

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Vaught Sermon Notes: Ephesians

W.O. Vaught Archive

2-1-1977

What the Bible Says about Drunkenness

W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_ephesians



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "What the Bible Says about Drunkenness" (1977). *Vaught Sermon Notes: Ephesians*. 49. https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_ephesians/49

This Sermon Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the W.O. Vaught Archive at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vaught Sermon Notes: Ephesians by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DRUNKENNESS

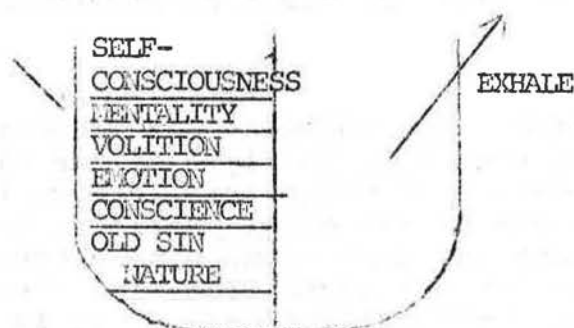
A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 53
EPHESIANS 5:18

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

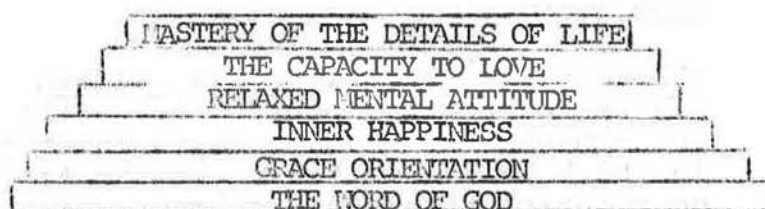
EPHESIANS 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

In order to understand this amazing verse, which has caused great consternation in the Christian world for so many centuries, and has also been misunderstood by so many, it is absolutely necessary for us to keep in mind the construction of the human soul. It is also necessary for us to keep in mind the edification complex.

THE HUMAN SOUL



THE EDIFICATION COMPLEX



As we breathe in truth through the apertures on the various facets of the soul, we begin to erect the edification complex. As we climb up and up, we finally arrive at a mastery of the details of life. Soul-breathing is absolutely necessary if we are ever going to arrive at mature Christian living.

This verse 18 is the crossroads of this chapter. All we have studied in Ephesians up to now comes to a focus right here. The secret of the growth in the soul and the development of the edification complex is THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The filling of the Holy Spirit is the key to the inhale and exhale of Bible truth. Since God the Holy Spirit is on the inside of every believer, it is very important to know the function of the Holy Spirit within. This is the Christian's spiritual powerhouse. This is the storage battery of the Christian's inner life. When a Christian is controlled by the Holy Spirit, then he produces divine good. Divine good is also produced by the inhale of Bible doctrine. Finally, the greatest divine good is produced from the edification complex in the soul. So when a believer builds a strong edification complex in the soul from the vast storehouse of Bible doctrine from the Scripture, then the divine good he produces is of the highest quality. You see, there are various types of divine good; such as gold, silver, and precious stones. The highest type is the precious stone type produced by mature, stable Christians who have developed a strong edification complex.

The Church Age Is Different

One point to be remembered at all times is this--you live in the Church Age and as a New Testament believer, you have assets that were unknown in Old Testament times. You are now living in the intensification of the angelic conflict. Christ is now seated at God's right hand.

When this happened, God said to Christ, "Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now the intensification of the angelic conflict is the making of these enemies into Christ's footstool. So we are living in the heat of that battle, in the intensification of that conflict. When Christ sat down at God's right hand, the angelic conflict shifted gears and now we are in the real heat of that battle, with Satan and all his demon forces turning all their big guns on us. In this age, the Church Age, we are all in the line of fire of Satan's most vicious attack. Every single person in the Church Age who is a believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. None of these things was true in Old Testament times. We just happened to arrive on the scene when every demon and every false power at the Devil's command is being unleashed on us. Every believer is now a priest and is now an ambassador and this was never true in Old Testament times. Now in the Church Age every believer has a supernatural way of life and has a supernatural task.

