

Be Not Drunk with Wine, Part 1

Ephesians 5:18

Those of you who have been with us know that we have been studying the book of Ephesians together and Sunday mornings have been enriching times as we look at these tremendous truths and I would call your attention this morning to Chapter 5, verse 18. This is where we left off last time and we're going to be looking at the Spirit filled life. The Spirit filled life. Obviously to anyone who has been a Christian for any amount of time, you are well aware that this is a tremendously important text. A very familiar one an area of study that is to be dealt with, really, by every believer if he or she is to really comprehend what it is that God is asking of us. This is one of those absolutely crucial texts, a "locus crucis" if you will. In fact, there is no more important area in all of the worthy walk than this particular reality. The filling of the Spirit is critical for living the Christian life by God's standards.

Now you will remember that I have been trying to show you the book of Ephesians as a whole and a couple of times I've mentioned that you can view the book of Ephesians like a high performance automobile and in chapters one, two and three you have the description of the automobile particularly majoring on its power plant. In other words, God is saying - As a Christian this is who you really are. And He gives us phenomenal description of our position in Christ in the first three chapters. He describes the power plant that we have, the resurrection power that is available to us. All of the tremendous inheritance that God has given us and in chapters one thru three, verse thirteen, we have that great description of the believer as if he were a high powered, high performance automobile. Then we noted in chapter 3, verses 14 to 21 that the apostle Paul describes what I like to call the ignition switch. It doesn't do any good to have a high powered engine if you don't turn it on. And so in chapter 3, verses 13 or 14 on it talks about the ignition switch, how you turn the power on, getting started. You will remember that we talked about being strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man and how Christ then settles down and is at home in your heart and then you begin to understand the love of Christ and then you're filled with all the fullness of God and you're then able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all you can ask or think, in other words, the power is beginning to roll, the engine is beginning to move and the key to turning it on is to be empowered there by the Spirit of God, by Christ and by God the Father. And then as you come to chapter 4, now that the vehicle is described and the engine is rolling, chapter 4 tells us the route we're to drive. We call it the worthy walk and He tells us that we are to move on a path that is worthy of our calling.

This is a phenomenal vehicle we have and it's going to be driven in a phenomenal way on a very, very wonderful road. And the road involves uniqueness. We're different than the world; it's not the world's highway. And it involves humility not the pride of the world. It involves unity, not

the discourse of the world. It involves love, it involves light, it involves wisdom. And you will remember that we talked about those things, walking in unity, walking in humility, walking in uniqueness, walking in love, walking in light and walking, last time, in wisdom. So this is the path the car is to go on.

But at the end of the book of Ephesians, he describes some road blocks. As we drive this high powered vehicle, energized and driven along by God on the path that God would have us to go; we're going to find road blocks. That's why in chapter 6, verses 10 and following, he describes the fact that we're going to run into Satan. We're going to find ourselves confronting spiritual wickedness in high places, principalities and powers and the rulers of darkness and in order to handle this stuff, we're going to have to have the armor of God and verse 18 of chapter 6 we're going to have to pray always. So really we see the whole flow here of how God has designed the believer as a high powered, powerful, high performance vehicle. He is turned on as he is strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man and he begins to move on a path that Paul calls the worthy walk and he lives in unity, humility, uniqueness, love, light and wisdom and eventually he's going to hit some road blocks living that kind of life and he's going to have to encounter Satan and defend himself and fight against Satan by virtue of the armor of God and the weapon of prayer. You say, "Well, how does this part fit in?" Well, I call this You've got to put something into the tank and what do you put in? Verse 18 says it, "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess but be" what? "Filled with the Spirit." This is the believer's gas. This is the fuel. This is what makes it go and it wouldn't do a bit of good to have everything else right if you didn't put any fuel in. I remember seeing the picture in a magazine of the Amish farmer who won a car somehow and when he got the car delivered to him he hooked, up his horse to the bumper and rode instyle. You know, there's a lot of Christians who hook up the horse of the flesh to the vehicle created by God, meant to be empowered by the fuel of the Holy Spirit and then with the horse of the flesh they haul the thing around. Listen, God designed you to be operated by being filled with the Spirit, not by being pulled by the horse of the flesh. That's the message that this verse wants to say.

