

BE FILLED BY THE SPIRIT; EPH. 5:18-20 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

THIS A.M., ~ WE'LL LOOK AT THE NEXT SECTION OF EPHESIANS, ~ ANOTHER VERY short one, ~ 5:18-20.

▶▶ If I understand this correctly, ~ in *verse 18a* the "and" has the idea of "along with."

▷▷ And it links *verse 18a* back to the main point of *5:15-17*.

↪↪ I.e., ~ Paul is simply saying, ~ "along with living cautiously and watchfully, ~ do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit."

OK, ~ LET'S DIG IN TO THIS NEXT PARAGRAPH.

IN VERSE 18a, ~ PAUL SAYS ~ ¶¶

"DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE."

▶▶ Now, ~ it's important to understand that Paul is not restricting this to only wine. ~ "do not get drunk with wine," ~ we could say, ~ represents alcohol abuse in general.

▷▷ And in the widest sense, ~ this phrase represents sinful behavior in general. ~ So by the broadest application, ~ Paul is saying "do not engage in sinful behavior."

▶▶ And notice what Paul is not prohibiting. ~ He is not prohibiting drinking alcohol. ~ If he were, ~ he would be contradicting himself.

▷▷ In *1 Tim. 5:23*, ~ he told Timothy, ~ "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." ~ Prohibits getting drunk.

IN VERSE 18b, ~ PAUL TELLS US WHY WE ARE TO ABSTAIN FROM DRUNKENNESS.

"FOR THAT IS DEBAUCHERY." ~ I.E., ~ IT LEADS TO DEBAUCHERY.

▶▶ Paul warns us here to abstain from drunkenness, ~ because it leads to loss of self-control, ~ to reckless actions, ~ to unrestrained, ~ immoral living, ~ and to ruining one's life.

▷▷ In brief, ~ drunkenness, ~ as, ~ of course, ~ does all sinful behavior, ~ leads to negative results. ¶¶ 1/8

▷▷ And that is what we need to keep in mind as we go through this: ~ that all sinful behavior brings about negative results. ~ As Paul says in Gal. 6:8a, ~ ¶¶

→ → "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption."

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS FURTHER POINTS OUT SOME OF THE NEGATIVE RESULTS TO which drunkenness can lead.

▶▶ E.g., ~ Prov. 20:1. ~ In 1a, ~ "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, ~ [in 1b draws conclusion] ~ and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

▷▷ Too much alcohol leads to boisterous behavior and fights. ~ It confuses the senses so that the drinker is out of control.

▷▷ The only conclusion possible is that whoever gets drunk is unwise. ~ It just is not sensible to drink to excess.

▶▶ And Prov. 23:29-30. ~ "29 Who has woe ~ [or, ~ trouble, ~ anguish]? ~ Who has sorrow? ~ Who has strife ~ [i.e., ~ Who is always fighting]? ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Who has complaining ~ [i.e., ~ Who is always complaining]? ~ Who has wounds without cause ~ [i.e., ~ who has bruises that could have been avoided . . .]? ~ Who has redness of ~ [or, ~ bloodshot] eyes?"

▷▷ & the ans., ~ v. 30, ~ "Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine."

→ → Simply put, ~ "Who has these things? ~ Those who become drunk."

▷▷ The six questions in verse 29 are designed to unveil the emotional (Who has woe and sorrow?), ~ relational (Who is always fighting and complaining?), ~ ¶¶

→ → & physiological (Who has bruises & bloodshot eyes?) effects of alcohol abuse.

ISAIAH ALSO SHOWS US THE NEGATIVE RESULTS OF DRUNKENNESS.

▶▶ Is. 5:11, ~ "Woe to those ~ [i.e., ~ How terrible it will be for those] ~ who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them!" ~ Those who do this are headed for trouble.

BELIEVERS ARE TO ABSTAIN FROM DRUNKENNESS BECAUSE OF ALL THE NEGATIVE results it leads to. ¶¶ 2/8

▶▶ But there are even more reasons to abstain from drunkenness in particular ~ and all sinful behavior in general.

▷▷ All sinful behavior is the total opposite of making every effort to think carefully and deeply about how we should live and being careful about what we do.

▷▷ It belongs to our old, ~ unsaved life, ~ and has no place in the life of a new creation in Christ.

▷▷ All sinful behavior is completely contrary to living a life that is filled with and governed by Christ-like love.

▷▷ And worst of all, ~ it brings dishonor to the name of Jesus.

INSTEAD OF BEING DRUNK, ~ PAUL TELLS US IN VERSE 18c WHAT WE ARE TO DO.

"BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT."

▶▶ This could also be translated as "but be filled by the Spirit." ~ And I think this translation will help us better understand what Paul is getting at.

▶▶ Now, the Bible never commands believers to be baptized by the Spirit or to be indwelt by the Spirit. ~ Both are actions that God performs when a person trusts Christ for salvation.

▷▷ But believers are commanded to be filled by the Spirit.

▶▶ Now, ~ we must not imagine some weird thing that makes us dance in the aisles and speak in tongues.

▷▷ Paul is using descriptive language to picture the control of the believer by God the Holy Spirit.

↳↳ Simply put, ~ being "filled by the Spirit" means being controlled or governed by God the Holy Spirit. ~ Or TPID, ~ it means being under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

→→ I.e., ~ rather than being under the influence of alcohol ~ believers

BUT WHAT DOES "BE GOVERNED BY, ~ OR BE UNDER THE influence of, ~ the Spirit" mean?

▶▶ Well, ~ in Col. 3:16, ~ Paul says, ~ with one major difference and a little variation, ~ just about the same thing as he does here in Eph. 5:18c-20. ~ Let's compare them (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18c-20). ↴↴ 3/8

▷▷Col. 3:16, ~ "16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

▷▷Eph. 5:18c-20, ~ "18c but be filled with/by the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." ~ Notice how parallel these two passages are.

▶▶I believe both phrases, ~ "be filled with/by the Spirit" ~ and "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," ~ point to the same thing.

▶▶Now, ~ I think it's pretty obvious that the easier phrase to understand is "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

▷▷And when we come across parallel passages in which one is easier to understand, ~ we should use the easier to explain the harder.

▶▶Basically, ~ the phrase "the word of Christ" is just another way of saying "the word of God." ~ And the terms can be used interchangeably, ~ which I'll be doing throughout

▷▷So, ~ in Col. 3:16, ~ Paul is saying, ~ "Let the word of God dwell in you richly."

▷▷Simply put, ~ Paul is calling believers here to be governed by, ~ or be under the influence of, ~ God's word.

▶▶Subsequently, ~ "be governed by, ~ or be under the influence of the Spirit" means same thing, ~ that we are to be governed by, ~ or be under the influence of, ~ God's word.

BASICALLY, ~ BOTH PHRASES, ~ [GOVERNED BY SPIRIT/GOD'S WORD], ~ ARE SAYING that we are to saturate our minds and hearts with ~ and live ~ the word of Christ.

▶▶This goes back to Ps. 119:11, ~ which we discussed last time. ~ "I have stored up your word in my heart, ~ that I might not sin against you."

▶▶My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ we are to read God's word, ~ study it, ~ meditate on it, ~ think about it, ~ and get to know it thoroughly. ~ And allow it to work w/in us

▶▶But that's not all. ~ We are to recognize its authority and let it rule in our lives.

▷▷IOW, ~ we are to put the word of Christ into practice. ~ God's word should govern, ~ or influence, ~ everything we think, ~ say, ~ and do. ↴ 4/8

THE QUESTION IS, ~ WHY DID PAUL USE THE PHRASE "BE FILLED BY THE SPIRIT"?

▶▶ I don't think we can know for sure, ~ but perhaps it was to highlight the Holy Spirit's work enabling believers to understand and obey God's word ~ and to help us grow strong in the faith through it.

NOW, ~ IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE FORM OF THE VERB PAUL USES in Eph. 5:18c, ~ makes this a continuing obligation for believers.

▶▶ We could read it this way, ~ for context we'll start at [verse 18a](#), ~ ¶¶

▷▷ ^{18a} And do not get drunk with wine, ^{18b} for that is ~ [or, ~ leads to] ~ debauchery, ^{18c} instead, keep on being governed by the word of Christ."

↳↳ Or, ~ "keep on being under the influence of God's word."

▶▶ So this is not to be one time or occasional thing. ~ We are to be constantly saturating our minds and hearts with God's word. ~ And we are to be constantly living it.

▷▷ As [Prov. 4:27a](#), ~ which we also looked at last time, ~ says, ~ "Do not swerve to the right or to the left."

↳↳ I.e., ~ we are to not deviate or turn from following Jesus' word. ~ Straight line

AS WE SAW EARLIER, ~ DRUNKENNESS BRINGS ABOUT VERY NEGATIVE RESULTS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ~ BEING GOVERNED BY THE WORD OF CHRIST BRINGS ABOUT very positive and beneficial results. ~ We'll consider them briefly.