The Time When Ephesians Was Written

Let us go back to about 62 A.D., the time when Ephesians was written, and remember that you have to interpret the Bible in light of the time in which it was written. At the time when Paul wrote this letter, the consumption of alcoholic beverages was one of the chief problems, by both the people and the priests. In that day they drank wine almost like we drink water today. This phrase "Be not drunk with wine where in excess" in the greek really says, "Stop being stoned." It is a present, passive, participle of "Methusko" and this means to get drunk on alcohol. It is derived from "Methu" which is a noun for alcohol. We get such words as methanol, methylene, and methyl alcohol from this word. "Methusko" means too much alcohol and this means being drunk. The present tense means that they got drunk habitually and the negative means to stop it. The passive voice means that they received this drunken condition from taking the alcohol into their bodies. The imperative mood means that they are to stop it. So the believers in Ephesus, including the priests, were getting drunk habitually and Paul here was commanding them to stop it.

Now, whether you drink or do not drink is none of my business. But be that as it may, I am going to present to you what the Bible says about drinking hard liquor and you can take it or leave it.

BE NOT DRUNK WITH WINE

1. THE NEGATIVE COMMAND

The negative command not to drink intoxicants is being used here as an analogy of being filled with the Holy Spirit--and not being filled with "spirits." We have two passive imperatives here. "Be not drunk with wine" and "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." The indwelling of alcohol in large amounts changes the character and personality of the one drinking.

2. IT IS WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE THAT COUNTS.

Things on the inside of us change us for better or for worse. We are activated and motivated by what is on the inside.

3. A SOLEMN WARNING HERE.

But in addition to the analogy of alcohol to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there is a warning to the believer in Ephesus regarding the use of alcohol. They used it for sublimation and for a tranquilizer. Almost everyone drank in the ancient world except Daniel. Just as in Europe today many believers drink in moderation. The thing that is wrong with the drinking is this-- it was taking the place of God's work of grace in their hearts.

4. EXCESSIVE USE OF ALCOHOL IS DESTRUCTIVE.

When alcohol is used to excess, like these Ephesians were using it, it destroyed the building of the edification complex in their minds.

5. DRINKING ALCOHOL IS THE GREAT REFUSAL.

The Christian who is relying on alcohol has refused to take advantage of the Christian assets provided for him through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

6. A CHEAP SUBSTITUTE.

The Christian is thus filled with "spirits" instead of the Holy Spirit and this is a cheap substitute. You can't have both at the same time. It is not "both and" but it is "either or."

The word for wine here is "oinos" and this means alcoholic beverage. In John 2 where Jesus turned the water into wine the word is "oinos" and it was intoxicating. So this means stop being drunk by means of "oinos." Wherein is--and the "is" is a present, active, indicative of "eimi" and it means "keeps on being" so this says, "It keeps on being a habit of excess." The word for excess is "Asotia" and this is the word from which we get "sot." It means debauchery, excess in shameful indulgence. So a corrected translation is like this--"Stop becoming intoxicated by means of wine which is debauchery."

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF DRINKING

(Please remember that Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach. This in no way conflicts with what Paul is saying here.)

Drinking alcohol is its own worst witness. Just watch those who drink and you will see it doesn't have much from which to recommend itself to you for anything of value. I have no prejudice about drinking, but I will present here the doctrine of drinking and what you do with this truth is your business. Please don't forget this--The drinking of liquor and beer is the No. 1 problem of this nation today, and this applies right down to high school and even into junior high.

1. DRUNKENNESS IS ALWAYS CONDEMNED BY THE BIBLE.

ISAIAH 5:11 "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!"

ISAIAH 5:22 "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:"

ISAIAH 28:7-8 "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean."

ROMANS 13:13 "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."

1 CORINTHIANS 5:11 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

PROVERBS 20:1 "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

PROVERBS 23:20 "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:"

When thinking and reflexes are not normally functioning, then you are drunk. Now there is a difference between drinking and drunkenness, and drunkenness is a sin. The Bible does not say drinking is a sin, but it says drunkenness is a sin. Now, don't get up tight about that statement and run out of here and tie one on or buy a six pack. Just relax and listen to this doctrine all the way through.

2. DRUNKENNESS IS TO BE AVOIDED BY MATURE RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE.

You are responsible for others, and to carry out your responsibility, you cannot be drunk.

Leaders ought not to drink ever.

PROVERBS 31:4-5 "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." (It makes me boil in my heart to see our presidents drinking toasts with alcohol with leaders of foreign governments--especially Russia and Red China. He is out of line when he does so and the Bible says he is out of line when he does this.)

