

Be Not Drunk with Wine, Part 2

Ephesians 5:18

This morning we are, as you know if you were here last time, we're going to digress just a little bit from our text of [Ephesians 5:18](#). In our continuing study in the book of Ephesians we found ourselves, last week, in verse 18 and that verse introduces to us the topic of drunkenness and that introduces to us the topic of drinking. And because there have so many, many questions about this very important area, many of you have asked is it right - should a Christian drink alcoholic beverages - what does the Bible teach - and so forth and so on that we decided to stop here and share some thoughts on this.

Somebody was telling me that as they came to church this morning they saw a billboard that said - What is Christmas without Jim Beam -. Maybe that reflects some of the sickness of the society in which we live. It does introduce to us a problem that is indeed a problem. [Ephesians 5:18](#) says, "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess but be filled with the Spirit". This is a direct command against drunkenness. The Spirit of God is saying we are not to be drunk. In our society we have up to 20 million drunks, 20 million alcoholics, 6 million of them are young and 3.3 million of them are teenagers. We can safely say that America has a severe drinking problem. I suppose we aren't too surprised about that. We would expect a proud, self-indulgent, sinful, pleasure mad society which is filled with consequent guilt, anxiety, frustration and depression to try to both live it up and forget it all by drinking. We're not too shocked at that at all. But what may be a little stranger to us is the fact that Christians who by our Lord's definition are meek, selfless, absolutely forgiven, comforted by the Holy Spirit, filled with the joy of the Lord should seek their comfort and their joy from a bottle. Yet the amazing facts of a recent survey show that 81% of all Roman Catholics and 64% of all Protestants drink alcoholic beverages. This is a very important issue. And much discussion and much confusion goes on in the debate. Some people say a Christian should not drink at all, absolutely no, it is forbidden, it is wrong, it is sin. Others say, a Christian can drink, yes, in moderation it's fine, especially since the Bible indicates that Gods people drank wine, and if you do it in moderation it's fine.

I've been with Christians in this country, in Europe, Latin America and other places, some who did drink and some who did not. Some go to dinner and they wouldn't think of ordering wine and some others order it first and later think about dinner. I've had people on various mission fields tell me to stay in such and such a place because the wine was best there. And I've had on the other hand people who have been in the mission field society for many, many years and have never consumed any at all. It doesn't seem to be an issue of whether you're here geographically or somewhere else but there is, indeed, a lot of mixed feelings about whether it is right. I've had people come to me and say, when are you going to preach against drinking? And I've had people

come to me and say, you're not going to preach against drinking are you? You would have enjoyed being at my house yesterday and hearing the ambivalence on the phone calls I got. Well, we're just calling to ask you're not going to say this tomorrow, are you? I would say come and find out. I know there's a lot of concern and the last thing I want to do is put everybody under a lot of guilt and the last thing that I want to do is make you think that whether you drink or don't drink is a symbol or emblem of your spirituality. Spirituality is what you are. What you do is only a manifestation of that.

Now remember this, in our last study of [Ephesians 5:18](#), we told you that drinking is used in the contrast here with the Holy Spirit filling because it was not so much a social thing that Paul is looking at as it was theological. Sure people in that society just as in this society and in every other society around the world through the history of man, drink to forget their troubles, drink to induce joy, drink to induce some sense of comfort. It is true there is a social element to it but what Paul has in mind goes way beyond that, it is theological.

You see, wine was used for inducing drunkenness in pagan religions. In the worship of pagan gods by the Greeks and the Romans in order to induce what they thought was a higher religious consciousness. They believed that the more drunk they were the higher level of consciousness they attained to commune with their gods. It is exactly what Paul was saying in I Cor. 10, when he said you can't drink the cup of the demons and the cup of the Lord, you can't go and drink the cup that makes you drunk to commune with the gods and then come and take the cup of communion by which you commune with Jesus Christ. Our communion demands the full use of your faculties, as it is energized by the filling of the Spirit in contrast with their communion which is really the absence of your faculties induced by the alcoholic content in some drink. Remember that I told you that Satan had counterfeited the whole gospel? We talked about the god Zeus who is sort of Satan's false Father. He's sort of like God the Father. And Zeus gave birth to a son who was then torn from limb to limb and was reborn which is the false resurrection. Remember that son was originally conceived without Zeus ever meeting the mother so that it was a virgin kind of conception, and you'll remember that Zeus decided to make that son the Lord of the earth, again indicating the same counterfeit. And so this became the lord of the earth, this son of Zeus who was reborn. His name was Dionysus and he is known as the god of wine. Why? Because pagan religion was induced by drunkenness. That was all a part of the system.

So when Paul is saying, do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit, he is saying your old kind of religious worship is out and the new is in and it's by the Holy Spirit not by drunkenness. So that's the basis of this contrast. That's the basis of his comparison. It is far more than just a social issue. He's talking religiously. He is saying, if you're going to walk the worthy walk, you're going to walk in humility, unity, and you're going to walk different than the gentiles walk, you're going to walk in love, light and wisdom then you will not induce your communion with God through drunkenness, you will do it by the filling of the Spirit of God. The point is that drunkenness is forbidden because it is a manifestation of an old way of life, incompatible with the new life. OK? Be not drunk with wine is a command.

