What it means to be Full of the Holy Ghost

by Smith Wigglesworth

6th January 1923

Bible Reading: Acts 6

In the days when the number of disciples began to be multiplied there arose a situation where the twelve had to make a definite decision not to occupy themselves with serving tables, but to give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. How important it is for all God's ministers to be continually in prayer, and constantly feeding on the Scriptures of Truth. I often offer a reward to anyone who can catch me anywhere without my Bible or my Testament.

None of you can be strong in God unless you are diligently and constantly hearkening to what God has to say to you through His Word. You cannot know the power and the nature of God unless you partake of His inbreathed Word. Read it at morn and at night, and at every opportunity you get. After every meal, instead of indulging in unprofitable conversation round the table, read a chapter from the Word and then have a season of prayer. I endeavor to make a point of doing this no matter where or with whom I am staying.

The Psalmist said that he had hid God's Word in his heart, that he might not sin against Him; and you will find that the more of God's Word you hide in your heart, the easier it is to live a holy life. He also testified that God's Word had quickened him; and, as you receive God's Word into your being, your whole physical being will be quickened and you will be made strong. As you receive with meekness the Word, you will find faith upspringing within. And you will have life through the Word.

The twelve told the rest to look out seven men to look after the business end of things. They were to be men of honest report and filled with the Holy Ghost. These were just ordinary men who were chosen, but they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and this infilling always lifts a man to a plane above the ordinary. It does not take a cultured or a learned man to fill a position in God's church; what God requires is a yielded, consecrated, holy life, and He can make of such a flame of fire. Baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire!

The multitude chose out seven men to serve tables. They were doubtless faithful in their appointed tasks, but we see that God soon had a better choice for two of them. Philip was so full of the Holy Ghost that he could have a revival wherever God put him down. Man chose him to serve tables, but God chose him to win souls. O, if I could only stir you up to see that, as you are faithful in performing the humblest office, God can fill you with His Spirit and make you a chosen vessel for Himself, and promote you to a place of mighty ministry in the salvation of souls and in the healing of the sick. There is nothing impossible to a man filled with the Holy Ghost. It is beyond all human comprehension. When you are filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, God will wonderfully work wherever you go.

When you are filled with the Spirit you will know the voice of God. I want to give you one illustration of this. When I was going out to Australia recently, our boat stopped at Aden and Bombay. In the first place the people came round the ship selling their wares, beautiful carpets and all sorts of oriental things. There was one man selling some ostrich feathers.

As I was looking over the side of the ship watching the trading, a gentleman said to me, "Would you go shares with me in buying that bunch of feathers?" What did I want with feathers? I had no use for such things and no room for them either. But the gentleman put the question to me again, "Will you go shares with me in buying that bunch?"

The Spirit of God said to me, "Do it."

The feathers were sold to us for three pounds, and the gentleman said, "I have no money on me, but if you will pay the man for them, I will send the cash down to you by the purser."

I paid for the feathers and gave the gentleman his share. He was traveling first, and I was traveling second class. I said to him, "No, please don't give that money to the purser, I want you to bring it to me personally to my cabin."

I said to the Lord, "What about these feathers?" He showed me that He had a purpose in my purchasing them.

At about 10 o'clock the gentleman came to my cabin and said, "I've brought the money." I said to him, "It is not your money that I want, it is your soul that I am seeking for God." Right there he opened up the whole plan of his life and began to seek God, and that morning he wept his way through to God's salvation.

You have no conception what God can do through you when you are filled with His Spirit. Every day and every hour you can have the divine leading of God. To be filled with the Holy Ghost means much in every way. I have seen some who have been suffering for years, and when they have been filled with the Holy

Ghost everything of their sickness has passed away. The Spirit of God has made real to them the life of Jesus and they have been completely liberated of every sickness and infirmity.

Look at Stephen. He was just an ordinary man chosen to serve tables. But the Holy Ghost was in him and he was full of faith and power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people. There was no resisting the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. How important it is that every man shall be filled with the Holy Spirit.

[At this point in the service someone (possibly Wigglesworth) spoke in prophetic tongues. The interpretation was: "The divine will is that you shall be filled with God; for the power of the Spirit to fill you with the mightiness of God. There is nothing God will withhold to a man filled with the Holy Ghost."]

I want to impress the importance of this upon you It is not healing that I am presenting to you in these meetings—it is the living Christ. It is a glorious fact that the Son of God came down to bring liberty to the captives. And He it is who baptizes with the Holy Ghost and fire, who is shedding forth this which we are now seeing and hearing.

How is it that the moment you are filled with the Holy Ghost that persecution starts? It was so with the Lord Jesus Himself. We do not read of any persecutions before the Holy Spirit came down like a dove upon Him. Shortly after this we find that after preaching in His home town they wanted to throw Him over the brow of a hill. It was the same with the twelve disciples. They had no persecution before the day of Pentecost, but after they were filled with the Spirit they were soon in prison. The devil and the priests of religion will always get stirred when a man is filled with the Spirit and does things in the power of the Spirit. And persecution is the greatest blessing to a church. When we have persecution we will have purity. If you desire to be filled with the Spirit you can count on one thing, and that is persecution. The Lord came to bring division, and even in your own household you may find three against two.