Pastors need to stay sober.

1 TIMOTHY 3:3 "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;"

TITUS 1:7 "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;"

Deacons need to stay sober.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8 "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;"

3. THE BIBLE CONDEMNS CERTAIN PEOPLE AND TRIBES FOR DRUNKENNESS.

Genesis 9:21 - Noah

1 Samuel 25:36-37 - Nabal

Isaiah 28:1 - Ephraim

Genesis 19:32-36 - Lot

4. THE BIBLE STATES TWO CASES WHERE ALCOHOL IS CONDEMNED.

Proverbs 31:6-7 and 1 Timothy 5:23

"Oinos" is alcoholic beverage--not grape juice.

So evidently there is some benefit to be derived from a little bit of alcohol. This is something used very moderately. So if you take this as an excuse to run out and throw a big one, you have twisted what I am trying to say here.

5. THE WATER WHICH JESUS TURNED TO WINE WAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE.
 In John 2:1-11 it is "Oinos". But the fact that he turned water into wine was not the original liquor advertisement. Some smart-aleck and hotheads try to make this into a condoning of drinking. It does no such thing. The miracle was not designed to furnish liquor to get people drunk, but to call attention to who Jesus was. The miracle focuses attention on Jesus, the God man and the only Saviour. In this miracle we have six giant water pots. They had been empty, but were filled with water. Now you can distill water until doomsday and it won't become liquor. The water was turned to wine by Jesus and that was a miracle. So we have a spiritual lesson here. The water of the word of Ephesians 5:26 and it means wine is analogous to inner happiness. Judges 9:13 and Psalm 104:15
JUDGES 9:13 "And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"
 The primary purpose was Jesus presenting himself as the unique Saviour of the world. At a wedding it was customary to serve wine. IT WAS NOT CUSTOMARY TO MAKE A FOOL OF YOURSELF AND GET DRUNK.
 The percentage of alcohol in the wine Jesus made has been an occasion for much argument, but evidently it was much less than the hard liquor of today. Be certain of this--what Jesus did was perfect and the wine he made was the best that anyone has ever consumed in the history of the world.
6. ALCOHOLISM FORMS A PART OF THE PATTERN OF NATIONAL DISASTER.
 Now here is where I get my "amen" crowd back. Alcoholism causes national disaster and depression.
JOEL 1:4 "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."
 When too many people get drunk the economy of the country is hurt. You can't have drunk people and have a stable economy. Drunk people often cause a riot.
JOEL 1:5 "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth."
 A nation of drunks can be easily invaded. They are considered by the enemy as "sitting ducks."
JOEL 1:6 "For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion."
7. THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.
 It leads to impulsive and abusive behaviour. It amplifies mental attitude sins and can lead to violence. It leads to a disease which effects the eyes or the legs. (In Mississippi when I was a boy, they would drink all kinds of things, like extract and they called the disease "jake-leg." Excessive alcohol in the brain can cause brain deterioration. Sclerosis is also caused by excessive drinking. Delirium tremens is also caused by heavy drinking. A certain type of lying is also brought on by excessive drinking.

8. ABSTINENCE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE YOUNG.

For the growing years abstinence from drinking liquor cannot be over emphasized. One of the most virile civilizations of all time was the Roman Republic for their first 600 years and they didn't drink at all for that period. Then they began to make liquor and drink and this was one of the reasons for their downfall.

9. NOTE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE BELIEVER SHOULD OPERATE.a. Under the law of love.

Christians are to so live that they do not cause others to stumble.

b. What about the elements in the Lord's Supper? We read Jesus took the cup, and in that cup was boiled grape juice. How do we know? We know it was not distilled wine for this reason. During the Passover and all the Jewish feasts no distilled wine was ever permitted. We have the record of a Chaldean Commander writing to his forces in the field, and it says--"Remember you have Jewish men in your ranks. Do not serve any alcoholic drinks during the Jewish sacred days for they do not tolerate anything like this among their people."

The Jews never drank intoxicating wine at the Passover. Therefore in the Lord's Supper, there is no excuse for a church ever to serve fermented wine, but we have people doing this all the way from the Plymouth Brethren to the Episcopalians. But it is not Biblically correct.

c. Under the law of expediency, you can't afford to drink because of your influence over other people.