Drunkenness is forbidden in the Scripture. It is a pattern that belongs to the former life. In Romans, chapter 13, this is made abundantly clear in verse 13, "Let us walk honestly as in the day not in drunkenness." In Galatians, chapter 5 and verse 21 we find similarly these words, back in verse 17 it talks about the flesh, in verse 19 the works of the flesh and then in 21 it lists these, envyings, murders, drunkenness. These things are not a part of our new life. I have told you in the past time that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. **I Cor. 6:10** says the same thing, "Drunkards do not inherit the kingdom of God." I Peter chapter 4, verse 3, "For the time past of our life may suffice us when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine." That's the past of our life, that's sufficient for it, it stays there, it belongs there and that's all. That's part of the darkness of the past. We no longer, it says in **I Thess. 5:6**, 'we no longer sleep as do others but we watch and are sober minded, for they that sleep, sleep in the night and they that are drunk are drunk in the night,' The point is, drunkenness is a part of the night from which we have come. We have entered into the day in Jesus Christ and there's no place for drunkenness. So the Bible warns us against drunkenness. A believer is not to be drunk. People will always say, "Well, what does drunk mean?" Drunkenness can be defined as, any point in which the alcohol takes over any part of your faculties. That's drunkenness. Now it has all kinds of degrees and I don't know for everybody where that fine line is but whenever you have yield the control of your faculty in any sense to that alcohol, that becomes drunkenness.

Now the Bible has a lot to say about this. I'd like to point out a couple of things to you. Proverbs, chapter 20, verse 1, the Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived whereby, is not wise." The point is a person who takes that and becomes drunk is a fool and he is deceived to think that it makes something out of him that's positive. That's a deception of Satan, it is a mocker. You think it's doing something for you and it mocks you in the very act. Proverbs, I want you to look with me, chapter 23. One of the most interesting descriptions of drunkenness in all the Bible. Proverbs 23, verse 19. The book of Proverbs, of course, was a book that fathers taught their sons and so all through the book of Proverbs you hear the father speaking to his son and in chapter 23, verse 19 you hear it again. "Hear thou my son and be wise and guide thy heart in the way." In other words, if you're a son of the kingdom, a son of the King, if you're a part of God's world and God's domain, if you walk in the light then if you're in the way keep yourself in the way, guide your heart in the way. In verse 20 he says, "Be not among winebibbers." In other words, your life is incompatible with the drunkenness of those who you came from. "Be not among winebibbers" and by the way, "gluttonous eaters of flesh." And we can talk about that some time in the future. "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty and drowsiness shall clothe a man in rags." A person who becomes an alcoholic winds up in rags and you can see it if you've been watching the news this week and you've been kind of in on the Skid Row stabbings, you know exactly what it looks like to see those people. I've preached time and time and time again in the Missions. In fact, when I was very young I use to go to one on Third Street night after night and preach in the mission and watch these people clothed in their rags because of their drunkenness. What a deceiver drink was. You know, it was

not making men of distinction, it was clothing men in rags and it was very apparent all you need to do is take a short look at that area and you can see for yourselves.

Now go down to verse 29 and he describes here what is a picture of drunkenness. By the way, in the middle he talks about harlotry because drunkenness and sexual immorality are so akin. He talks about the harlot in verse 27 cause that kind of goes with it. But verse 29 he describes the situation of drunkenness. I want you to see it. "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contention? 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." Let's just look at that for a minute. Whose got woe, whose got sorrow, heartaches, fights, who has babbling at the mouth, who has wounds without cause, who is it who has for no good reason at all runs into a freeway abutment, runs into a fire hydrant, a telephone pole, runs into a wall, falls into a window, who is it that has redness of eyes, who is it that Just gets himself into trouble, sorrow and fights and babbles at the mouth, it's the drunk. It's they that go with mixed wine. Mixed wine here is not talking about the wine that was mixed with water, it's talking about the mixtures of wines. You know the supposed connoisseur, the one who makes an issue out of winebibbing.

Now in order to avoid falling into this pit, he says, "Look not on the wine when it is red, when it gives its color in the cup, when it goes down smooth." In other words, just don't get involved with looking at it cause it is an enticing thing. You look at it, have you ever seen those people, they hold it up, those ads, and they flash lights through it and they look at it and they pour it out in slow motion and it's flopping down and you have people who are professional drinkers of wine, and wine tasters. It's playing around with what is an inducement. And he says in verse 32, "It looks so good and it goes down so smooth and at last it bites like a snake and stings like an adder." "And thine eyes shall behold strange things." I'm not going to ask all of those who have had that experience to stand up and give your testimony, we can assume it. "And thine heart will utter perverse things." You see funny things, the pink elephants and all the rest and your heart utters perverse things and you'll be like a person who lies down in the midst of the sea, lying on top of the mast.

The verse means, here's a ship in the midst of the sea and you who are drunk is like the guy who is trying to sleep in the mast. If you know anything about a ship it's obvious that with the motion created at the bottom will be the most extreme at the top and the guy on the mast is going like this ... I talked to a guy this week who told me he had the experience of frequently being drunk and that is the most apt description he heard in his whole life. But you know what the amazing part of it is, it'll say they have stricken me, and I was not sick, they beat me and I felt it not, when shall I awake, I will seek it yet again. Amazing, all that trouble and what do you do when you get up? Go right back after it. One of the great old testament commentators, Dalitz says, "The author passes in this text, from the sin of prostitution and uncleanness to that of drunkenness because they are nearly related, for drunkenness excites the fleshly lusts and to wallow in delight in the mire of sensuality, a man created in the image of God must first brutalize himself by some kind of intoxication."