You've got all of this energy and power and resource and. the path is laid out, the road is laid out, the walk is laid out and in order to do it you ought to be energized by the Spirit of God and this section from 5:18 right on to 6:9, he describes how the filling of God affects you. How it affects all of your relationships. How it affects your attitude. He talks about being filled with the Spirit, for example, affecting yourself in verse 19, "You'll speak in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs", in verse 20, you'll give thanks. How it's going to affect you with other people, you'll submit, in verse 21, to others. How it will affect you in your home, wives, husbands, chapter 6, children. How it will affect you at the office or where you work, verse 5 of chapter 6 it says servants and it talks about masters. In other words, the filling of the Spirit will affect every relationship within you, touching everybody else in your home, in your work. This is the fuel that makes you go.

Now you will remember, also, that we were talking last Sunday about the wise walk, verse 15. Let's go back to that a minute. "See then, that you walk circumspectly", that means that you walk wisely, that you walk with an analytical, careful, critical, exacting mind as you look where you're stepping. You walk in wisdom, not as fools but as wise. And a wisdom walk involves redeeming the time because the days are evil. And he says, "Wherefore, be ye not unwise" or stupid "but understanding what the will of the Lord is." And then he goes right into verse 18, "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess but be filled with the Spirit".

Now listen people, the final element of the wise walk is to walk filled with the Spirit. That's the final element. You are the biggest fool of all if you hitch up your horse to the car; you are the biggest fool of all if you try to drag around the new creation of God by the horse of the flesh. That's foolishness. Wisdom says, I have this tremendous resource, I have this power, I'm going to let it be energized by the Spirit, I'm going to let it be filled with the Spirit. You know, it's kind of like owning the highest powered vehicle in the world, owning Standard Oil and never bothering to put the fuel in. You are the highest powered thing in the world. I've said this many times, outside the Trinity - the Christian is the hottest commodity in the universe. There's nothing that can compete with you. You have been given the resource of Gods resurrection power, you've got it all. That's the first three chapters of Ephesians. Not only that, you possess the greatest source of fuel, you possess the divine Holy Spirit who will energize you.

Now here you are with a high performance vehicle, owning the divine Standard Oil Company. Doesn't make much sense if you don't put the fuel in. That's the point. To live the Christian life demands that you be filled with or literally controlled by the Holy Spirit. Now we're going to be talking about that in the next few weeks but before we can get to the phrase that says be filled with the Spirit, we must pass the one that says don't be drunk with wine, right? This is part of a contrast that Paul is giving. So we're going to talk this morning and next week about what it means in the first phrase, "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."

Now Paul presents a contrast doesn't he, between drunkenness and being Spirit filled. That's really a contrast that is very clear, it seems very simple on the surface and yet there are some profound truths. Now as we look at this particular section from verses 18 to 20 or 21, we see three things. The contrast in verse 18, the command at the end of verse 18, to be filled with the Spirit, and the consequences, verses 19, 20 and 21. The consequences are singing, saying thanks and submitting. We'll get to those. And the command is "be filled with the Spirit" and we'll get to that but for this morning and next time, the contrast is "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess."

Now this whole matter of drunkenness and this whole matter of drinking wine and whatever is a big problem today. It's a big discussion in the church. Christians talk about it. Some Christians say, "Well, I don't drink and you shouldn't drink, it's a sin to drink." Somebody will say, "Well, it's not a sin to drink, Jesus drank wine and they drank wine in the Bible and they drank wine in

the Old Testament and I'm just being biblical, and I want to be a biblical Christian." And other people say, "Well, the only time you don't drink is if it offends a weaker brother and if you're that weak you have no excuse anyway. You ought to be strong by now." And other people will say, "Well, no; we should never drink, we have no part in that, we don't drink, we don't smoke, we don't chew, we don't go with girls that do," and all of that. Rooty-toot-toot, we're the boys from the institute. You know how it goes.

