

Series: Ephesians
Title: Be Not Drunk with Wine
Text: Ephesians 5: 17-20
Date: November 9, 2014
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Ephesians 5: 17: Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18: And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Drunkenness is indeed a sin. Drinking alcohol is not a sin. Drunkenness is a sin. Our Savior says clearly, “Be not drunk with wine.” Understand his will and do it.

But the Holy Spirit is not using Paul to merely chop off one limb of the corrupt tree. He is using “drunkenness” as a metaphor to cut at the very root of the tree—that is our sin nature.

Drunkenness caused by drugs and alcohol is like the intoxication caused by the old man of sin within us. Giving ourselves to our sinful, fleshly man of Adam is like giving ourselves to wine. When our works, our belly, our senses, our pleasures, our glory, and the cares of this world are a man’s god—he is drunk with the wine of his flesh.

Ephesians 5: 18:...wherein is excess;

They used to call alcohol a “gate-way drug.” Drunkenness opens the door for worse and worse things. That is true. Intoxication by following our sin-nature, leads to worse excess: intemperance, rioting, covetousness, brawling, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, all kinds of malice—worst of all is self-righteousness, self-sanctification, self-redemption, self-salvation.

The sin-nature is the root problem. A man could become a T-totaler—never touch alcohol—but the root is still there. The root is the old man of sin we are born with. Drunkenness of literal alcohol is because we are first drunk with our flesh and our sin-ful will.

The Lord is teaching us to walk after the Spirit, not after the flesh.

Notice, each fill us with something, “And be not drunk with wine.” Be not drunk with the flesh and your vain works. “But be filled with the Spirit.” And both effect something in us, “wherein is excess.” The flesh produces: rioting, songs of the drunkard, rejoicing in the works of the flesh. But being filled with Spirit produces another kind of song, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

So do we understand this from the outset? The Lord is teaching us here: be not drunk on the old man of flesh; which will bring forth excessive rejoicing in wicked fleshly deeds; but be filled with the Holy Spirit, who brings forth songs of rejoicing in the wonderful works of God.

John 7: 37: In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Drinking flagons of the Holy Spirit will do us much good. Let us drink deep from the cup of salvation rather than the iniquity of the flesh. For our divisions we will go through the scripture which speak of drunkenness and its effects to behold our sin-nature in contrast with the Holy Spirit and the effects he produces.

NOAH

First, let's learn from Noah, in Genesis 9: 20-22, "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: 21: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent."

Noah greatly typifies Adam here: Adam was put in a new world; Noah is in a new world after the flood. Soon after, Adam walked after the flesh; soon after, Noah walked after the flesh.

After what God has done for us, making us a new creation, whether we walk after the fleshly sin-nature or walk after the Spirit, it takes determination and effort on our part. It took planning for Noah to be a farmer. Noah took seed God gave and planted it. As God made the seed grow, Noah guarded the tender grapes from the foxes. Noah labored to process the grapes. Then Noah drank of the fruit of his labor.

Brethren, God put his elect in the Ark, Christ Jesus his Son. Christ bore the flood of judgment for his people as we hid safe in him, justified by Christ. The Holy Spirit made us a new creation, fellow-citizens of Christ's new heavens and new earth. God made his everlasting covenant in our heart typified in the covenant made with Noah.

Scriptures says, Christ's people shall be willing in the day of his power. So like Noah, we must determine and work at being a cultivator of good fruits by walking after the Spirit. We must have the Spirit because we can do nothing of ourselves.

John 6: 63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

So we must take Christ the Seed delivered to us in the gospel. Rather than being a hindrance to the Holy Spirit, be a help. See that the Seed goes deep in our new heart, in the good ground. As the Holy Spirit brings forth fruit in us, walk in the Spirit, make no provision for the flesh—run off those little foxes that would eat the tender fruit. Like as Noah processed the fruit and drank of it, we need to process the word by attentively hearing it, by giving ourselves to study what we have heard, by comparing scripture with scripture. All this is part of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Opposite to how Noah "was drunken" with the wine of his fleshly nature, the Holy Spirit shall fill us and make us drunk with the love of Christ. The effect of being intoxicated by his sin-nature and walking after his flesh, was that became drunk and was "uncovered within his tent."