The Lord Jesus came to bring peace, and soon after you get peace within you get persecution without. If you remain stationary, the devil and his agents will not disturb you much. But when you press on and go the whole length with God the enemy has you as a target. But God will vindicate you in the midst of the whole thing.

At a meeting I was holding, the Lord was working and many were being healed. A man saw what was taking place and remarked, "I'd like to try this thing." He came up for prayer and told me that his body was broken in two places.

I laid my hands on him in the name of the Lord, and said to him, "Now, you believe God."

The next night he was at meeting and he got up like a lion. He said, "I want to tell you people that this man here is deceiving you. He laid his hands on me last night for rupture in two places, but I'm not a bit better."

I stopped him and said, "You are healed, your trouble is that you won't believe it."

He was at meeting the next night and when there was opportunity for testimony this man arose.

He said, "I'm a mason by trade. Today I was working with a laborer and he had to put a big stone in place. I helped him and did not feel any pain I said to myself, 'How have I done it?' I went away to a place where I could strip, and I found that I was healed."

I told the people, "Last night this man was against the Word of God, but now he believes it. It is true that these signs shall follow them that believe, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. And all through the power that is in the name of Christ." It is the Spirit who has come to reveal the Word of God, and to make it spirit and life to us.

You people who are seeking the Baptism are entering a place where you will have persecution. Your best friends will leave you—or those you may esteem your best friends. No good friend will ever leave you. But it is worth while. You enter into a realm of illumination, of revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost. He reveals the preciousness and the power of the blood of Christ. I find by the revelation of the Spirit that there is not one thing in me that the blood does not cleanse. I find that God sanctifies me by the blood and reveals the efficacy of the work by the Spirit.

Stephen was just an ordinary man clothed with the divine. He was full of faith and power, and great wonders and miracles were wrought by him. Oh, this life in the Holy Ghost! this life of deep, inward revelation, of transformation from one state to another, of growing in grace and in all knowledge and in the power of the Spirit, the life and the mind of Christ being renewed in you, and of constant revelations of the might of His power. It is only this kind of thing that will enable us to stand.

In this life, the Lord puts you in all sorts of places, and then reveals His power. I had been preaching in New York, and sailed one day for England on the Lusitania. As soon as I got on board I went down to my cabin. Two men were there, and one of them said, "Well, will I do for company?"

He took out a bottle and poured out a glass of whiskey and drank it, and then he filled it up for me.

"I never touch that stuff," I said.

"How can you live without it?" he asked.

"How could I live with it?" I asked.

He admitted, "I have been under the influence of this stuff for months, and they say my 'inside is all shrivelled up,' and I know that I am dying. I wish I could be delivered, but I just have to keep on drinking. Oh, if I could only be delivered! My father died in England and has given me his fortune, but what will the good of it be to me except to hasten me to my grave."

I said to this man, "Say the word, and you will be delivered."

He enquired, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Say the word, show that you are willing to be delivered and God will deliver you."

But it was just as if I was talking to this platform for all the comprehension he showed.

I said to him, "Stand still," and I laid my hands on his head in the name of Jesus and cursed that drink demon that was taking his life.

He cried out, "I'm free! I'm free! I know I'm free!" He took two bottles of whiskey and threw them overboard, and God saved, sobered and healed him.

I was preaching all the way across. He sat beside me at the table. Previous to this he had not been able to eat, but every meal he went right through the menu. You only have to have a touch from Jesus to have a good time. The power of God is just the same today. To me, He's lovely. To me, He's saving health. To me, He's the lily of the valley. O this blessed Nazarene, this King of Kings! Hallelujah! Will you let Him have your will, will you let Him have you? If you will, all His power is at your disposal.

They were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which Stephen spake, and so, full of rage, they brought him to the council. And God filled his face with a ray of heaven's light. It is worth being filled with the Spirit, no matter what it costs. Read the seventh chapter, the mighty prophetic utterance by this holy man. Without fear he tells them, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." And when they heard these things they were

cut to the heart. There are two ways of being cut to the heart. Here they gnashed their teeth and cast him out of the city and stoned him. On the day of Pentecost, when they were cut or pricked at the heart they cried out, "What shall we do?" They took the opposite way. The devil, if he can have his way, will cause you to commit murder. If Jesus has His way, you will repent.

And Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. O, this being full of the Holy Ghost! How much it means. I was riding for sixty miles one summer day and as I looked up in the heavens I had an open vision of Jesus all the way. It takes the Holy Ghost to give this.

Stephen cried out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." As he was full of the Spirit he was full of love, and he manifested the very same compassion for his enemies that Jesus did at Calvary. This being filled with the Holy Ghost means much in every way. It means constant filling, quickening, and a new life continually. Oh, it's lovely! We have a wonderful gospel and a great Saviour! If you will but be filled with the Holy Ghost you will have a constant spring within, yea, as your faith centers in the Lord Jesus, from within you shall flow rivers of living water.