And so the Bible is very clear about drunkenness. In Isaiah chapter 5, verse 11, "Woe unto them who rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink and who continues till night till wine inflames them." One of the characteristic marks of an alcoholic is he drinks in the morning. Woe to those who start in the morning and drink till night. And by the way, which we shall see later, you just about have to do that in that day to get drunk because the alcohol content was so low. You'd have to really go at it all day long unless of course, you drank strong drink as indicated here. If you were just drinking wine it would take a long time because of the difference of their kind of wine which we'll see in a minute. But the person who gets up and drinks all day is going to have woe to him. Chapter 28 of Isaiah and, there are many other passages. I'm just going to give you some samples. Chapter 28 of Isaiah, God gives an indictment against Ephraim, the children of the Lord, which is very, very scathing. He says, "They have erred," [Isaiah 28:7](#), "through wine and strong drink are out of the way." In other words drink has driven them out of the proper perspective toward God. Look at this; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink.

Now I'll tell you something, the priest was forbidden to drink at all. We'll see that next time. Why? Because a priest was in a position of representing God, if he became drunk and made a misjudgment or misrepresentation, he could carry a whole group of people with him. And here the priest and the prophet of God were drunk, they had erred, they had made statements that were not true and they were swallowed up with wine. They were out of the way through strong drink, they erred in the vision and they stumbled in judgment. They were saying wrong things, they were leading people astray. And it tells how really rotten they had become in verse 8, "For all the tables were full of vomit and filthiness so that there is no place clean." They were vomiting and excreting right in the place where they were drinking. Incredible debauchery on the part of the priests and the prophets when God had called them to the place He had called them to. No wonder God judged them. In the 56th chapter of Isaiah we find in verses 11 and 12 a similar thing, talks about the people who were supposed to be watchmen for Israel, people who were supposed to be caring for the people. And it says, "They were greedy dogs that could never have enough, they're shepherds who can't understand their own way, everyone is for his gain from his quarter and they say, I'll fetch wine and we'll fill ourselves with strong drink and tomorrow shall be as this day and much more abundant." We're just going to stay drunk. And you know, God literally indicts these people. Anytime any person is in the position of spiritual responsibility and they drink and become drunk, they really are indicated by God in fearful ways. In Hosea chapter 4 in verse 11, "Harlotry and wine and new wine take away the heart." And here you have God linking drinking with adultery. Drinking with harlotry and prostitution.

Alright now we'll stop right there for a minute. I think you get the picture of how God feels about drunkenness. You saw the evil wretchedness of the drunkenness in chapter 9 of Genesis, where the result of it was a terrible incest. We know that God forbids drunkenness. It's repeated again and again. At no point in the life of a believer is he or she ever to yield the control of his faculties to alcohol. We are all priests unto God. We are all those with spiritual responsibility. We are all

those to speak a fit word and to speak a right representation of God and to do a thing that would rightly represent God at all times and we do not give up our faculties at any time, in any act of drunkenness-no matter how minimal it would be without violating God's standard for having ourselves in accord with the Spirit of God.

But on the other hand, did you know that wine is also commended in the Bible? Some of you are saying, "Oh no, I was so comfortable with the first part." But wine is also commended in the Bible. We've got to be fair, it is. Did you know that in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 23 the people were told to bring drink offerings to the temple for God? Those drink offerings were wine. And did you know that according to [I Chronicles 29:19](#) it is very likely that they kept a supply of wine in the temple for those offerings? And in [Judges 9:13](#) and in [Psalm 104:15](#) it says there's a special kind of wine that cheers, that makes you happy. And in [Isaiah 24:9](#) the drinking of wine was accompanied with singing good songs. And in [Isaiah 55: 1 & 2](#), this is a shock, Isaiah equates wine with salvation. He says, "Come and buy wine" and he's really giving a salvation invitation. In John 13 our Lord Jesus Christ drank wine and ordained the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table. Paul told Timothy in [I Timothy 5:23](#) to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake. And it's obvious that the Old Testament and the New Testament show the staple drink was wine. And by the way, when the Good Samaritan went down the road and found the man on the side of the road. It says in Luke

10:34 that when he got him all fixed up he poured wine in his wounds.

And in Proverbs 31 it says when somebody gets old and sick and they're about to die, give them some wine to act as a sedative, to ease the pain, as an anesthetic.

So you see in Scripture we have wine as a destroyer and wine as a mocker and wine as something that dissipates and wine is something that causes drunkenness which is forbidden by God and on the other hand you have wine as an acceptable thing in many places in Scripture so indicated. You say, "Well what are you trying to say?" Well I'm trying to say it's like anything else, that little grape that hangs on the vine with a potential for good and a potential for evil. So many things that are in this world are like that. I believe there was a time when it didn't have that. I believe fermentation is a result of two things, #1 - it's the result of the fall of man. I believe that before there was any decaying process, before the fall, there was no such thing as fermentation. #2 - I believe the flood created some problems too, because prior to the flood there was a canopy over the earth, people lived to be 900-plus-years. We found bones of dinosaurs and so forth that were huge things that lived hundreds of years and the process of fermentation wouldn't have even existed pre-flood because the canopy protected the earth from the rays of the sun that cause decay and the fermentation to exist. So you see the very process of fermentation is a result of the fall of man and the destruction of the vile, evil earth during the flood. Now we have to keep that in perspective. I don't think it's a part of God's original creation that we would have alcoholic drinks. By the way some people think that will be reversed in the kingdom when God brings back paradise lost.