So you have all of this kind of diversion from one end to the other about what is acceptable and what is not. And what I want to share with you is to try to give you today and next time, and I'm only going to lay some ground work today, today is going to be a little academic foundation and next time I'm going to get into what I call the Christians Wine List and that will be for next Sunday. And the composite of both, I hope, will be helpful to you. But let's begin where we are right now in verse 18 and see where we go.

"Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess." Now, one very clear way to act as a fool is to be drunk. Now that is the antithesis of wisdom. Verse 15 says, "Don't be a fool, be wise", verse 17 says, "Don't be stupid, but do God's will", verse 18 says, "Don't be drunk, be filled with the Spirit."

There really just paralleling the same thing. The biggest fool, the most unwise person is the person who gets drunk. On the other hand, the wisest person who does the will of God is the one filled with the Spirit, you see. Being filled with the Spirit is the will of God and is wise; being drunk is stupid and foolish. So that's the comparison. Now, Paul knows that the world is a drunken world and this is true, the world is a drunken world. I don't know if you're aware of it or not but in America there are at least 20 million alcoholics. That's a lot, one out of ten people or so. I called the National Institute of Alcohol and I found out that right now in America they have a record of 3.3 million teenage alcoholics. It always amazes me that whenever alcohol is advertised, you always see the men of distinction; it is associated with being a man of distinction. They never put a slobbering drunk, lying in the gutter advocating alcohol. But we have 20 million alcoholics, and 3.3 million teenage alcoholics and it's going very fast - up. Alcoholism is a major problem. This, I'm sure, is in Paul's mind. Let's just look at it first of all from this angle.

Paul is saying, "Don't be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" maybe in a general sense. Like, just don't be drunk, but be filled with the Spirit. In the sense that if you're looking for joy and you're looking for escape from your problem, you're looking for joy and comfort, don't seek it at the bottom of a bottle, seek it in the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit be your resource.

Now all people seek joy, everybody seeks exhilaration, nobody wants to be miserable all the time, people want to be happy and by the way, that's OK. God wants you to be happy, God is not a cosmic-killjoy. Doesn't go around saying, there's one having fun a-ha, get him. He doesn't do that. God does not have some great desire to literally inundate you with judgment. God wants

you to be happy. When Jesus introduced His first message in Matthew 5, as we've been saying, He began by saying happy or blessed or blissful in the man, happy is the one, happy is the one, happy is the one. Jesus wants us to be happy. Ecclesiastes, the preacher, looks at life and says, "There it a time to laugh". The Old Testament says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine". God wants us to know joy. Jesus said, "My joy I give unto you". John, [I John 1:4](#), "These things I write unto you that your joy be full". Paul, "Rejoice always, and again I say rejoice". And Scripture in the psalms says that, "The people shouted for joy and that there was fullness of joy." And on the day of the Lord's birth there was good tidings of great Joy and God wants us to be happy. God wants us to be joyful but God wants us to find the resource of joy in the right place not the wrong place. Not the artificial way. And what happens in society is that people want to be happy only their circumstances make them miserable so they get themselves in a stupor where they don't have to face the circumstance. I remember a kid said to me who was totally bombed on drugs, I said, "Does this answer your questions?" He said, "No. But at least I don't have to ask them, I can't even remember what they were." And that's the kind of escape the world calls joy. You see, it's seeking joy and happiness in an artificial way. People want comfort. They've got problems. They escape that way.

