

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit, not with Wine."

Ephesians 5:18

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Ephesians 5:18 (PowerPoint presentation)

Preface.

I think this is a meaningful and in some ways interesting Bible verse.

For me, it is a comforting word of God.

In what sense can I be relieved? "I don't have to drink!" "I don't have to drink!"

Since I was in the upper grades of elementary school, my older brothers have always told me, "You have that big figure and you have the looks of a drunkard because of your father and the lineage of the Hong family, which was ruined by alcohol, so you will definitely become a heavy drinker," but I do not drink even a drop of alcohol.

For me, alcohol has never been something that I had a good image of since I was a child.

I think I was lightly traumatized by it.

Part One

Drinking is good. Drinking is cool. Drinking is an adult education. Drinking is refreshing and stress relieving. Alcohol is tradition. Sake is something that is passed down from generation to generation, and we long to share a drink with our adult children. We grow closer to others over drinks. Entertainment without alcohol is impossible, and alcohol is a necessary tool for building close relationships. In a society where these trends are broadcast daily as a matter of course through advertisements on TV, in magazines, and in other media, it is easy to see why people are so blinded by the alcoholic beverage revelation. People and society accept this blind alcohol awareness campaign as a matter of course. I have always felt a sense of discomfort with these things since I was a child.

When I became a university student, I had one major concern.

I was worried that when I became a university student, I would have to drink alcohol, that I would be forced to drink alcohol, and that there was no way I could refuse to drink alcohol if it was offered to me by a senior student, whether at a welcome party for new students or at a drinking party for my club activities.

In compared with 30 years ago when I became a university student, the regulations on drinking under the age of 20 have become stricter now, so things are completely

different. When I became a university student, a pamphlet for a welcome party for new students made by upperclassmen introduced Tsukuba Medical Center Hospital, known as “Medicen,” as the hospital to which students of the university I attended were taken for acute alcohol intoxication.

At the time, I had a strong sense of discomfort with the idea that since I was now a college student, a status like an adult, I had to learn the taste of alcohol, and I had to learn and be made to learn how to deal with alcohol.

Still, well, as a college student, I had about three occasions when I was made to drink alcohol until I was totally drunken.

I started reading the Bible after I became a Christian. Then, when Daniel in the Old Testament was placed in a gifted education program in the Babylonian empire to which he was taken captive, in an atmosphere where everyone accepted the program as a matter of course and, in fact, even considered it an honor or a privilege, Daniel and his three friends made up their minds that they would not defile themselves with the feast and wine that the king would eat, and they requested, in a sense, to risk their lives by asking the king to let them not defile themselves. I was thrilled to hear this.

The body of a person who believes in the true God is the temple of God sanctified by God where the Spirit of God dwells, and I was moved and encouraged by the way they tried to express the importance and seriousness of this in their daily lives, and the way they carried it through.

I remember feeling a sense of relief that “it is okay to reject alcohol.”

Perhaps that is why I feel a sense of relief and agree with the words of this Ephesians 5:18, “Do not be drunk with wine, for there is debauchery.”

I think I have told you before that when I was a child, I hated and was afraid of my father who drank alcohol and was angry with me every day. But when I grew up and thought about my father, I felt differently. As a Korean living in Japan, I remember the pain of living through a storm of ethnic discrimination, the weakness of my father as a flesh and blood human being, the pressure of trying to protect his family while risking his life, dragging his legs for which he lost all sensation due to disk herniation, while sweating all day long at construction sites, and the pain and exhaustion in his heart and body from working so hard. Now, I think back and adequately say, “For my father, drinking was fun and rest. If he didn't drink alcohol, he wouldn't have been able to live.” I can now sympathize with my father's way of life, and I feel both love and apology for it.

However, since I was a small child, I have seen many adults, in addition to my father, who are angry after drinking. They were quiet before they drank alcohol, but suddenly they start to speak abusively. They complained about escaping reality. They become violent, fight with each other, and do things that are not good for them that they would

not do without drinking. They drink until they die, even though they would die if they drank any more alcohol. They buy alcohol even though they have no money. They say that they cannot have deep conversations or speak their mind without drinking, and they try to make themselves look big by drinking. Perhaps because of this, drinking alcohol, including just for the sake of drinking, seems futile to me and makes me feel empty.

I am sorry. I may be overstating things, but that's what drinking is to me.