But like so many other things we have to live with It now and it's got a potential for good and a potential for evil. Now you say, "Can we know what to do?" "Do we know whether we can drink or not drink? Does the Bible say anything to help us?" Well yes it does and I'm going to give that to you. This is called the "Christian's Wine List". I'm going to give you 8 check points. I don't know what your presuppositions are and I want you to know that I love you all and I'm not trying to wail away on you. I'm going to ask you these 8 questions and you have to think them through with me and we'll cover the first two and a little bit into the third one today. And I really believe, first of all, will help you to make a decision. Now let me tell you this, the Bible does not forbid drinking wine. Now don't say -Amen- you don't want to do that somebody around you might be shocked, you see. The Bible does not forbid drinking wine, if it did, I would just read the verse and we'd go home. I'd have to preach another sermon, right? It would be over. The Bible does not say wine is forbidden, but it does say some things that help us to know what we should do.

Number 1. This is the first question that came into my mind. Is it the same? What do I mean by that? Is drinking today the same as in Bible times? Or is the wine today the same as then? The reason I ask this is because inevitably Christians who rely, Christians who drink rather, rely strongly on their right to drink being based on the Bible. They say, "Well, Jesus drank, the apostles drank, the Old Testament drank, the New Testament drank there can't be anything wrong." And I thought about that and thought that's good. They want to use a biblical base, the Bible people did it so what's the big deal? They say they didn't have refrigeration then so it really was fermented, they drank it fermented so we're drinking it fermented, what's the big deal? So I immediately began to think, well, I wonder if the wine today is the same as it was then. So for the last three weeks I've been chasing this around, trying to find out if it was the same. And I have found some fabulous Information. Now I'm going to share it with you, so hang on.

I'm going to give you some words to start with, these are the biblical words and then I'm going to integrate those into the thing we discussed. Was the wine they drank the same as ours? If we're going to use their drinking as the basis of our drinking then it's going to have to be the same. If it isn't, then that principle is out, we'll find another one. First of all the most common word in the New Testament is oinos, the Greek word oinos, it's a word that simply refers to the juice of grapes, it is a general, very general word, it is used very commonly and, it is the normal new testament word for wine. By the way, they used it to speak of a grape, they would say there was hanging wine and what they meant was just the wine in the grape. It wasn't fermented or unfermented or in the process of being fermented or never to be fermented, that had nothing to do with it, it just simply meant it had reference to the juice of the grape, any kind.

Now the Old Testament equivalent to oinos is yayin, that's the Hebrew word. It's used 141 times in the Old Testament. And by the way, I was most fascinated to find out that the root for the word yayin is bubble up or boil up. And I thought that was rather fascinating and I'll tell you why in just a few minutes. Just register that somewhere and hang on to it, it's going to come back at you. And the word yayin is referring to wine that is mixed, not with other wine but usually with water. Sometimes with honey, sometimes with herbs and sometimes with myrrh but always

mixed, even if it was mixed with honey, myrrh and herbs it could also be mixed with water. So they had some various concoctions.

Now yayin, by the way, means mixed wine. I found that in the 1901 Jewish encyclopedia, that's not a Christian interpretation that's not just something we thought of, the Jews themselves looking at their own Hebrew text and examining their own use of words say yayin means mixed wine. Oinos predominately means that, oinos has to do with a mixed wine, wine mixed with water. There are two more words we have to consider. Glukos, from which we get the word glucose which is a sugar base kind of thing. Glukos means new-wine. It's used in [Acts 2:13](#) when they said of the apostle on the day of Pentecost, they're filled with new-wine. It is fresh wine but it is still fermented, it wouldn't take very many days to ferment. And even fresh wine just out of the grape without refrigeration would ferment very rapidly. So though it was comparatively fresh and was not fully aged it was still potentially intoxicating. That is why in [Acts 2:13](#) they said these men are drunk with new wine. The fact that it was new wine did not mean it didn't intoxicate. It would ferment just as fast. Now if you just took it out of the grape obviously it wouldn't necessarily mean it was fermented but what was called glukos or new wine could be just days, weeks or just a few months from absolute freshness and it would still be fermenting. By the way, the Old Testament word for that is tirosh and tirosh also means new wine. I read you earlier Hosea 11 and it says new wine is tirosh and listen to this, it says in the same verse that drunkenness goes with new wine. So new wine, tirosh, new wine, glukos in both cases could create drunkenness. So the fact that it was new wine didn't mean that it wouldn't happen.