▶▶ In [verses 19-20](#), ~ Paul says that as a result of being under the influence of God's word, ~ believers will engage in the following behaviors, ~ then lists

▶▶ And note that these positive results have to do with our corporate gatherings, ~ such as the worship service.

▶▶ Also, ~ these positive results have nothing to do w/ material blessings ~ and everything to do with spiritual blessings and spiritual growth.

THE FIRST POSITIVE RESULT, ~ VERSE 19a, ~ WE WILL SPEAK TO "ONE ANOTHER in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

▶▶ Now, ~ it's impossible to differentiate precisely between "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." ~ And that's ok, ~ because that's not Paul's point. ¶¶ 5/8

▷▷I will make note that songs here are not just any songs, ~ but songs that have to do with our faith and worshipping God. ~~ It's "spiritual" not "secular" songs.

▷▷Generally speaking, ~ the three terms indicate a variety of songs used in worshipping God in believers' gatherings.

▶▶Paul's point here is that when we are governed by the word of Christ, ~ we will be prompted to encourage one another through our worshipping God.

▶▶The singing of praise is always directed to God as the primary audience and recipient, ~ but there is also a horizontal dimension.

▷▷As a result of being under the influence of God's word, ~ the people of God hear one another singing praise to God, ~ and their hearts are encouraged and strengthened.

↪↪So, ~ when we sing the choruses and hymns in our worship service every Sunday, ~ it is not only a means of worshipping the Lord.

→→It is also a means of encouraging one another.

▶▶Now, ~ this first result is a little difficult to understand. ~~ What we need to keep in mind is that it is a work of God the Holy Spirit as we submit to His word.

▷▷And remember His ways are not our ways. ~~ So we're not always going to fully understand things.

↪↪But, ~ rest assured, ~ as we submit to God's word, ~ somehow our fellow believers will be encouraged through our singing praise to God when we gather together.

THE SECOND POSITIVE RESULT, ~ VERSE 19b, ~ WE WILL SING AND MAKE MELODY TO the Lord with our heart.

▶▶Now, ~ this is not talking about silent singing. ~~ It's talking about genuineness in our worship of God.

▶▶When we are governed by Jesus' word, ~ we will not just go through the motions and mouth the words of the choruses and hymns with no feeling, ~~ emotion, ~ or genuineness behind it.

▷▷We will not be like the people Jesus spoke about in [Matt. 15:8](#), ~ "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." ~~ They were definitely just going through the motions. ↴↴ 6/8

▶▶ As a result of being under the influence of God's word, ~ our singing to and praising the Lord on Sunday morning or anytime will be genuine.

THE THIRD POSITIVE RESULT OF BEING GOVERNED BY THE WORD OF CHRIST, ~ VERSE 20, ~ we will be thankful to God and express it when we worship and fellowship together.

▶▶ This is the opposite of the behavior of those engaged in drunkenness, ~ or in sinful behavior in general.

▷▷ Is. 5:11-12, ~ "Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! They have lyre and harp ~ [i.e., ~ stringed instruments], tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the Lord, or see the work of his hands."

▷▷ At their parties with their wine and their music, ~ these people don't see or think about what the Lord has done.

↳↳ They have no thought or care for the Him. ~~ They have no understanding of what the Lord is doing.

▶▶ In stark contrast, ~ believers, ~ when we are under the influence of Jesus' word, ~ will think about what the Lord has done.

▷▷ We will have many thoughts of Him and care for Him deeply. ~~ And we will have an understanding of what He is doing.

→→ And this in turn will lead us to be extremely thankful to Him and to verbally express that thankfulness in our corporate gatherings.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN WE CONTRAST THE RESULTS OF BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE WORD of Christ ~ with the results of drunkenness in particular and sinful behavior in general, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ we clearly see that the better course of action for us, ~ believers, ~ to take is to not put ourselves under the influence of sin, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but rather to put ourselves under the influence of Jesus' word.

▶▶ Now, ~ as we've noted before, ~ Jesus is not some cosmic killjoy, ~ threatening us to obey or else He'll take it out on us by making us miserable. ¶¶ 7/8

▷▷ Jesus loves us beyond measure. ~ Further, ~ He knows and wants what's best for us, ~ and what will bring positive results in the form of spiritual blessings and growth for us.

▶▶ As Paul spells out in [Eph. 5:18-20](#), ~ what's best for us and what will result in spiritual blessings and growth for us is to place ourselves under the influence of the word of Christ.

▷▷ One is reminded of the words of Moses, ~ which may apply to what we've been discussing. ~ Deut. 30:19-20a.

↪↪ "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days."

LET'S PRAY 8/8