



MT. ROSE REFORMED
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Filled with the Spirit

Reverend Scott Johnson | July 12, 2026 | Exodus 31:1-11

Old Testament Reading

The Old Testament reading is Exodus chapter 31, verses one through 11. Exodus 31, one through 11, and this is God's holy word.

The Lord said to Moses, see, I have called by name, Bezalel, the son of Uri, son of Hur of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood to work in every craft. And behold, I have appointed with him Aholiab, the son of Ahazamak, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you: the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, and the finely worked garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for their service as priests, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the holy place. According to all that I have commanded you, they shall do.

New Testament Reading

Our New Testament reading is Ephesians chapter five. You can keep your place there in Exodus 31. Our New Testament reading, Ephesians five, verses 15 through 21.

Ephesians five, 15 through 21. Look carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. You can turn back to Exodus chapter 31.

The Tabernacle's Construction

We've been working our way through the book of Exodus for some time now, and at this point in the book, the Lord has just finished giving to Moses all of the detailed instructions on how the tabernacle was to be built. In the verses just preceding the passage that we heard in chapter 31, the verses just before that, those instructions came to an end with the Lord telling Moses how he was to make the bronze basin that would be used for the ceremonial washing of the priests, the anointing oil that would be used for anointing the priests, the incense that would be burned on the altar of incense.

And so Moses has received all these instructions, and it was just Moses that the Lord spoke to on how all of this was to be built, how everything was to be made. However, it was not Moses who would be doing the actual craftsmanship. It was not Moses who would be working with all of these materials to build this tabernacle.

Instead, the Lord would call and equip other men—and we know from another passage, at least some other women as well, but the Lord would call and equip other men to do the actual work of constructing everything that had to do with the tabernacle, the structure, the wooden beams, the curtains, all the things that were included in the tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, the table for showbread, the golden lampstand, the garments for the priest, and so on. And so the Lord has appointed men, and like I said, some women as well, to work on these things.

Filled with the Spirit of God

And the most striking fact about the Lord's calling and equipping these craftsmen to make all of these things was that at least one of them, Bezalel, the Lord says that he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He says in verse three, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God. And he is filled with the Spirit of God in order to accomplish all of this work.

And this is the detail that I want to zero in on with you this morning as we look at this passage, that the Lord would fill Bezalel, and perhaps Holiabizuel, with the Holy Spirit. And when it comes, or when you hear the term, filled with the Holy Spirit, what comes to your mind?

Do you think of someone having some kind of euphoric, ecstatic experience by which they are somehow raised above all the common struggles and difficulties of life and live on a kind of elevated plane? Or do you think of worshippers in a church service falling down or shouting out or speaking in tongues? Or maybe you think of a Christian who says he has had a second blessing or a second experience of grace. Before, he was just a Christian, but now he is a spirit-filled Christian.

Well, there's much confusion over what this expression means, and that's because there's much confusion over the role of the Holy Spirit in general. Of the three persons in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit whose work, whose purpose, is most misunderstood among Christians. And so we want to understand what it means that Bezalel and Holiab were filled with the Holy Spirit.

We especially want to know what that means because as Christians, we are commanded by God to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We heard that from Ephesians 5, verse 18. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. But if we don't know what that means, we can hardly know what we are seeking if we seek to be filled with the Spirit. And so with that in mind, we want to consider with this passage, and we'll consider other scriptures as well, what they have to teach us about being filled with the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Equips for Service

And the first lesson that we can take from this passage is this, that the Holy Spirit equips God's people for service. The Holy Spirit equips, enables God's people to serve Him.

I would imagine that Moses probably felt a great deal of relief when the Lord told him that he had already appointed two men to take part in and to oversee the construction of the tabernacle

and everything that was connected with it. Because the tabernacle and everything in it called for the craftsmanship and artistry of the highest order, and involved all kinds of material: gold, silver, bronze, precious stones, wood, fabric, and so on.