There's one kind of stuff I've seen and it's a liquor and it's scotch, I guess, it's called Southern Comfort. Listen, that is not comfort and that's going to take you further south then you want to go. But I'm always amazed at how they sell Southern Comfort. Listen, what Is Paul saying? "Who is the Comforter?" Who is it? The Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the comforter. He's saying if you want comfort, if you want joy, then find it where it really exists not in the bottom of a bottle which is to artificial and when all of a sudden, when that is over all the problems are there again. That's why the Bible says, "Casting all your cares on Him, for He cares for you". Intoxication is never the remedy for the cares of life. Intoxication is never the remedy for the cares of life; all that does is add another worry. All that does is add more problems and by the way, I would add at this point that alcoholism is not a disease, it is a sin. It eventually will become a disease element in-so-far as it will affect the body. But alcoholism and being a drunkard, according to the Bible, is a sin. It is the manifestation of depravity. It is a sin. It needs to be confessed and dealt with as a sin. If you want joy unspeakable and full of glory in your life, if you want comfort beyond the comfort the world can ever dream of, then Paul says, "Be filled with the Spirit". Don't seek your answers in the bottle, they're not there, they just compound the problem. And whenever you look at the Bible and you talk about drunkenness, it always comes out bad.

Every illustration of drunkenness in the Bible is a disaster with no good thing in it, it will never make anything better, it will never solve any problems. Noah became drunk and in his nakedness he acted shamelessly. Lot became drunk and his daughters committed incest with him. Nabal became drunk and at a crucial time God took his life. Elah became drunk and he was murdered by Zimri. Benhadad and all of his allied kings became drunk and they were slaughtered. Only Benhadad was spared and that was a sin to spare him. Belshazzar, in Daniel 5, met together with a great feast and it says they drank wine and they praised the gods of gold, and of silver and of

bronze, of iron, of wood and of stone and in the midst of the drunken brawl the kingdom was ripped right out from under Belshazzar. The Corinthians were drunk and in their drunkenness they desecrated the Lord's table and God made some of them sick and some of them He executed. You see, drunkenness is always associated, in the Bible, with terrible things, restrained living, immorality, dissolute behavior, reckless, wild behavior.

You see drunkenness associated with sexual behavior today, immorality. You see drunkenness with unrestrained, reckless behavior. I've seen a drunk in a situation I was involved with, where a guy was literally tearing a place to shreds. I was trying to prevent him and he was throwing bottles with Jack Daniels stuff right at me, smashing on the walls. I was unable to do anything, just out of control. I've seen them take drunks and put them in straight jackets, I've seen them tie them up and take them to hospitals. It's associated, in the Bible, with these kinds of things. Drunkenness is always associated with tragic things. That's why it tells us too explicitly that if man is to be a leader in the church, he is to be an elder; he must not be one who lingers long beside his wine. He has no place in that kind of position. Drunkenness disqualifies a man from any kind of spiritual service at all, at all. Peter says, "You used to live like that", I Peter 4, "The time passed of our life which suffice us to have wrought the will of the pagans when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, wild parties, carousing, abominable idolatries". You see, all that goes together, that all fits together. All that abominable idolatry, all that excess in sexual activity, all that fits together with the drunkenness. And by the way, drunkenness marks a person who is not the character of the kingdom.

I Cor. chapter 5 tells us, "I have written to you not to company if any man is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous or an idolater, railer or a drunkard or an extortioner." If a person calls himself a Christian that is a drunkard, you shouldn't even associate with him. In verse 10, backing up, if he's in the world and he's one of these kind of people, you need to go to him and take the gospel. But then when salvation comes, chapter 6 verse 9, "Don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom." He says, "Not thieves, not covetous and not drunkards," ..."And such were some of you." In other words, the church ought to be filled with ex-drunkards. But if there are drunkards in the church, if there are what we call alcoholics in the church who are still drinking, who are still doing it, who are still drunkards, then they are not Christians or else they are claiming to be Christians and should be disassociated from us.

Now only God knows, it's possible for a person to be a Christian and be drunk but Paul said drunkards don't inherit the kingdom. Now I'm not saying if you get drunk you lose your salvation, I'm just saying that it is generally true of a Christian that he isn't a drunkard, And if you say, "Well, I became a Christian and it didn't have an affect on my drinking." And I say, according to what Paul said, you didn't. You could be a Christian and slip back into that but I would think that if you came to Jesus Christ, there would had to have been a change in your life.

Oh maybe sometime later on, oh I've known of people who were Christians and sometime in their life they got to drinking and they just got into the thing a sin later in their life. Tragic thing.