Now I want to give you another word. Another word you need to know in the Old Testament is shekar. Shekar means strong drink and that means unmixed. The New Testament word is sikera, it means unmixed. So you've got three things, number one, oinos and yayin are mixed wine, wine mixed with water that's its predominant use and then there is glukos and tirosh that is fresh new wine which was also mixed with water so far as history tells us and thirdly, there was shekar and sikera which was unmixed, straight wine, out of the grape into the glass and into the mouth, nothing in between. Now based on these terms and I want to give you some historical insight and all that stuff is going to come together and I think you'll find it fascinating.

My conclusion is this, I'm giving you the conclusion first so you'll know where I'm going, the wine of the Bible times was not necessarily the same as the wine we have today. The wine drunk today is unmixed with water, it is straight wine. That is not true of biblical wine and I'll show you why.

First of all some of the wine of Bible times was absolutely unintoxicating, it was not fermented. Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge University says this, "That yayin, mixed wine, or oinos does not refer only to intoxicating liquor made by fermentation but more often refers to a thick unintoxicating syrup or jam produced by boiling to make it storable."

Now what did we tell you the root word yayin was, the root of that word was to bubble or boil, which indicates it was very common for them to take that which came out of the grape and boil which would cause the evaporation of the liquid, the loss of fermentation capacity when the liquid departs and they would have a storable kind of paste which they would put in jars. This is no different than women canning things today, to preserve them and they would preserve this thick syrupy substance. The grape juice that was left after the boiling process could not ferment in that condition it was then stored in new wine skins.

Do you remember the words of our Lord in [Matthew 9:16-17](#), "Do not store new wine in old wineskins". Do you know why? The same reason you don't can old jars with old rubber seals, Why? Because the leakage will cause fermentation. The reason our Lord said that was, you store new wine when it's reduced to this concentrate in new wineskins, the last word of verse 17, Matthew 9, "That it may be preserved". The Lord was really accommodating an illustration they understood. This was put in new wineskins that were sealed properly so no fermentation would occur. You ladies who can know that if you use a bad little deal at the top, it will ferment and you'll have a problem. So that's exactly what our Lord was saying. There were times and places when they definitely wanted to eliminate any fermentation capability of what they would use. So it's not simple enough to just say they drank alcoholic beverages because there was no refrigeration, they got around that this way. And the thick syrup similar to grape jelly, they very frequently squeezed on bread like jam. And when they wanted to drink it they would squeeze it into something and mix it, according to Pliny the Roman historian, with up to twenty parts of water. It was a thick paste that they had to put the water back in from the evaporation, right? So it would be unfermented and totally unintoxicating and by the way, from best as I can tell from my research that's the preferred kind to drink. That's why Samuel Lee said that was the most common way of storing and preparing wine. And don't you know that it was obviously easier to store this way than in liquid form because it would be too bulky. So that's the way it was common today. Now classical writers have spoken about this and I want to show that to you so you'll know that there's some real sources.

Horace in 35 BC, this goes way back, says, "You can quaff under a shade, cups of unintoxicating wine". So they recognized that they had that. Plutarch in AD 60 wrote, "That filtered wine neither inflames the brain nor infects the mind and the passions and, is much more pleasant to drink". Now Plutarch is saying, I like the kind with no alcoholic content, doesn't inflame the mind or anything and is much more pleasant to drink. Aristotle said, "The wine of Arcadia was so thick it was necessary to scrape it from the skin bottle which it was stored and dissolve the scrapings in water. Virgil in 30 BC talked about the kind of wine that was boiled down to the luscious juice and then preserved. Homer in the ninth book of his Odyssey tells us that Ulysses took in his boat a goatskin of sweet black wine and when it was drunk, it was diluted with twenty parts of water, of course because it was so thick it needed water to be consumed as a beverage. Columella and other writers who were contemporaries with the apostles inform us that in Italy and Greece it was common to boil the wines which, of course, would not have been done if they

wanted to preserve the alcoholic content. Archbishop Potter born in AD 1674 in his Grecian Antiquities, Edinburgh edition 1813, vol. 2 page 360 says, The Lassademonians use to boil their wines over the fire, then drink them. He refers to Democritus a celebrated philosopher who traveled across the greater part of Europe, Asia and Africa who died 300 BC, to Paladius a Greek physician to making a similar statement.

Now these ancient authorities called the boiled juice of the grape, wine. And some of you may have heard of Opamenian wine mentioned by Plymy, the Roman historian, he said it had, the consistency of honey. So I m just trying to give you illustrations of the fact that this was really historical fact. A Professor Donovan said in a Bible commentary that in order to preserve their wines to the ages, the Romans concentrated the grape juice from which they were made by evaporation. It talks about how they did it to render them thick and syrupy. Not just the Romans did this; the Jews did it, the Mishnah which is the codification of the Jewish law states that the Jews were in the habit of using boiled wine. W. G. Brown who traveled all over Africa, Europe and Asia in the Eighteenth century states that the wines of Syria are mostly prepared by boiling immediately after they are expressed from the grape till they are considered to be reduced in quantity when they are put in jars or bottles and preserved for use. Then there is a Doctor Newman who said, he's a professor of chemistry in Berlin in the Eighteenth century, it is observable that when sweet juices are boiled to a thick consistency they not only do not ferment in that state but are not easily brought into fermentation even when diluted with water. So even diluting them back again and leaving them stand they might ferment but they would ferment very slowly.