And the Israelites, whom Moses had just led out of Egypt into the wilderness, we know that they were really good at one thing. They were really good at making bricks. But how was Moses going to find a skilled craftsman or craftsmen to build a tabernacle according to the pattern that was shown to him on the mountain? Moses knew that he wasn't capable of that. He was a shepherd. So who was going to do that?

Well, the Lord is good. And as St. Augustine put it in his famous prayer, God commands what he wills and he gives what he commands. And so the Lord provided for Moses and the Israelites, not only two skilled men to oversee the construction of the tabernacle, but many others as well, whom he gifted and equipped with ability and competency to carry out all the artistry and the craftsmanship that was required for the tabernacle.

So let me read again verses three through 6, just to hear how God provided the people that would be necessary for building this tabernacle. He says, verse 3, And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. And behold, I have appointed with him Aholiab, the son of Ahazemek, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability that they may make all that I have commanded you. And then he goes on to say what they will make.

Serving Simply for the Lord

We don't know a whole lot about these two men who are named, Bezalel and Aholiab. The text does tell us a little bit about their family histories. Just an interesting note here, Bezalel is probably the grandson of the same Hur that held up Moses' hand when the Israelites were fighting the Amalekites. And so we've learned about his grandfather earlier in Moses.

But you'll notice that neither one of them was from the priestly tribe of Levi. Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab, he was a Danite. He was from the tribe of Dan. So what that means is that once they finished the articles and building the tabernacle, because they weren't priests, because they weren't Levites, they would not have been allowed to touch the things that they

had made after they made them. And not only that, but for some of the things that they made, they would not even be allowed to see them again.

And that would be true for most of the Israelites. Most of the Israelites would never lay eyes on much of what these craftsmen would work so hard to build. And so, these two men and the other craftsmen, they would have to serve the Lord simply for the sake of serving the Lord. They would have no opportunity to display or to showcase their handiwork, their skill in the pieces of art that they made.

The reward in their work would have to be simply the joy of serving the Lord and serving others. And of course, that is the reason why any one of us should be willing and desirous to serve God, simply for the sake of serving God, simply for the sake of bringing glory to Him and serving Him, simply for the sake of doing good to others, and not in order to showcase our gifts or our abilities.

Chosen and Empowered for a Task

Now, both of these men had what we might call natural abilities or talents that they were born with to do this kind of craftsmanship. Presumably, perhaps, there was some way in which they were able to pursue these crafts, even in Egypt. And of course, it was God who gave them those abilities. Whatever thing we may be naturally good at, whatever bent that we may have towards this or that kind of a skill, that is a gift of God.

But far more important than that natural gifting, we may call it, God filled them with the Holy Spirit. Again, in verse 3, he says, And I have filled him with the Spirit of God. And the first thing we need to observe here is that God filled, He filled Bezalel and Aholiab, He filled them with the Holy Spirit specifically so that they might carry out the task that God had given to them.

God had appointed these two men, they were chosen by Him to build the tabernacle, to oversee its construction. And as part of His sovereign call to that service, to that work, He filled them with the Spirit. And what this means is, is that being filled with the Spirit cannot be separated from the particular God-appointed task or area of service that He gives to the one whom He fills with the Spirit.

And when we look at other teaching in the Bible, look at other places in the Old Testament, we see the same thing. Where this expression is used, filled with the Spirit, or where a similar

expression is used, it is so that somebody may serve God in the way that God has appointed for him to serve.

For example, before Moses died, he laid his hands on Joshua. Of course, Joshua would be the leader of Israel, so God gave him a definite task to lead the people of God. And for this task, to lead God's people, God gave the Spirit to Joshua. Deuteronomy 34:9, Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The prophet Micah, he tells us how he was filled with the Spirit of God when he was called by God to serve him as a prophet. Micah 3:8, But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

We see this very same pattern when we go on to the New Testament. In the Gospel of Luke, we read how John the Baptist, he was filled with the Spirit even before he was born. He was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. And why was that? So that he could fulfill his prophetic calling. Luke 1:16, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

In the book of Acts, we read how on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit when Christ, the exalted Christ, when he poured out the Spirit upon the church. And this was not merely for their own good, for their own edification, but it was so that they might bear witness to the risen Christ, that they might declare that Jesus Christ is Lord in the languages of all of the Jews who had come from various parts of the world.