I don't know if they were ever saved, maybe they were. They fell into the sin and sometimes the Lord would even take them home, Only God knows whether you're a Christian or not if you're doing that but the statement of Scripture says if you are doing this, if you are characterized as a drunkard you are not in the kingdom. But the very same passage also says that it's possible for one to claim to be a Christian and do it only God knows the difference, You'd better examine yourself, That's what we've been saying all through our study, examine yourself. If you've got a problem in this area whether you're really a Christian, you'd really better examine yourself. And let me add this, if you have a problem in this area, God can deliver you. I believe that. I believe that if you're really filled with the Spirit, you'll have the joy and the comfort to the solutions that you seek. You won't need that stuff. I believe that though your sins be as scarlet they can become as white as snow and though they be red like crimson they can be as wool and I believe God can turn you around. I've seen too many people with a problem like that and God can turn them around (snap) that fast, if you yield to Him, if your conversion is real.

What Paul is saying to the Ephesians and to us, "Look, you have a higher kind of life, you don't seek your joy and exhilaration in the bottom of a bottle, you get it from the wonderful Holy Spirit." But listen, that's not the main meaning of what he is saying. That was just a little free part. The main meaning of what he was saying I'm going to give it to you right now and I want you to listen to this. Paul's main thrust here is religious. It is religious. He is talking about systems of religions. Now this may surprise you so listen. Drunkenness was associated with pagan religion. The pagans believed that to commune with the gods, you had to put yourself in a drunken stupor to come to the highest level of communion with the gods. This is what was called the mystery religion. These are the roots of Greek, Roman, Mythological religious systems. And they believed that you could commune with the gods through ecstasy, that was the frenzies and the ecstasies, the whirling-dervishes, the self-hypnosis, the demonic things that went on, they called it ecstasy - extasia and enthusiasmas, enthusiasms. And they would get themselves worked into a literal frenzy and emotional bath. In addition to that, they would drink and drink and drink until they were drunken and they thought that lifted them to the level of communion with the gods.

That's not unlike what we hear today. From Timothy Leary on, people have been saying that if you get high on drugs or alcohol you reach a greater level of consciousness. Your consciousness is heightened and you can literally commune in a religious way at a higher level. And you hear the mystics talk about this, Eastern Mysticism advocates this, the occult advocates this, all kinds of mystical religions advocate this. There are people involved in this because they believe it raises them to a higher level of religious consciousness. This is nothing new. . It is right out of the history of paganism, it's exactly the way it used to operate. Let me tell you how it came about in terms of the culture of the Ephesian church and how this relates to them.

The great god of the Greek mythology was a god that we know as Zeus. Zeus was the great mighty god. A god that was great and powerful. And Zeus, somehow, implanted his productive potential in Semele, who was a goddess. Now they did it without ever meeting because no one

could ever look on Zeus because they would be instantly incinerated by his glory. You see, it sounds like a satanic counterfeit of God the Father. And so Zeus and Semele never met but Semele was carrying in her womb this child of Zeus and Semele decided that she had the right to see the father. So she entered into the presence of Zeus and was instantly incinerated in his presence. And Zeus snatched the body of the baby from the womb, yet unborn, and sewed it into his thigh. Zeus sewed this into his thigh and carried the baby in his thigh until its full term from which it was born. Now you haven't heard anything yet. The infant god was then born and it was destined by Zeus that this Infant god should become ruler of the world, of the planet earth. This god was going to rule the planet earth. Well, there were some beings; sub-gods already on the earth according to Greek mythology called the Titans and the Titans were the sons of earth. They sort of ran the earth. And when they saw that this son of Zeus was going to come down and take over, they were very upset. So they got hold of the baby and they tore him from limb to limb and they ate him. But Zeus rescued the heart, swallowed the heart and gave birth to the baby.

Now friends, that's what I call weird kind of stuff but that's what Greek mythology teaches. I got that out of a direct source. So finally after Zeus had swallowed the heart, the child was reborn. He named the child Dionysus. Now that's important because that name comes up in Greek religion, the ancient religions of the mystery religions of Babylon, over and over and over again. Dionysus is a very familiar name. You read anything on Greek mythology and you'll see his name everywhere. He was the number one god of earth. And Dionysus was born.

