them. Here is the key verse that Peter quotes as having just been fulfilled:

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” Acts 2:17 / Joel 2:28

It’s important to see that Peter sees Joel 2:28 as ***having been FULFILLED*** already in that moment. **The Day of Pentecost** was the day the Spirit was poured out - the day men and women saw visions, old men dreamed dreams and everyone was enabled to speak God’s Word like prophets.

This is not a prophecy awaiting a future fulfillment. This was fulfilled 2,000 years ago! The Spirit was poured out and the disciples experienced it. God’s Spirit was poured out in full measure!

**As believers living in the age of the Holy Spirit we have access to the full Presence and Power of God.**

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will ***pour out my Spirit on all flesh***.” Joel 2:28

That’s what Joel 2:28 means - the Spirit was dumped out and the disciples were saturated, inundated, immersed! This was not a little sprinkling, a little touch of the Spirit. This was a full saturation.

It is one thing **to see a lake in the distance**. It is another to jump into that lake. The prophet Joel saw this outpouring from a distance. The disciples found themselves ***suddenly swimming in the lake*** of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power.

And this remains our joyful privilege today! We live in the age of the Holy Spirit - what the apostles called “the last days.” The final age of history started with the death and resurrection of Jesus. We have been living in the last days for 2,000 years. The Holy Spirit has been poured out on all of God’s people and it is our job to walk in the fullness of His presence and power! How do we do that? Today we will see **three places** we need to let the Holy Spirit fill up: our minds, hearts and mouths! First - our minds!

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Mind with God’s Word**

“Let this be known to you, and give ear to my words… This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel…” Acts 2:14,16

***Spiritual renewal always begins with God’s Word.*** God initiates and we respond. Do we study Scripture? Do we meditate on God’s Word day and night? Do we gather regularly to hear the Bible read and explained? Do we memorize verses and passages to fill our minds with the truth?

Peter urges the Jews gathered there in Jerusalem to LISTEN. “Give ear to my words.” Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter was speaking the word of God in that moment. His words on the day of Pentecost reached equal authority with those of the prophet Joel!

Revival began in **King Josiah’s day** when one of his officials stumbled on a scroll. It happened to be Deuteronomy - and it goes to show that work days are necessary and sometimes you find something important. In that case it was Scripture and when the young king read it he realized how disobedient the nation had become! He finally saw with clarity the holy requirement of God in His Word and how far Israel fell short of that standard.

***Revival happens for us in the same way.*** When we **open the Bible** and don’t just let the words bounce off of us but we let them sink in. We set aside a time and place to not just read like we are skimming the news app but to connect with our Lord. We treat it like our most important appointment of the day.

**Freshman year of college** was like this for me. I took a spiritual formation class and decided to actually try what they taught us - to take an hour and get away with the Lord. Just me and a Bible. Later I brought along a notebook and pen. Sometimes in a little prayer chapel by my dorm. Sometimes out in the woods nearby. My spiritual life caught fire as I read, studied and meditated on God’s Word. Suddenly everything I had heard about growing up in church became real. God became real.

Can’t we all relate to this? We have seasons when we are both disciplined and devoted - when we invest both quality and quantity time - and, amazingly, we feel much closer to God! Then we have seasons when we are busy and distracted and just catching a little Bible as we drive and do other things. And, surprisingly, we feel pretty dry and detached from the Lord.

One of our elders says about family time - you get the QUALITY TIME in the midst of QUANTITY TIME. The same is true with God. Don’t deceive yourself that you have QUALITY time with God if you don’t allocate QUANTITY time too. Fill your MIND with God’s Word. There is no other way to encounter Him - to see Him in the fullness of His glory and draw closer to Him! This is the consistent message of the New Testament:

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Mind with God’s Word**

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” Col. 3:16

“Be transformed by the renewal of your minds” (Rom. 12:2). “Set your minds on things above.” “Whatever is true, noble, right, just pure… think about such things.” It’s a battle for the mind. We win it by filling our minds with Scripture! Second.

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Heart with God’s Love**

“Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” Acts 2:17

***What are dreams and visions?*** If your mind is full of something during the day, you will dream about it at night. If your heart is full of something, you will see visions of it throughout the day - you will daydream about it!

Do you remember ***“being in love”***? When that guy or that girl were all you could think about? When you literally dreamed about him or her? Ah, those were the days, right?

What have you been ***obsessed with*** recently? Have you been busy with work and focused on a project so much that it fills your mind? Do you dream about it - whether in a good or bad way... ? Do you wake up in night sweats, stressing? Do you daydream about finally making that sale, closing that deal, getting that big promotion?

When’s the last time your obsession was GOD? When was the last time you had a GOD dream or daydream?

Now, the book of Acts will show us **people who have dreams and visions** and through those the Lord guides and directs them. We can’t control of predict that kind of thing. But we can control what we set our hearts and minds on.

If you want to be filled with the Spirit, the book of Ephesians tells us exactly how:

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Heart with God’s Love**

“That you… may have strength to comprehend… to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Eph. 3:18-19

To be filled to the measure of ALL THE FULLNESS of God, we need to personally **know and experience** “how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.” We need to think about it. We need to ***remember the gospel***. We need to revel in the love of Christ that led Him all the way to the cross. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to show us - to give us supernatural power to really grasp the truth of this - the infinite cost of Jesus’ suffering for us; what His love moved Him to do.

When we really ***EXPERIENCE the love of Jesus*** - when we swim in that infinite ocean of grace - our hearts fill up! We fill up with joy and peace and comfort. The things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. All of our aches and pains and frustrations and fears begin to fade into the background and we just see Jesus. Jesus is raised up and everything else falls back into a proper perspective.