Our New Testament reading, Ephesians chapter 5, we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, but following that command is a description of the ways in which we are to serve God. We are to address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We are to give thanks in all things to God. We are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. And then Paul goes on in chapter 5 to detail all of the ways that we are to serve Him in our families and at work and so on. And all of this is premised upon this truth that we are filled with the Spirit as Christians.

And so the biblical pattern is that God fills His people with the Holy Spirit in order that they might carry out the work or service or ministry to which God has called them. And so what this means for you as a Christian is that God has not only given you the gift of salvation as a believer in Jesus Christ—you have received the gift of the forgiveness of your sins, you have received the

gift of eternal life, you have received the gift of the promise of heavenly glory and the life that is to come—but not only that, but God calls you in giving you these gifts of salvation. He also calls you to be his servant, to be a servant of God, but also to be a servant of others for the sake of God.

And so as a believer, then you are called both to salvation, but also to service. And to enable you to serve Him faithfully, fruitfully, God fills you with His Holy Spirit. And so to be filled with the Holy Spirit, it's not about having a kind of ecstatic experience or speaking in tongues or receiving a second blessing from God, but it's about being equipped, enabled, empowered by God, by His Spirit in order to be faithful to Him, to serve Him in the way in which He calls you to serve.

And along with the Holy Spirit, God gives every believer, everyone who comes to faith in Christ, receives from God with the Spirit, spiritual gifts for service. Romans 12:6, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. Let us use them to serve others. 1 Corinthians 12:7, to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 1 Peter 4:10, as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

And so to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to receive the gifts of the Spirit along with the Spirit means that God, He equips you, He enables you to serve Him in whatever way that He calls you to serve Him.

The Goal of Spirit-Enabled Service

So let's ask a bigger question. What is the goal of that service? Well, the goal of Spirit-enabled service is to glorify Christ. The goal of Spirit-enabled service is to glorify Jesus Christ.

For Bezalel and Aholiab, their goal, at least their immediate goal, was very clear. They were to construct the tabernacle. They were to build everything in the tabernacle, or at least to oversee it. And they were to do it according to the instructions that Moses gave to them, according to the instructions that he received from the Lord. And so they were to build this tabernacle, we might say, according to code, according to God's divine code.

But in the nature of the case, since this was to be the dwelling place of God, they had to build everything and construct everything and design everything in such a way that it would be

consistent with the character of God, because this would be God's tabernacle, his tent. This is where he would dwell. And so the tabernacle and all the parts of it had to reflect the glory and the beauty that belongs to God himself. God is the ultimate source of all glory, all beauty. He is infinite in beauty, infinite in glory. And so his tabernacle had to be a reflection of that.

The Lord said this about the priestly garments. The priestly garments, we looked at that a few weeks ago. Exodus 28, verse 2, God says to Moses, now, that was just said about the priestly garments, but we can surely say that that would be the case as well for everything connected with the tabernacle, that it was to be made for glory and for beauty. And so what these craftsmen made had to be beautiful.

Another way to put it, they were creating works of art. In fact, this passage gives us something of a theology of art. Since God is the one who is the infinite source of all goodness, truth, and beauty, then the best art, or true art, is that which in one way or another reflects or expresses the goodness, the beauty, the truth that is inherent with God himself. And so, in their obedience to the Lord's instructions, and in making everything beautiful, Bezalel and Aholiab, they were giving glory to God.

But we could take that even a step further. They were giving glory to Christ. Although Christ had not yet come into the world, nevertheless, they were glorifying the Son of God in all that they did in making the tabernacle. As we've seen, as we've gone through Exodus, as we have looked at all of the different parts of the tabernacle, ultimately what the tabernacle revealed to the Israelites was the glory of Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the fact that God dwelt in the tabernacle, the priestly service that would take place there, the sacrifices and so on. These were all types and shadows of the Messiah, the Christ, who was yet to come.