Now Zeus was mad at the Titans so he blasted all the Titans with lightning. They were reduced to ashes and out of those ashes came the human race. So now you know the whole story. Now Dionysus was then in control of the earth, said the Greeks. And as Dionysus was in control of the earth he began to develop a religion. And the religion that he developed was this religion of ascendancy, where the human beings that arose out of the ashes of the incinerated Titans, these human beings could arise to a level of divine consciousness. Rise to commune with the gods and it was a religion of ecstasy and emotions. It was a religion where there was wild music and the ancient writers say, quote "There was dancing madness where there was sexual perversion and finally, it was all induced by drunkenness" and they would all meet together, they would begin with music and then the dancing the frenzy would continue. Then they would do some human mutilations of genital parts, they worshipped phallus. They got involved in all that kind of thing and when they began to dance and drink and become drunken they came to a high point where they would eat the raw flesh of the mystic bull that was brought in and finally they would in a great conclave of voices, they would call out to Dionysus with this phrase, "Come though Savior". That was their worship. It was recognized for its music, this worship was dancing madness, for its ecstasies, its enthusiasmas, sex perversions, all induced by drunkenness. And Dionysus became known as 'the god of wine'. The god of wine. You can see that the core of the whole concept of drunkenness is a vial, pagan, counterfeit of true religion. And when Paul is saying, Look, don't be drunk with wine, he's not merely dealing with a social problem, he's dealing with a theological one you see. He's dealing with something way deeper than fun and

games. This is Satan's counterfeit, this is the way Satan captures minds, bodies into his system you see, through this method of drunkenness. Dionysus became known as a god of wine.

Do you know what the Roman name for him was? The Greek is Dionysus, the Latin is Bacchus, the same one. You've heard of a Bacchanalian feast, that's a drunken feast. Bacchus is the god of wine, if you know any Roman history you know that this was the Jovial god of wine that had the nymphs, all the little funny women in the funny little flimsy white things and the Satyrs all around with flutes you know, the nymphs, the satyrs and the jolly god of wine was nothing more than the equivalent of Dionysus. And the worship was the same.

When I had the opportunity, a few years ago, to go to the holy land, I was able to go to the Arab country, to Lebanon, to Beirut, to Syria, to Jordan and so forth and we went to the eastern most point of the ancient Roman Empire which was a city called Baalbek, it was named after Baal. In fact there they have the oldest idol in existence. That is a known idol of Baal; it is fashioned to be Baal. Well the Romans went into that area when they extended the Pax Romana into the east and they wanted to establish a base so they built a city of Baalbek, it's an incredible city. The largest single out stone is there. It's an obelisk that's at least two-thirds of the width of this auditorium, I don't know how wide it is, all carved out of one piece of rock. We don't even know how they did it let alone how they moved it to get it there. They have built incredible temples, just incredible, astonishing temples with massive, huge, long, solid stone pieces of rock sitting on top of columns and there are three main temples in Baalbek, right in the middle. They're all in the same area. There stands out among those three the one that is the best remaining one and it is the temple to Bacchus, this god Dionysus, the god of wine. The people there were telling us that this is where the people met for their religion. The three different temples signified three different elements of the same expression of worship, but it culminated in the temple of Bacchus. As you approach it you see these tremendous columns and parapets and all of these forms of stone and they are carved intricately and you don't really know what it is until you get very close and then you realize it's all vines with leaves and grapes hanging on it. The whole temple is literally covered with grapes and vines because that's the whole thrust of their expression of worship. It was drunkenness. They were even telling us that they made the place so that the overflow of wine, the spillage and that which they literally vomited out have a way to roll and flow out.

And so it was a drunken orgy. They had sexual involvement with it and so forth. This is the thing that was behind the scenes of what Paul is talking about here. It is not just social, it is theological. He is saying to these Ephesians your background was a place where you communed to the gods with drunkenness but I'm saying to you if you want to really communicate with God be filled with His Spirit. It's a great truth, isn't it? That's really the heart of what he is saying. And that's what he is saying to us. We don't need the artificial stuff of the world; if you want to be raised to the highest level of consciousness just enter the presence of God through the filling of the Spirit.