So the point is this, people, there was this paste that was used that was non-intoxicating. Concentrated grape juice, by the way, is still around and it's called today, dibs. It is used today in vineyards in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon. It is used for food seasoning, it is used even to put on bread and it saves the necessity of refrigeration to preserve a non-fermenting drink. So all I want you to understand from that, people, is this; that the wine that was consumed then was not necessarily what we know as wine today. It was a concentrated, grape Juice with its fermentation and intoxicating property removed. The point I'm making is this, you cannot defend wine drinking today on the basis they drank wine then unless you can prove you're drinking the same thing they did. If you can't do that you live got to leave the argument alone and you've got to say, -Well, I can drink wine for another reason and okay, we'll go to another reason but that one isn't going to work unless it's the same, Let me add another thing, they not only had this paste but they sometimes stored it as a liquid from time to time. Liquid would ferment.

Now according to Robert Stein who did the research on this in 1975 and put it out in Christianity Today, they used to keep the liquid form of the wine which was used on a daily basis and maybe they wouldn't want to always take the paste and mix it if they didn't have the time or for any reason, they would store it in large jugs called amphorae. They would do this, from the amphora they would draw out the pure, unmixed wine, they would pour it into kraters. There in the krater they would mix it with water so that they would pour the water in to mix it and from the krater it

would go to the krater, which is the cup. They never served wine from the amphora to the krater without going through the krater. In other words, they didn't serve wine not mixed with water. If it wasn't the paste, if it was liquid and it did ferment then they would mix it with water. And by the way, we find that the mixture as we look at history could be as high as 20-to-1 to 3-to-1, they would mix it with water.

Now listen to this, drinking unmixed wine was looked upon even by unsaved people as barbarian. Athanasius quotes Manes of Athens with this statement, The gods have revealed wine to mortals to be the greatest blessing for those who use it are right for those who use it without measure, the reverse, now watch, for it gives food to them who take it in strength and might and body, for medicine it is most beneficial, it can be mixed with liquid and drugs and it brings aid to the wounded, in daily course to those who mix and drink it moderately, it gives good cheer, but if you overstep the bounds it brings violence, mix it half and half you get madness, unmixed bodily collapse.

You see those people mixed. it and even to mix it one to one was considered barbarian. The lowest I could find was 3 to 1. It is evident that wine was seen in ancient times as a medicine and of course as a beverage. And as a beverage it was always thought of mixed. It was either mixed on a paste base or it was mixed from an amphora into a krater and then it was served and not unmixed. The ratio of water might vary but only barbarians drank it unmixed. And the mixture of water and wine of equal parts, one to one, was considered to be strong drink and frowned upon. The term wine or oinos or yayin, old and new testament is to be understood as wine mixed with water and when they wanted to say unmixed wine they said that the wine was akrateron, in other words, it was akrater, there was no krater in the middle and it went right out of the amphora into the krater without mixing.

Now the point that I'm trying to make is this, unmixed wine was unacceptable to that culture. Strong drink was unmixed and that was for barbarians to drink. As we move away from the church of the New Testament and we get into the church after the New Testament church, the early church we call it. They wrote about this in a volume called the Apostolic Tradition. In the Apostolic Tradition it says that the early church followed this same custom serving only mixed wine, whether from a syrup or from a liquid base.

You say, "Well, what is the significance of all this? What are you trying to say?" What I'm trying to say is this, if you want to defend the fact that you can drink wine today on the basis of the fact that they drank it in the Bible then you need to re-examine whether what we drink today is the same as what they drank then. And we find out as we get close to the subject that they drank what was either totally unintoxicating such as the syrup base or what was so diluted with water that its intoxication level was very minimal. Let me illustrate it to you. I called the Alcohol Council, their information center at the library, and I found out this information. Beer has 4% alcohol, wine has 9 to 11% alcohol and that doesn't matter how long it sticks around that's just the range of alcohol it produces that's 9 to 11%, brandy which is fortified wine has 15 to 20%

alcohol and liquor which is whatever liquor is, scotch, rye and all that stuff has 40 or 50%, in other words, if it's 80 proof it has 40% alcohol, if it's 100 proof it has 50% alcohol.

Now anybody who drank anything from 15 to 50% alcohol was considered definitely a barbarian. So I don't think we even need to discuss whether a Christian should drink hard drinks, hard liquor. It is very apparent, in fact, you realize even to drink it at all and maintain your sanity you have to take it in little tiny sips because of the power it has. To drink something that's 100 proof you would just as well drink a half a bottle of rubbing alcohol and a half a bottle of Welch's grape juice, you get the same affect. That's how much of it is alcohol. And I'm not even taking the time to go into the medical factors involved in what that alcohol does. All you have to do is find somebody in a gutter sometime and take him to a hospital and watch him die of sclerosis of the liver and you get a little idea.

Let's take a very conservative estimate. Wine ferments to a 9 to 11% alcohol, okay let's take the lowest mixture level that I could find 3-to-1, the lowest I could find to say nothing about 5-to-1s 10-to-1, 15-to-1 or whatever, the lowest I could find. If you took that 9 to 11% fermented alcohol wine from that amphora and you mixed it in a krater with a 3-to-1 water ratio the product would be this, the alcohol content in the final product mixed with water would be 2.25-to-2.75% alcohol. So it's very low. By the way, something has to be 3.2% alcohol to be classified as an alcoholic beverage. So you have a sub-alcoholic beverage. The point being this, in order for you to get drunk on wine mixed with 3 Parts of water, you'd have to stay there all day drinking that stuff to get drunk. And that's exactly why the Bible says of elders in the church. Do not linger long beside your wine. In other words, to get drunk in those times on wine you would have to purpose to get drunk because you would have to override your bladder for one thing.