And so we can say this then: the Holy Spirit filled Bezalel and Aholiab so that they would magnify the pre-incarnate Christ in all the things that they made for the tabernacle. So that was the goal of their service.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

And the Holy Spirit does the very same thing today. His work is to bring glory to Christ. Earlier I said that there's a lot of confusion in the church today concerning the person of the Holy Spirit.

What is his relation to the Father, to the Son? How is he active in the life of the church? How is he active and present in the life of individual Christians?

So much of this confusion could be cleared up if we could settle our minds on one fundamental truth, and that is this: that in all that he does, it is the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit to bring glory to the name, the person, the work of Jesus Christ. That is what the Spirit does.

When Jesus was on the eve of his crucifixion, he told his disciples that although he was going away from them, the Father in heaven would send them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to be in His place with His disciples forever. But Jesus put it this way in John 14:18. He said, I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. In other words, Jesus is saying when the Spirit comes to you and indwells in you, it is I myself who will come to you. And so the Spirit mediates the presence of Christ in us.

It is also the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised, who would teach the disciples all things. After he left, he would bring to their mind the remembrance of all that Jesus had taught them and said to them. And so the Spirit would impress upon the hearts, bring to the minds of the disciples the teachings of Christ. At one point, Jesus said that the Spirit would glorify him. And that's what the Spirit does, and that's why, at least one reason why, He is called, in the New Testament, the Spirit of Christ. He is the Spirit of Christ.

And so we can characterize the entire ministry of the Holy Spirit as the ministry of highlighting, magnifying the truth, the work, the person of Jesus Christ. The theologian J.I. Packer, he compares the role of the Holy Spirit to that of a floodlight set in the ground in front of a building. So imagine a building and in front of it, in front of the bushes and all that, there's a floodlight or floodlights that are set into the ground. And when you walk by the building at night, you don't see the floodlights because they're buried in the ground. But what you do see is the building lit up by the light that they shine. And so in the same way, Packer says that the spirit is the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior.

And even before the incarnation of Christ, the Holy Spirit filled these two workmen, Bezalel and Aholiab, that they might glorify the coming Christ, that through their work the light of the Spirit would shine upon Christ. And that is the purpose for which God fills His people with the Holy Spirit today. That is why we are given the Spirit of Christ today. It is so that Christ may be made known, that He may be glorified, not only in our own hearts and minds, but also that He may be made known and glorified through us who are filled with the Spirit as God's people.

Let me quote from J.I. Packer, he says this, he says, the truth we must grasp here is that our exercise of spiritual gifts, and we can include with that, our being filled with the spirit, is nothing more nor less than Christ himself ministering through his body to his body to the Father and to all mankind. From heaven, Christ uses Christians as his mouth, his hands, his feet, even his smile. It is through us, his people, that he speaks and acts, meets, loves, and saves here and now in this world.

So as believers, as God fills us with his spirit, we then make Christ known to one another and to the world even in the way in which we serve. And so we should ask ourselves a question. How am I seeking to serve Christ in the world in this way? How am I seeking to be the mouth, the hands, the feet, even the smile of Jesus to others? Because it is Christ himself who comes to bless and to minister to others as you seek to serve others in the name of Christ and by the power of the spirit whom he has given to you.

And so as you seek to encourage others, as you pray for others, as you give of your time and your resources in serving others, as you show love to others, as you seek to advance the good of others, in all of these ways by the spirit of Christ whom God has given you and who is working through you, it is Jesus himself who comes to the person you serve for their blessing and for their good. And so, to be filled with the Spirit is in order that we might glorify Christ as we serve others in the name of Christ.

The Greater Tabernacle

And with all that in mind, we can look at this passage from another perspective, and we'll conclude with this, and that is this: that just as the Holy Spirit filled and enabled Bezalel and Aholiab to build the tabernacle, so we can even say, in that sense, who was the true builder of the tabernacle? It was the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ. But just as He enabled them to build the tabernacle then, so the Spirit of Christ is at work in the world today. And He is building a far greater tabernacle. He is building the Church of Jesus Christ.