I am sometimes told, "You are missing out on a large part of your life if you don't drink," but I feel "I am fortunate that I don't have to drink, that I don't feel the need to get drunk, and that I don't have the slightest desire to drink at all."

Part Two

At the same time, I can fully agree with the words, "Instead, be filled with the Spirit" which follows "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery."

I remember when I was touched for the first time by God the Holy Spirit in the innermost core of my being, and I could not help but confess the faith crying out, "Oh, Jesus!"

I was like I had never even known the letter "a" of Jesus Christ until then, but I said, "Jesus loves you. Jesus is everything. You can be happy only when you know Jesus." That is a bit weird, and at first glance, it is something that might lead one to think, "He must be drunk," or "He is a pathetic person who has fallen completely in love with a strange religion."

Before I know it, I feel an inexpressible sense of apology for my genuine sinfulness.

Despite this, I am saved.

I cannot give up fighting against sin.

And I am apologetically grateful for the fact that I myself am in the process of being led by the Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christ: love, joy, peace, generosity, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.

Above all, my very being has been remade anew through the salvation of Jesus Christ in order to be made a temple of the Holy Spirit.

I can pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit, that instead of being drunk with the world and boasting of empty boldness, I may embody boldness in what will last forever.

I am simply happy and fearful of the fact that I myself am being transformed into a person who is willing to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit so that I can live in the will of the Lord, if there is a will, that I am transformed into the person who wants to thank the Lord with all of my reason, intellect, and sensibility.

For that, I apologize.

At the risk of sounding a bit harsh and preachy, I have to disagree with Christians who know the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit get together with other Christians and drink alcohol to get drunk.

The Bible certainly does not forbid drinking, but it does not recommend it either.

Proverbs 31:6, Psalm 104:15, and other passages say, "Give wine to the brokenhearted. Wine rejoices the heart." These words seem to speak of the efficacy and comfort of drinking and recommend it.

However, more often than the words of the Bible that seem to encourage drinking seem to be words of warning against the unnecessaryness of drinking and debauchery.

The Bible describes a land where grapes can be cultivated and wine can be made, and where everyone can enjoy and savor the wine they make, thanking God for the fertility of the land and rejoicing.

But perhaps because we are all sinners, we can see in the Bible as well as in this world the figures who fell into a dissolute way of life, who is somehow drunk with the wine, and who, before long, has made an idol of the wine.

Part Three

The interesting point of Ephesians 5:18 is that it compares "being drunk with wine" and "being filled with the Spirit," which are two completely opposite things.

In other words, "getting drunk" and "being filled with the Spirit" seem to have similarities, but they are completely different in meaning and content.

The Bible teaches us about this similarity and difference in many places.

For example, in the Old Testament, there is King Saul, who was once filled with the Spirit of the Lord, but grieved the Holy Spirit as if to destroy himself, quenched the Spirit, became possessed by the spirit of wickedness, and threw a spear at a man while drunk. And there is young man David, who comforted King Saul who become drunk and tormented by evil spirit, while being filled with the Spirit of the Lord and offered praise while playing, despite being thrown the spear.

In the New Testament, it is Peter and the other disciples in Acts who were boldly transformed by the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

As if their previous timid appearance of hiding in fear was a lie, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the gospel of Jesus Christ in the languages of various nations.

People scoffed at such an appearance, saying, "How ill-mannered they are, getting drunk so early in the morning!"

Let's go to the book of Acts and look at it.

Acts 2:1-41 (PowerPoint)

Acts 4:1-14 (PowerPoint)

I think the greatest similarity between “getting drunk” and “being filled with the Holy Spirit” is “boldness.”

Peter, who had been hiding and praying, saying, “If it is revealed that I am a disciple who believes in Jesus Christ, my life is in danger,” was filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly came out in public to speak about God's salvation and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To those who did not believe in God, however, he seemed a bit insane, out of his mind, or drunkenly mumbling something very strange in the early hours of the morning.

It's interesting.

Believing in Jesus Christ, confessing Him, and sharing His gospel with others seems a bit insane.

I think it certainly is.

When I first saw Christians praying with their heads down in worship, I thought, “Oh, these people might be insane.”

But when I am touched by the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit, I don't care about such things, I just tell the truth as the truth, facts as facts, and just live.

I am convinced that It is a way of life that is sane, rational, intelligent, and sensitive, a way of life that is in accordance with the will of the Lord.

We learn that it all comes down to the words of Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

That is boldness.

True boldness, the boldness to demonstrate where it should be demonstrated in the eyes of God, exudes from our bodies.