Proverbs 23:20: Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: 21: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

But the effectual fruit produced by the Holy Spirit is he makes us drunk with the love of Christ for us, covers us in the full garment of the righteousness of Christ and makes us dwell, not naked in a tent, but covered in his house forever. If we eat of our flesh and drink the wine of false works, we will be poor and drowsy till we are covered in rags or are naked. But being filled with the Spirit, eating Christ's flesh, we will come to the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Spirit strengthens us in Christ so that we are clothed forevermore in the garments of salvation. The Spirit makes us "sing and make melody in ours heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE STUBBORN SON

Secondly, let's learn from the stubborn son in Deuteronomy 21: 18-21, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they

have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”

This son is one dead in sin. So he walked after his flesh, became drunk and filled with excess. So no chastening would correct him. He was stubborn and rebellious not heeding the voice of father or mother. So God commanded he be brought to the judges and stoned to death. Why? He was evil. God will have the evil put away from his people. By his death God will make his people hear and fear—reverence—the Lord.

Be sure to understand: the root problem, the root of the tree, is the flesh, the sin-nature, the sinful heart within us. The old sinful son within us is full of gluttony, drunkenness, stubbornness, rebellion, refusing to hear, and refusing to be chastened. We must walk after the Spirit, hear Christ our everlasting Father correct us, hear the voice of his bride correct us with this gospel. We must take that sinful son of our flesh to the gate—to Christ the Way. Take him to our elders, the triune God. Confess to our Savior that the son of sin within our flesh is stubborn and rebellious. He is a glutton and a drunkard. We cannot chasten him into obedience. Ask God to stone him to death so that God’s true Israel, his true son within us, might hear and fear God and reverence God.

CHRIST OUR WISDOM

Thirdly, we must hear our Wisdom, Christ Jesus. Let’s hear Christ in Proverbs 23: 29-30, “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.”

This is the excess, the effect of literal drunkenness. But hear Christ describe to us the drunkenness of falsehood, of self-righteous works, of attempting to come to God without Christ, of walking after the flesh, instead of the Spirit.

Those who tarry long at the wine of Babylon’s fornications will find that her wine produces, “woe, sorrow, and contentions.” But tarry long at the wine of the gospel, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and Christ produces wellness, rejoicing, contentment in Christ. Tarry long mixing your works with Christ’s works and that mixed-wine produces, “babbling, wounds without cause, and redness of eyes.” But tarry long hearing and believing salvation is all of grace and the Holy Spirit and produces songs of praise to the Lord, healing for all our wounds, clearness of eyes so that see God’s glory in the face of Christ Jesus.

Our wise Solomon, Christ Jesus, teaches us that the wine of fleshly religion does not end with what it promises at first sight, “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright.” (Pro 23: 31) Salvation by works may give a lovely appearance, like wine first appears in the glass. But Christ says, “Look not thou upon it.”

Indeed, there is a wine that is beautiful to look upon which beauty never changes—the wine of the blood of the Redeemer. There was a supper one night: Christ and his apostles dined together. They were drinking wine. Christ held up his cup of wine. As they gazed upon that wine in the cup, he said, “This [wine represents] my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Mt 26: 28) That was beautiful wine! That is wine that never changes. It represented Christ’s blood in which the everlasting covenant of grace is unchangeably written.