The scriptures tell us, and we've already considered this as we've gone through and looked at the tabernacle from Exodus, but the New Testament counterpart to the tabernacle, later the temple, is the church, the people of God. 1 Corinthians 3:16, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?

And just as the first tabernacle was a work of art, it was something beautiful since it reflected God's own beauty and truth, so the temple, the greater temple that the spirit is building today out of you and me and out of all of God's people, it is something too that is beautiful.

From Ugliness to Beauty

One of the consequences of our fall into sin is that we have brought ugliness into God's creation, which God said was very good, and since God created it, it was and is beautiful. But by our sin, we have brought ugliness into this beautiful creation. There are many ways that we can describe sin. Sin is lawlessness. Sin is rebellion. There are other ways that we can describe sin. But one way that we can describe it is to say that sin is ugly. It is ugly. It is contrary to all that is beautiful and good.

My pride, my rebellion against God, my obsessive love of self, my hatred, my envy, my lust, there is nothing that is attractive or comely or beautiful about any of these things. Sin is ugly. It's a perversion of what is good. And the consequences of sin are ugly. What are the consequences of sin? Well, we're reminded of them every day in this world. Conflict, hatred, war, disease, ultimately death. These are the ugly realities that mark our sad world because of our fall into sin.

The good news of the gospel is that God gave us his son, Jesus Christ, so that we might be transformed from something that is ugly to something that is beautiful, beautiful and lovely, that we might be made beautiful, beautiful in righteousness and holiness, even as Jesus himself is perfectly and infinitely beautiful because he is righteous, because he is holy.

And God is doing this in us, and He is completing this work in us of making us something truly beautiful. He does this in us because of what He first did to His Son, Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us that even though Jesus was sinless, God made Him to be sin. He made Him to be sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

And so what that means is that when Jesus hung upon the cross, when Jesus was crucified there, the Son of God as man, He bore all the repugnancy, the hideousness, the ugliness of our sin. He became sin for us. Though in Himself, He was always pure and sinless, yet for our sake, He assumed the likeness of something ugly. Something hideously ugly, a sinner, crucified, dying this grotesque, horrible death on a Roman cross and bearing the wrath of God, the curse of God

because of our sin. God gave his son over to that, to that bearing the ugliness of our sin so that we might become something beautiful.

And Jesus raised Him from the dead on the third day. And He raised Him from the dead, not in ugliness, no longer the one being crucified, but He raised Him up in glory, in honor, in beauty.

And if you belong to Jesus Christ, if you have come to Him by faith, if He is your Lord and Savior, then this is the work that God is doing in you now by His Holy Spirit. It is a radical, a thoroughgoing transformation. He is recreating you from a person who was ugly because of sin into a person who is beautiful because of righteousness. And that is the work of the Spirit, to make you beautiful as Jesus himself is beautiful, beautiful in love and righteousness and holiness.

God's Masterpiece

Back in Exodus, it was the work of the Holy Spirit to fill these two craftsmen, that they might make something beautiful for God, his tabernacle. And now the Holy Spirit fills you and me. He fills every one of his people in order that he might make something. And he is making something that is far more glorious, far more beautiful than that tabernacle in the wilderness, the greater tabernacle, the spiritual tabernacle. And this is made up of boys and girls, men and women who are being conformed more and more into the image of Jesus Christ.

And when you think about it, of all the beauty that surrounds us in this world, of all the beauty that God has made, there is nothing that is more beautiful and lovely than what you are in Jesus Christ, a redeemed sinner, one upon whom God has set his love and one in whom he is working to conform to the image of his son. Can there be anything more beautiful than that? There isn't.

In fact, we can say that as a believer in Jesus Christ, you, along with all of God's people, you are God's masterpiece. His greatest work of all that he has made in creation that declares that God is a master artist. This is his greatest work yet. And he has continued to do that good work in you by his Spirit to conform you more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.