

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 20

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: **“What Controls You? / Godly Control”**

Ephesians 5:18 ~ July 24, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers live under God’s power and control – to live wisely.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Missions Month – Dale Beyer

Opening Prayer

To understand our verse today - as the Ephesians would have understood it, we need to understand the common practices of the culture in which they lived.

The Greek and Roman world was morally corrupt in more ways and at a deeper level than our own culture. One of the common religious practices involved the worship of Artemis / Dianna. One of the Seven Wonders of the World was in Ephesus – the Temple of Artemis. One of the ways that they worshipped this goddess was through drunken orgies in the Temple. Their former way of worship was controlled by their physical lusts and the alcohol they consumed. Therefore, immorality, and drunkenness were a normal and accepted part not just of the culture of Ephesus, but even of the religious practices.

You can understand that when it came to teaching the Ephesian believers how to live, that Paul had to be very direct in how they were to now live and worship as followers of Christ. They were no longer to worship as they had when they followed Artemis – controlled by their passions and liquor. They were new creations in Christ, adopted into the family of God, and they needed to imitate

God, not the people of Ephesus. They needed to be controlled by the Spirit of God!

18 “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

This verse is not a stand-alone verse in this passage – it is directly connected to what we have been studying throughout chapter 5. To obey the command to imitate God (*vs. 1*) and abstain from immorality, impurity and greed, so they could pursue goodness, righteousness and truth, so they could live carefully, with wisdom, making the most of every opportunity “...because the days are evil”, they/we need to be controlled - filled by the Holy Spirit! Paul begins by a negative command:

The command against drunkenness vs. 18a

Keep this verse in context with the preceding verses. Paul has just commanded us to live wisely, making the most of every opportunity – because the days are evil.

Many people struggle and live with great pain, sadness, and disappointment in their daily life. Maybe their sadness is due to illness in their own life or in the life of a loved one. Maybe they are experiencing a time of life where they are in the “valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23) or some other great difficulty.

Sometimes these difficulties are a natural part of life in our sinful, fallen world, and sometimes they are the result of evil that is done to them. Whatever the specific reason or circumstance, when some people become aware that “the days are evil”, instead of confronting and exposing that reality, they

prefer to escape this reality, and they get drunk to escape and experience a sense of fun and happiness.

But Paul clearly tells us not to get drunk!

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.”

It is extremely foolish, since the “days are evil”, to think that you can turn to alcohol as a remedy or escape from the difficulties of the day! Wise living – living in a way that you will know what God’s will is, is found in the Bible, not in the bottom of a bottle.

Present Passive Imperative

Why is this command important for us to obey?

Because it “leads to debauchery” (NIV)

“for that is dissipation” (NASB)

Dissipation / debauchery are foreign words to many people today.

The term in the Greek has the idea expressed in our modern slang of *‘being wasted’* – or of *wasting your life*. The same root word is used in Luke 15:13 when speaking of the Prodigal Son, “...squandered (*wasted away*) his wealth in wild living.”

Paul has just told us to live wisely, not unwisely (vs. 15-17).

When people are drunk, they do the dumbest things! They become fools in what they say and what they do.

A cowboy, who just moved to Wyoming from Texas, walks into a bar and orders three mugs of Bud. He sits in the back of the room, drinking a sip out of each one in turn. When he finishes them, he comes back to the bar and orders three more.

The bartender approaches and tells the cowboy, "You know, a mug goes flat after I draw it. It would taste better if you bought one at a time."

The cowboy replies, "Well, you see, I have two brothers. One is in Arizona, the other is in Colorado. When we all left our home in Texas, we promised that we'd drink this way to remember the days when we drank together. So I'm drinking one beer for each of my brothers and one for myself."

The bartender admits that this is a nice custom, and leaves it there.

The cowboy becomes a regular in the bar, and always drinks the same way. He orders three mugs and drinks them in turn.

One day, he comes in and only orders two mugs. All the regulars take notice and fall silent. When he comes back to the bar for the second round, the bartender says, "I don't want to intrude on your grief, but I wanted to offer my condolences on your loss."

The cowboy looks quite puzzled for a moment, then a light dawns in his eyes and he laughs.

"Oh, no, everybody's just fine," he explains, "It's just that my wife and I joined the Baptist Church and I had to quit drinking."

"Hasn't affected my brothers though."

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery."

Does this verse mean that drinking is a sin?

There are differing opinions within the Christian community on whether or not a Christian should drink alcohol. My purpose this morning is not to discuss that point...Paul did not say "*Do not drink alcohol.*" – he commands us never to get drunk, because of the damage and wastefulness that drunkenness brings.

One thing we *can* say without any hesitation: The Bible is clear that drunkenness is a sin, and therefore, we must avoid it at all costs. (See Gal. 5:19-23, 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Peter 4:3)

For the Ephesians, this was a vital command. They had lived in a culture that drunkenness was not only tolerated, but in a sense, it was pious behavior! Paul's command though is not only in the form of a negative prohibition...the most important part of this verse is the positive command – to “...be filled with the Spirit”.

