

**“Running on Empty”**  
**Pastor Brad Smith**  
**Ephesians 5:18-21 NKJV**

**SCRIPTURES**

Ephesians 5:18-21 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, (20) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another in the fear of God.

**ILLUSTRATION**

In order for a vehicle to go somewhere, we must have motion. In order to have motion, we must have propellant. That is where gasoline comes in. You can have the nicest, the finest, the most expensive car in the driveway, but if it doesn't have the right fuel, IT'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

That reminds me of my high school days. I remember the first car my parents gave me. It was 1994 Oldmobile Cutlass Supreme. (PICTURE ON THE SCREEN).

It was maroon and a two door coupe. Man was I proud to drive that thing to school! My dad gave me the keys, filled it up with a tank of gas, and paid the first month of insurance on it. He then gave me a JOB. He told me real quick “This is the last tank of gas and insurance I will put in this car”. Boy, let me tell you something: He meant every word of it. In other words, what he was meaning was “There is a God, and I’m not Him”.

I would drive that car to work as a teenager back and forth, and I would make sure I got every drop I could out of that tank of gas. Many nights, the gas light would come on. These were the days before cell phones. I would hope I could make it home. Its what you call “running on fumes”. I would scrounge up a few dollars or so and fill it up again to a ¼ tank and do it all over.

Life is miserable when you are running on empty. I wonder how many Christians live spiritually like that? They are running on E. At any moment, they would fall apart at the seams and have a breakdown, because they are running on the fumes of the past.

Now, as a grown up with better income, I operate a little different. I do my best to stay on full. Unless I am on a long distance trip, I very rarely let my tank get below half. I take advantage of EVERY opportunity I have to top off the tank.

## **INTRODUCTION**

That's what I want to preach about this evening to you at The Bend. I want to preach about "Running on Empty".

One of the chiefest of all problems in the church world today is that people DO NOT UNDERSTAND their NEED for the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps you have been raised in this kind of church all of your life. Also, maybe you did not grow up like this. Maybe your church never mentioned the Holy Spirit. Maybe your church preached AGAINST it. Maybe they even said that tongues are of the devil. Whatever it is, my goal today is to inspire you to go deeper in your relationship with the Lord.

## **BACKGROUND**

Paul in this text is talking to the church at Ephesus. He is giving them just some basic Christian instruction for how to live in this world.

He tells them to

1. Walk in love (vs. 2)

2.Walk in light (vs.8)

3.Walk in line (vs. 15)

Those are pretty hard instructions. Not only are they hard, but they are impossible. That's why he instructed them in verse 18 "And not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit."

To be effective in the world we live in, we need to be filled and empowered by the Spirit.

## **APPLICATION**

### **1. The Contrast**

- a. He contrasts wine to being filled with the Spirit.
- b. When a person drinks alcohol, they yield to its power.
- c. It affects their speech. It affects their action. It affects the wallets. It affects their foot steps

### **2. The Command**

- a. He commands "do not be drunk", however the opposite side of the comma is true. "Be filled with the Spirit".

- b. Smith Wigglesworth said “ to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not only a divine luxury, but a divine command”.
- c. We ought not view this experience as minimal.....it is important!

### **3. The Consequence**

- a. Singing
- b. Giving Thanks
- c. Submitting to one another

## **CONCLUSION**

The Holy Spirit is symbolized many ways in the scripture, and one of those is by oil. When praying for the church at large, I was reminded of an old scene from a classic movie “The Wizard of Oz” (PICTURE ON SCREEN).

When Dorothy found the Tinman, he was rusty from the rain. His mouth, arms, and legs were not working. She heard him mumbling and when she came closer, he was uttering the words “oil can”. When the oil was applied, he became free! Much like the Tinman, we can allow life to rust us up, causing us to be immobile. We need to get some fresh oil!