***Is your mind filled with God’s Word?*** Is your heart filled with God’s love? Do you daydream about Jesus? Do you cry anguished tears at night for lost people to be saved? Do you long for the kingdom to come? Does your heart agonize for the return of Jesus, your Bridegroom? If these things are true, then I bet the third place to fill up is already full.

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Mouth with God’s Glory**

“I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.” Acts 2:17

***What was the job of a prophet?*** They spoke God’s Word and proclaimed God’s glory!

* **Isaiah** saw a vision of the Lord in His temple, high and lifted up - and was sent from that experience of glory to go to a stubborn and rebellious people and call them to repent.
* **Daniel** saw the kingdoms of the world rise and fall, and the kingdom of God rising to take over the world - and shared this truth with the pagan kings of Babylon and Persia: “the most high rules over the kingdoms of men!”
* **Joel** saw the Day of the Lord - a dark and terrifying day of reckoning and judgment - and called God’s people to repent while there was still time!

This was the prophet’s sober task: to see the glory of God in all of its overwhelming truth and proclaim that truth to people who would mostly reject it.

In the **Old Testament** it was the job of a select few. In the New Testament, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, ***it became the job of every believer***. We are all called to prophesy, not in the sense of telling the future but in the sense of telling the TRUTH about God. We have the Word of God. We have seen the glory of God. It is our job to speak of the wonders we have seen and experienced! That’s what the apostles had just done:

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Mouth with God’s Glory**

“We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” Acts 2:11

12 apostles speaking at once - and a crowd of thousands from all over the region understanding them in all different languages. But the message was the same: “Behold your God! See in Jesus the mighty salvation of God!”

**What our hearts and minds are filled with, we talk about**, don’t we? We get excited about the Lightning and the Rays - not the Bucs so much. But we watch the games, read the recaps, watch the highlights, cheer for the heroes… And we talk about them. We watch TV and talk about the shows that we like. Back when they made movies we talked about those. If you enjoy your job you talk about it. If you have grand kids you show pictures and videos and talk about them all the time on social media and in person.

Hear this: if you don’t TALK about Jesus much - could it be that you don’t THINK about Him much? Could it be that your heart and mind are not filled with His glory and grace? Ephesians 5 makes it clear that when you are filled with the Spirit, it comes out of your mouth!

**We have access to the full Presence and Power of God:**

* **Fill your Mouth with God’s Glory**

“Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs…” Eph. 5:18-19

I’m sure we’ve all known **people who just overflow with Jesus**. He is always on their lips. They talk about His faithfulness. They talk TO Him in front of you - “Lord, help us!” They walk closely with the Lord. They don’t just love Jesus, they are “in love” with Jesus. It’s not a spiritual show it’s just part of who they are.

We have **Romanian friends** in Chicago who are like this. They still contact us sometimes to ask how they can pray for us. A couple of them have been down to visit a few times! When we share how we are they immediately respond with, “Oh, praise the Lord! God is good!” And even when they face difficult things they say things like, “God is faithful. He is taking care of us.”

I hope you have people like this in your Community Group. Oakwood, thankfully, is full of people like this. It’s one of the wonderful signs of spiritual life here. It’s one of the reasons that when people come, they stay - because they sense the talk they hear is real for us. People are welcoming and quickly invite new folks to visit their small group. They try to get to know you and when they ask, “How are you doing?” they actually want to hear an answer.

Here is our summary for today:

**As believers living in the age of the Holy Spirit we have access to the full Presence and Power of God.**

* Fill your Mind with God’s Word
* Fill your Heart with God’s Love
* Fill your Mouth with God’s Glory

We are not waiting for the fulfillment of Joel 2. It happened on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit of God was poured out in power and **the believers were SATURATED**, they were baptized with the full presence and power of God. That remains true for every Christian today.

We have access to the full presence and power of God. Ephesians 3 promises that every Christian who experiences the love of Jesus will be filled up with ***ALL THE FULLNESS of God!*** We need to strengthen our theology of the Holy Spirit! We need to remember that we are the **Temple of the Holy Spirit** - and that as those who have been baptized or immersed in the Spirit we walk around, every minute of every day, with the Lord God of heaven and earth in our hearts!

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/pastorsandpreachers/john-newton.html>

Let’s close today with the inspiring story of **John Newton**. Born in London in 1725 to a Puritan mother, Newton did not embrace his mother’s faith but followed his father into a life at sea, with all of the questionable morals that involved in those days. Not a half-hearted person, Newton threw himself into his passions. Eventually he got involved in the lucrative slave trade, working his way up until he was the captain of multiple ships transporting slaves across the gruelling Atlantic passage.

https://www.biography.com/news/amazing-grace-story-john-newton

In a ***terrible storm*** in which he thought everyone on board would die, Newton called upon God to save them and, miraculously, the cargo shifted and the ship did not sink. Newton considered that the day of his conversion, but his life did not change for several more years.

Still, he eventually left the slave trade and became a pastor. Later in life he mentored and supported William Wilberforce in fighting to bring an end to that abominable industry.

As part of his ministry, Newton led a weekly prayer meeting and worked with other believers to **write new hymns** to invigorate their times together. In this context he wrote Amazing Grace, along with 280 other hymns! Newton filled his mind with God’s Word. He filled his heart with God’s love and he filled his mouth with God’s glory.

Let’s pray together and then lift our voices with Newton and millions of others to sing of the Amazing Grace of our God!

Amazing Grace!