But the mixed-wine of grace and works, though it may appear lovely at first, the whole time a man dwells on this earth, but the end for those who meet God trusting in the mixed-wine of grace and works, is this, “At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.” (Pro 23: 32)

Romans 6: 21-22: The end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

At first, you may mingle only a little of your works with the wine of grace, but soon your intoxication will lead to this, “Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.” (Pro 23: 33) It is sad when a man gets drunk and commits adultery on his first love with a strange woman. But even sadder is the adultery that the drunkenness of free-will works religion leads to: leaving Christ our Husband for the harlot of Babylon, false religion.

If a man can do so he proves he was never truly united to Christ in grace. But the mixed wine of works and grace always leads to that strange woman. He’ll begin to utter her perverse doctrines in his heart and speak perverse things against Christ. Who is this strange woman? Christ showed her to John and described her as

Revelation 17: 1:...the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication....18:3: For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

But though Babylon and her converts rebel against God, God is so absolutely sovereign that he even overrules false religion to accomplish his will in the earth,

Jeremiah 51:7: Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

Wine makes a person sick. But it makes him forget his sickness and return. “Labor pains and whisky sickness are soon forgotten.” Likewise, falsehood and false religion makes a man sick, “Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.” (Pro 23: 34)

Isaiah 28: 7...the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment. 8: For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, *so that there is no place clean.*

Religious leaders strike you down like drunkenness, “They have stricken me...they have beaten me.” But self-righteous sinners’ soon forget and return to it like a drunk to wine, “I was not sick. I felt *it* not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.” (Pro 23: 35)

FINAL END OF WILL-WORKERS

Now, let’s hear God’s description of Israel’s work’s religion. This is a prophecy describing the day they rejected Christ up till the day the Lord destroyed the nation and left it desolate. It is in Isaiah 5: 11-13 “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!”

They may have literally followed strong drink but primarily it describes that zeal they had for seeking righteousness by their works. Paul described it in Romans 10.

Romans 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

In their drunken ignorance, they rose up early and followed their works—their strong drink—until night. Confidence in works inflames the sinner—puffs him up in pride—just as strong drink does. Our text says, “wherein is excess.” Will works is full of banqueting, feasting, rejoicing. This was their so-called worship services, “And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts” (Is 5: 12) But who do work-religionists rejoice in and glory in? Well, who do literal drunkards sing about? Self! We see by the contrast given next, self, is who they gloried in, “but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.” (Is 5: 12)

This is the difference between the wine of the drunkard's religion and the wine of the Holy Spirit. Those drunk on their flesh: praise and speak of man's will, man's wisdom and man's works. They say it is for Christ's glory. But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands; they never clearly preach Christ is All and all flesh is grass! But those filled with the Holy Spirit do the opposite: we speak not of man's works but glory in the work of the Lord and the operation of his hands alone.

The Holy Spirit asked through the apostle Paul, “who hath first given to him?” (Rom 11: 35) God first chose his people; God first draws his people to Christ his Son, first giving us life, faith and repentance; God first made us righteousness in his Son, first made us holy by forming the Spirit of his Son in us, first forgave us our sins; God first makes us filled with the Holy Spirit and makes us walk after him, first preserves us so that we persevere by his power; God first raises us from the dead, first gives us the eternal inheritance which he predestinated us unto from before the world was made. So then “what hast thou that thou didst not receive?...why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor 4: 7)

Believers are filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus we sing unto the Lord, we thank the Lord, we glory in God our Father in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. But those the Spirit has not circumcised in heart do not!

Jeremiah 9: 23: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD. 25: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all...circumcised with the uncircumcised; 26: Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all *that are* in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart.

Sinner, be not drunk by what you have done for your idol, “the little j-jesus”, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” (Gal 6: 15-16)

Since the natural sons of Israel were drunk on their own works, filled with the excess of their own traditions, rather than filled with the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ's work alone, God rejected them. God says, “Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.” (Is 5: 13) Wine of man's making—literal or the wine of his fleshly works—does not quench the thirst; it makes you more thirsty. Christ said, “he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” So our text says, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph 5: 17-20)

Amen!