Now if you wanted to be determined in your mind to get drunk you would just go out and knock out a whole bunch of strong drink, right? You wouldn't mix it; you'd act like a barbarian. But the warnings of Scripture are this, that wine with such a low alcohol content, be careful that you don't in a situation, just sit there so long that it does have an affect on you. But the idea is this, that the wine that was consumed then if it were 3-to-1 would be 2.25 or an average of 2.50% alcohol content which is so minimal that it doesn't even classify itself as an alcoholic beverage.

The point is this, people, whether you are talking about the paste or whether you are talking about the mixture, the wine that was consumed in those days was a wine with a nonexistent or negligible alcohol content. And drunkenness was something you set out to do, to get drunk. That's why the Bible says a man who is an elder is a man who would never linger long with his wine. You know something; I've seen a guy lose his faculties on wine in 45 minutes by drinking 4 or 5 glasses of it. That couldn't happen in the Bible times, you would have to linger with your wine for a long time to do that. So the point, people, is just that. You cannot use that which was consumed in the Bible as a basis for what we drink today. They would look at what we drink today as barbarian. That was not what they consumed. So first question, is it the same? Answer, "no."

Second question. Is it necessary? Now I realize that in the biblical times it was somewhat necessary to drink wine. And there may be times today when it is necessary. The Bible doesn't say you can't do it because the Bible knows there are times in history where you don't have much choice. If you're in a particular country of the world and that's all there is and you were dying of thirst and so on, and you've got little choice, then you're going to take advantage of what is available. So the Bible doesn't just flat out blank - wipe it out. I believe in my own heart that when the Lord Jesus Christ would serve wine, He would not serve wine that had the potential to make people drunk. People say, well, what do you think he created there at the wedding feast at Cana? Well, in the first place, it was glukos, right? Because it was new-wine, He made it and didn't they say it was better than all the rest? By the way, the things that I read indicated, that the people preferred glukos over everything else because it was so sweet. So the fresh wine was the most preferred of all.

Actually it went like this, the fresh wine was the most preferred of all, the second most preferred was the paste concentrate and the last one was the kind that just sat and fermented. I'm sure the Lord made the glukos which took a long time to ferment anyway. It would ferment but it was slower because it was fresher. And I'm also interested to note that before Jesus ever made that wine in Cana, He told those people to fill those jugs with water. He didn't want there to be any question throughout the rest of history about whether or not He created unmixed wine. I believe it was mixed with water and it was glukos so he really got the best of it. No wonder they said this is the best we ever had. And even as the week went along and it would begin to turn a little bit, the mixture of water would prevent it from becoming in any sense intoxicating. I don't think our Lord would do that. So we have to go to this question, is it necessary today?

The Lord produced wine, the Lord talked about drinking wine and they used wine in the Old Testament because it was of necessity in their society. But don't conclude that it was fermented and don't conclude it was intoxicating because it may not have been. There may have been times when they had wine that was a 1-to-1 mix, because that's what the host offered and that's all that was available and they had to be very careful. There may have been times when strong drink was offered and in the midst of thirst they took a small amount because they had no choice. There may have been times when all these things were there but we have to keep in mind that in that day and in that age and maybe in some parts of the world today there is a necessity for this that's why God doesn't give us a blanket statement.

But the point is this, if we ask ourselves is my drinking necessary? That's a very important question. In those days maybe they had wine, fruit juice, milk and water. They had little choice. Today, you can drink anything, I mean the cupboards in the market are just jammed full of stuff everything conceivable. We would have to say this, is drinking wine necessary today? No, it is not necessary so it moves out of the category of necessity and into a preference, a want. That's the only place you can put it, so really, if you're going to say you drink, you can't say you drink because they did, in the Bible just say you do because you want to. That's fair, you prefer that. You'd rather drink wine than coke or iced tea or I don't know what. Admit that and that's

basically what it is in our society, but don't use this ideal, "Well, I really think it's necessary, if I don't do it they're going to be offended. I have a lot of unsaved friends and I feel that I just need to have a beer with the boys or I need this with the gang, and I just need to be a part cause I really don't need to offend them." Frankly, people, that is the dumbest argument I have ever heard. That's no argument at all. If a whole bunch of people get together and they all scratch behind the left ear, do you scratch behind your left ear so you'll be a part? If everybody on your block doesn't use deodorant, do you not use deodorant? What is that? That's no argument at all. That isn't saying anything, that's silly. You know, there are probably as many non-Christians that don't drink then there are Christians who don't, in this age. If between 81% of the Roman Catholics and 64% of the Protestants drink, I don't know if the people who are unsaved have a much higher percentage than that. There are a lot of unsaved people who don't drink. You can meet them all in one place if you go to a Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. There are a whole bunch of people who have sworn off all together. You'll meet people all the time who aren't Christian people who don't drink. I've even been in a situation with Christians and non-Christians where the Christians drank and the non-Christians didn't. That is no argument. People aren't going to make a big theological conclusion about your inability to develop human relationships because you don't drink. They're not going to say that, in fact, there are a lot of people who wish to God they didn't drink a lot of them.