You know, this very corruption stood behind the Corinthian church too. Look at I Corinthians with me for a minute, chapter 10. In affect, the whole problem of the Corinthian church is that they were never able to cut themselves off from the evil system. They weren't able to divorce themselves off from the world. Whatever corruptions they had known in paganism they managed to drag into the church. If they were cliquish in their pagan life, they were cliquish in their church. If they were hero worshipers in their pagan life, they we're hero worshipers in the church. If they were fascinated by philosophers in their pagan life they were in their church life. If they sued each other in their pagan life they were suing each other in their church life. If they were proud and egotistical and uncaring in their pagan life that's how they were in the church. If they didn't know how to make a marriage work in their pagan life they didn't seem to be able to do it when they entered the church life either. If they had trouble with meat offered to idols in their pagan life, same trouble when they became believers. If they didn't know what to do about the gifts of the Spirit, if they didn't know the true gifts of the Spirit in the church, it was because they had corroded them all, corrupted them all with the paganism. And you will never understand the meaning of tongues and prophecies or anything in I Corinthians 12 to 14 unless you understand what was going on in the pagan world behind the scene. That was the whole mishmash. Everything was counterfeited in the Corinthian church. Everything was being scrambled because they were dragging their paganism right into the church and in dragging their paganism in they corrupted everything.

Now, in the early church and in the church today, what is the one ordinance, the one beautiful remembrance that God has given the church that is the highest act of worship, what is it? It's communion, isn't it. That which our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself designed to lift us up into His very presence. That which the Lord designed to remember Him, that which the Lord designed for us to commune with Him at His table and the Corinthians, you see, were used to communing with gods through drunkenness so when they came to the Lord's table, guess what they brought - drunkenness.

So Paul is really approaching this subject in chapter 10 verse 16. He says to them, "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Since there is one bread we who are many are one body for we are all partakers of that one bread". In other words what he is saying is hey, we're all one, we partake of one bread, one blood, one body. Now that's the basis of his point, unity. Then he goes on to say in verse 20, "The pagans, they sacrifice to demons, to a no god and I don't want you to fellowship with demons. You can't drink the cup of the Lord which is the cup of communion and the cup of demons which is the cup of drunkenness." You can't do those two things. Why? Back to verse 16, because we are communicating with Christ in one body. Verse 17, in one bread and one body, you can't divide it that way. You can't take Christ and commune with His cup run over here and drink yourself blind and drunk and worship some demonic idol. You can't do that. You can't be, verse 21 says, a partaker of the Lord 's Table and the table of

demons. You can't mix those things. You'll provoke the Lord to jealousy and you better be stronger than Him if you do that.

You see, that was the whole thing. They'd drink the cup of the Lord which was the lovely cup of communion, remembering Christ and go drink the cup of demons which was drunkenness, thinking they were getting to the highest level of religious consciousness through drunkenness. And our Lord was saying you can reach the highest level of religious, spiritual perception by taking simply the cup of remembrance. What a beautiful contrast.

Well, go over to verse 19 of chapter 11 and this is where it becomes crystal clear that's what they were doing. He says there must be heresies among you, there must be heresies and you should manifest what is true and what is not. But look at verse 20, "When you come together into one place", here's the Greek translation, this is not the Lord's Supper which you eat. You come together, you might call it the Lord's Supper, you might say come on everybody we're going to have communion now. You might say that it's that but it is not that for in eating everyone takes before the other his own supper, that's gluttony, and leaves people hungry and another is drunk. In other words, what you are doing is not the Lord's table it is the table of demons. You're doing it the way you used to do it, the way paganism does it. You see, that was behind the scenes here, that was the issue. He is contrasting the Satan counterfeit with the divine reality of true worship of true meaning. I want you to see that's what he's saying here. He's saying don't worship God the way you use to. Now that doesn't hit our culture because we didn't worship God through drunkenness, I hope. Maybe some of you came out of mysticism where you got high on drugs and thought you were getting to some religious level of super consciousness, I don't know. But that's what he is saying here because the Ephesians had this counterfeit religious system. And he saying come to the pure. Don't let anything falsify what the Spirit wants to do. Don't let anything falsify what God can do willingly with His Spirit. What a tremendous truth this is. Just a fantastic reality. But we don't need anything in the world. You know Satan is the thief of God and he will always add some artificial thing, phony joy, phony fellowship, phony communion. Now I think that is precisely what Paul is talking about in Ephesians.