We are not to be bold in vain, where there is no need to be bold, but in living it out, in communicating the fullness of the mystery revealed in Christ, in what perishes not, but what pertains to eternity and immortality.

We become bold in truth.

We will be bold in the person of Jesus Christ, the Truth.

On the other hand, we are bold when we are drunk.

I told you that I got drunk three times when I was in the university. One of those times was at the year-end party of the sports club I belonged to at the time, which was held at a rented out tavern called “Murasaki”.

At the urging of a senior member of the club which I could not refuse, I drank beer poured into eight lined up cups to the tune of the song “Do-Re-Mi” until I was completely drunk.

Then a strange boldness began to grow inside me.

There was a senior female manager whom I had always thought was beautiful, but she was dating another senior player in the club.

Still, I had a strange, obscene thought that I might try to talk to that manager just once, when I was drunk.

However, I had a feeling in the corner of my mind that if the senior player with whom she was dating found out that I had done so, it would be a terrible thing, but I had the audacity to say, “Oh well,” which was clearly wrong.

Well, as it turned out, I was too goofy myself, and since almost all the members of the club were drunk, I was unable to talk to the senior manager while we were kind of waffling around.

After the year-end party was over, I managed to go back to the dormitory and fell asleep with my shoes on the moment I entered my room. I was so relieved. However, the next morning, as I looked in the mirror at my image scribbled all over my face and body with an oil-based sign pen, I felt relieved and thought to myself, “I am so glad I did not do anything strange to my senior manager last night.”

(Now that I think about it, I believe that God was protecting me.)

Even now, I cannot forget that moment.

At that time, I learned firsthand that when people get drunk, they become seriously bold and do things that they shouldn't do, things that they can't help but do, things that are empty, and that they have the temerity to do things that they shouldn't do without a care in the world.

Perhaps there were many in the Ephesian church 2000 years ago who, instead of seeking the boldness of being filled with the Holy Spirit, lived lives filled with wine and boldness in things that did not need boldness, which was probably not the Lord's will.

Part Four

In understanding the Word of God in Ephesians 5:18, the words of Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19 are very important.

Ephesians 4:30 (PowerPoint)

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (PowerPoint)

The Bible tells us, “It is a fact already determined that this world will perish.”

Whether the time of its destruction is first or our life span, we do not know, but in any case, we have all become perishable through death because of sin.

But the sealed proof that we will not perish in that day of perdition is that the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us through faith in Christ.

And yet, as 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, "Even those who say they believe in Christ, who believe in God, live in a way that not only grieves but extinguishes the Holy Spirit who has become their seal, and they may do it," which is a serious matter.

Since we human beings have forgotten the one true God, abandoned Him, and strayed from Him, we have built civilizations and cultures in an attempt to satisfy our unfulfilled desire for approval with all kinds of things.

However, none of these things can satisfy our fundamental need for approval.

We are always anxious.

We are always somehow unsatisfied.

Somehow, emptiness always accompanies us.

We feel a lack of any kind of joy or pleasure.

Where does such a bottomless desire for approval in us human beings come from? The Bible tells us, "It comes from the fact that the Spirit of God is not in me."

In those who have come to know and believe that Jesus Christ is God, the Holy Spirit, who is God, has taken up residence in them as a seal.

The fact that this body is no longer mine but God's and belongs to God has brought freedom, not bondage.

My unceasing need for approval has been ended..

The fact that I belonged to God brought not bondage, but rather freedom from all false idols and gods, and the presence of the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit were like a big piece of the puzzle of my being that had been lost.

A person who has learned through his or her own experience that there is no greater fulfillment than the filling of the Holy Spirit, that is the Christian, isn't it?

And a way of life that wants to boldly speak, live, and communicate that joy, that most precious joy, salvation, and fulfillment that humanity has lost.

That would be a life filled with the Holy Spirit.

We cannot get drunk on alcohol.

We don't feel the need to be drunk.

Conclusion

The words of Ephesians 5:18,

Ephesians 5:18 (PowerPoint)

I think this verse can be paraphrased as follows.

“I don't feel the need to get drunk. I want to be sure of my mind and pray to God. I want to praise the Lord with sobriety. I want to eat the Word of God with a sober mind. I want to be sure and live the Lord's will.’ Thus you should live.”

I would like to pray that we will be able to live a life filled with the Spirit rather than a life that depends on alcohol.

Let's pray.

Benediction : Ephesians 5:18