The command to be Spirit-filled vs. 18b

There is great confusion today in the Church about the Holy Spirit's activity in the life of the believer. I think it has always been an area of our Christian life that believers have struggled to understand, but even more so in the last one hundred years as we have seen the popularity of the Pentecostal movement. Let me try and give some clarity to what Paul is saying here by discussing four aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the life of the believer:

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Sealing of the Holy Spirit

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Filling of the Holy Spirit

At conversion, every believer in Christ is baptized into the Body of Christ by (or 'in') the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:13 - NIV

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

1 Cor. 12:13 - ASV

“For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body...”

“were all baptized” - Aorist passive indicative

Aorist = completed action

Passive = Done to you

Indicative = Certain action

When we are baptized in the Spirit into the Body of Christ, this also marks the moment that God seals us with the Spirit – and when the Spirit begins to indwell us.

So, to keep this simple, we could say that the Spirit’s baptism of the believer, His sealing of the believer and His indwelling presence in each believer are all speaking of the same event but emphasizing different results.

Baptism in the Spirit speaks to our inclusion into our new life – in Christ and into the Body of Christ, the Church.

Sealing speaks to the guarantee that God puts on our spiritual destiny – the permanence of our new position as saved, adopted children of God. (Eph. 1:13)

Indwelling speaks to the Holy Spirit’s daily, permanent abiding with us.

All three of these things: being baptized by the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit are all things that happen to us / for us at the moment of our conversion to Christ. They are not part of a ‘second blessing’ or ‘second baptism’.

It’s important to note that the N.T. never commands us to be baptized by the Holy Spirit, sealed or indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

But being filled by the Holy Spirit is another matter.

The N.T. does command us to be filled by the Holy Spirit, so we can say that filling is not the same as baptism, sealing, or indwelling

Baptism

Occurs only once
In each believers life

Never happened before
Day of Pentecost

True of all believers

Cannot be undone

Results in *position*

Occurs when we believe
In Christ

No prerequisite
(except faith in Christ)

Filling

is a repeated experience

Occurred in the O.T.

Not necessarily experienced
By all believers

Can be lost (due to sin)

Results in *power*

Occurs throughout the
Christian life

Depends on yieldedness

“Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

Present Passive Imperative

Being “filled with the Spirit” means that you set aside your fleshly desires, thoughts, and actions, and allow the Holy Spirit to influence your desires, your thoughts, and lead you to God-pleasing actions.

Wise living requires us to be “filled by the Spirit”.

To imitate God, to live good, righteous, truthful and thankful lives, to avoid sinful practices, we must be “filled by the Spirit”.

Application

So, how can we be filled with the Spirit? How do we obey this command?

First, understand your need for the Spirit's active role in your life.

One of the foundational keys to living by the Spirit is realizing that you can't live the Christian life through self-effort alone. This is a spiritual battle, and we need to fight with spiritual ammunition.

Second, keep learning God's Word.

This means that you won't live your life according to your feelings or the values of the world – but you will live your life according to God's Word. This doesn't mean you ignore your feelings, it means your feelings aren't the guiding force for how you will relate to others and how you will relate to God. It means you bring your feelings under the authority and truth of God's Word.

Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

This is a parallel passage with Ephesians 5:18 – and Paul tells the Colossians to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching...”

When you put along-side today's passage, this is the parallel to being “filled by the Spirit”. Letting the Word of God dwell in you richly, and being filled by the Holy Spirit are basically the same thing.

***Beware of Christian bobble-heads!

Third, allow other believers to encourage you.

We are not called to live in isolation, but in the community and fellowship of the saints. This occurs best in the fellowship of the local church. Through worshipping together (as the next few verses will expand upon), studying together, praying together, confessing sin to one another, and fellowshiping with one another, you will be made aware of the strengths and weaknesses in your life. This will enable you to seek the Spirit's power and leading in specific areas.

Fourth, confess sin – submit (yield) to the Spirit's leading.

Living or walking by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) means that you are battling the desires of the flesh. The Holy Spirit within you will wage war against the sin in your life because they are in contrast with one another. Asking God to open your eyes to the sins in your life – will lead to the Holy Spirit filling you with more of His presence and influence. Remember, the Holy Spirit is a person – like the Father and the Son – so we're not talking about a magic button or genie's lamp here – we're talking about a relationship with God – with His Spirit that resides in you. You will be more and more filled, as you empty yourself of your sin, thereby making 'room' for the Spirit of God to fill you with more of Himself.

How will you know if you are being "filled with the Spirit"?

You will imitate God (vs. 1)

You will worship with more joy and humility (vs. 19-21)

Your relationships will reflect the love of God (5:22-6:9)

Close in prayer