I don't buy the argument, you've got to do it to be accepted - I've been in South America, I've been down in Latin America where people drink, I've been in Mexico where people drink, I've been to every baseball game we played in there for several years then I went down there to play in those baseball tournaments against the national champions of Mexico a few years back and every time we'd go somewhere, after every game, they would throw this huge big party for us, I mean a big one. They'd take us to the local restaurant or country club, I don't know what it was, and man I tell you the stuff would flow. I remember we went to this one place and in front of every plate there was this huge bottle of stuff, huge, I don't know what it was, it was probably a couple of liters. And we all kind of looked at each other and ordered Coke, but they just had a great time. They drank theirs and ours. The great part of it was, we all had a terrific time only we knew what was going on. We knew the reality of the time, they enjoyed a fantasy. And when it was all over, they loved us they put their arms around us, they invited us back again next year. That wasn't an issue. I've been in Israel, I've been in Europe. I've never seen it an issue where somebody would denigrate my Christianity or someone would think less of me because I chose not to do that. I don't think that's any argument. I do say this, if it is a necessity, if you're in a situation and that's what's available and that's what's there and you have little or no choice then with discretion you need to deal with it as a necessity. But admit it in our society it is a preference.

So, I have to ask you this third question, and I'm just going to introduce it, then we're going to stop and I'll finish up next time. I've just given you two, there are six more. But now listen, this third question - Is it the best choice? Alright, admit it, you're going to choose to do it, is it the

best choice? You say, "Well, it's a lot better for you than coffee, a lot better for you than Coca Cola." Somebody else said, "I never saw a guy drink 8 cokes and couldn't walk a-straight line." So we can argue about that. Is it the best choice? Let me just show you one thing, then we'll get into it next time. I'm going to show you who was forbidden by God to drink at all, in the Bible. We'll find out if it's the best choice but before we do that and just in closing [Luke 1:50](#).

I want you to meet the greatest man who ever lived, OK. This is the greatest man who ever lived, that's what Jesus said. Up until his time, [Matthew 11:11](#), there has none born of women, there is none greater than John the Baptist. [Matthew 11:11](#) said up until his time, he was the greatest human being who ever lived. A very, very great man and look what it says in [Luke 1:50](#), "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine (oinos) nor strong drink (sikera) he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb." Now what's going on? The greatest man who ever lived was a tea-toteler. God forbade him to drink a drop. Why? That's for next week. Let's pray together.

Our Father we know that it's easy for us to evaluate our spiritual lives on dos and don'ts that aren't really the Issue. We know You haven't forbidden the drinking of wine and yet there are some things that are clear In the Scripture we're going to try to see to help us make a decision but God may we always know that it isn't the people who don't drink that are spiritual and the people who do are not, it isn't that simple. There are other things to consider. Not doing something never makes us anything. What we are is the issue and, Lord wherever we are and wherever we've been in this issue help us to see it the way You see it, help us to understand it the way You understand it. It's so wonderful, Lord, that You've given us so much truth to deal with, so many things to protect us. We know we should not only avoid sin but we should avoid anything that could precipitate sin. So help us Father to rightly judge for ourselves what You have us to do.

Just while we're meditating for a moment, just let me say this in closing, this message is unusual for us to deal with something technical like this and yet it's in the flow of God's word and it's so wonderful how it touches every part of life. But you may have come this morning and you say, "Boy, I came here hoping to hear about God and Jesus Christ and get an answer to my life, my problems, to the troubles and struggles of my heart and you talked about this and it didn't really meet me where I was." Well, let me tell you this, I'm going to pray and dismiss you in just one minute. To my right in front of the auditorium by the piano is a prayer room and counseling center. We have people there who would love to pray and share with you. They'll tell you how you can know Christ, they'll tell you how He can come in and fill the void in your life maybe you've tried to fill with drink from time to time, they'll tell you how you may make your life joyful and. He can settle you and give you peace in your heart. They'll tell you how you can forgive your sins and cleanse your heart and give you eternal life. And so we invite you to come when we're dismissed. There is no obligation, no coercion, nothing to join or buy or anything. We just want to pray with you and love you and share with you. Whatever your problem, they'll be there. And if, per chance, some of you have trouble with this area of drinking and have some here who may be identified as alcoholic or a drinking problem. The Lord can change that. You

don't need to be a drunkard, come to Jesus Christ and He can wash you white as snow. Some of you as Christians may have trouble with drinking; God can take care of that. As you yield to His Holy Spirit He can begin to move your will, your bent away from that to Himself. Don't be drunk with wine that is excess, be filled with the Spirit. If God asks that then God empowers that and He'll do it in your life. He loves you no matter what state your in. Even if you're an alcoholic or drunkard, He loves you too but He wants to change you into the full use of your faculties for His glory. Let Him to that today. Our counselors will be glad to pray with you about it.

Father, thank you for our time this morning for helping us to see at least the beginning of insight into this area. We love You because we know You care so much about us even enough to tell us about these things so that we can guard our lives in decision making for Your glory. Bless everyone here; draw us together again tonight as we consider what it is to be peacemakers. We'll thank you in Christ's name. Amen.