Now you can look back at Ephesians 5. Let me show you something interesting. The reason I believe it's a religious issue here is because of the context. Involved in those pagan religions when they got drunk they went into their liturgy. When they got drunk they went into their singing and their dancing and their wild activity and that's what's in Paul's mind and that's indicated by the fact that he follows verse 18 with the true Christian liturgy in verse 19. The true Christian liturgy is to speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord and giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and submitting yourself, one to another, in the fear of God. You see, he's contrasting spiritual real liturgy with the phony that Satan had invented. That's his point. Well, I think you see.

You're not a man of distinction when you get drunk. You don't distinguish yourself at all. If you get drunk, you're not distinct from anything, you are just parroting Satan's age-old lie and there's no civilization in the world that hasn't invented a way to get drunk because Satan is after it all the time. I've driven down the roads in the jungles of Ecuador and watched the Indians stagger from side to side with stuff they made with some kind of stuff they grind with their feet and push with rocks and every culture I've ever known. I've seen it in the Arab world; I've seen it all over the place. Every where I've ever gone, every city I've ever been in, I think it's part of the curse. I think that when God cursed the earth it became possible for the fruit of the earth to be corrupted to the point where Satan could use it to destroy. That's a good question theologians can argue about, whether there will be any alcohol beverages in the millennium if the curse is removed and nothing decays.

And so Paul says, "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess." Could I say a word about the word excess? Asotia, it means uncontrolled dissipation, uncontrolled dissipation. Don't be drunk because it leads to uncontrolled dissipation. And another way to translate asotia is the word debauchery. But be filled with the Spirit. What a beautiful contrast, what a beautiful and simple contrast.

Look at your life, what is it controlled by? Where do you find your joy? Where do you find your exhilaration? Where do you find your comfort? In a bottle? Ah, that's so artificial. Now somebody might say, "Well, it says don't be drunk but what about if you just drink and don't get drunk? What about that?" Well, that's for next time. Next Sunday morning I'm going to give you seven principles by which you can know what you ought to do in relation to this subject. Let's pray.

Thank you Father for helping us this morning to get some insight into Your word. Lord, my prayer is that this little verse tucked away almost non-descriptly in the midst of this letter will have an impact on our lives like it's never had before. What You really saying is you have a totally new resource for joy, for comfort, for exhilaration, for fulfillment, for communion with God then the world has never known and it's the filling of the Holy Spirit. The world wants to fill itself up with so many things, wine, alcohol, money, pleasure, possessions and You've simply said, Fill yourself with the Spirit and stay that way that your response might not be the phoniness and the hangovers that the world has but it might be speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks and submitting one to another and loving your husbands and loving your wives and caring for your children and all of these things that flow out of this text. Father, help us to know the simplicity of what it is to be controlled by Your Spirit. And help us to, know this that more than anything else, You desire to fill us with Your Spirit and all You ask that we should do is to empty ourselves of ourselves so that the Spirit can rush into the vacuum and fill us. Thus can we commune with You, thus can we reach levels of spiritual consciousness undreamed of, thus can we know what it is to be filled with all the fullness of God, thus can we understand how it is that we can do exceedingly, abundantly above all we ask or think according to the power that works in us. And

Lord as we look forward to next time to talk about this whole issue - should a Christian drink -
Help us to prepare our hearts for what Your word says. We thank you for our fellowship this
morning in Jesus' name Amen.