

Filled

“and they were filled with madness, and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus.”

Luke 6:11

Filled—The Greek is *epilesthesan*. It combines *epi* (indicating intensity) and *pletho*, which means “full.” The picture is to fill up a sponge, to be soaked full. This verse describes the mental state of the Pharisees when they saw Jesus heal a man’s deformed hand on the Sabbath. The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus breaking the Sabbath law. They pushed him to perform a healing. Since the performance of this act could be considered “work”, this would make Jesus guilty of a religious infraction. But Jesus turned the tables on the, arguing that no one would withhold something good on the day God had consecrated. So he healed the cripple. Luke uses this word to express the intensity of the Pharisee’s rage. They were soaked full of madness (we will study just what kind of madness it was). This was pure hatred. They were consumed by their desire to stop Jesus.

When this word is applied to people, it often means “to be affected or influenced by something.” It is the same word used of a believer being “filled” with the Holy Spirit. Clearly, it is not the “filling up” that is the problem. It is what we are being filled up with. Paul tells us to be filled with the Spirit (**Ephesians 3:19**) and be filled with the knowledge of the will of God. (**Colossians 1:9**) What fills our lives, controls our lives. If we want to clean up our lives, we can’t get rid of hatred by simply emptying ourselves of anger and bitterness. The moral universe is no different than the physical universe in this regard. Nature abhors a vacuum. An empty heart will simply suck in more of what surrounds it. The antidote for hatred is to be filled with the Spirit because the demonstration of being filled with the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control.

We often say that little children are like sponges, they soak up what is in front of them. But the Bible tells us that this is also true for you and me. What do you put in front of you? What are you soaking up? If it’s not God, you will just be another example of the use of this word when Jesus was on the cross: “and they filled up a sponge with vinegar.” You have to immerse a sponge if you want to fill it up. What will you plunge into today to be filled up?