

Ephesians 5:18-19 “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” INI

The Lord’s coming at Christmas calls us to, “Be filled with the Spirit for the LORD’s coming in our hearts throughout the New Year.” You may have picked up a bottle of wine or other holiday spirits as an appropriate part of celebrating the LORD’s coming with joy and thanksgiving to the LORD. On the other hand, notice the contrast in Ephesians 5 between being filled with the Holy Spirit and being filled with spirits? The Lord’s coming calls us to rouse our spirit by the former. To be filled with spirits is dissipation (Gk lit. not saving), a reckless choice that does not save yourself or others. To rely on spirits to provide relief for a problem in life, to give you a joy in life is dissipation? So, what is dissipation? Well, it means to abandon moral behavior, overindulge. When we abandon what is right, the rule of law, godly restraint, we also abandon the path that saves for the path of disease, destruction, devastation, and death. But that friend comes along, or the group, saying com’on, “Let’s go drinking, it’ll be spirited fun.” What foolish idolatry to think that the chemical warping of our brain can ever provide a resolution of problems, lasting joy, and real life. God warns, the sinful use of spirits is a lie of Satan that is right up there with his first, “Go ahead and eat the fruit, you won’t die, you’ll be like God.” So, with the spirits of alcohol, Satan, the world, and “friends” may tempt us to make foolish choices that lead to destruction. 6000 years of the history of this world show the results of Satan’s lie have continually produced, disease, destruction, devastation, and death. So be filled with the Spirit for the LORD’s coming in your hearts throughout the New Year.

When someone is “under the influence” of spirits it affects all their thinking and acting, and it creates an urgent desire for more. So, the

comparison of our text is pointing out that we should be bringing all our acting and thinking under the influence of the Holy Spirit and nourish the urgent desire He creates to make joyful melodies in our heart to the Lord, to be filled with the Spirit for the LORD's coming. Colossians 3:16 is parallel to our text but instead of "be filled with the Spirit" it substitutes as an equivalent, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you **richly**." So, find and follow all the riches of Christ's word for this is being filled with the Holy Spirit for the LORD's coming.

Sadly, many people claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit, yet refuse to follow God's word in certain areas of their life assuming they know better than God. And how often have we been tempted or succumbed to the same? But this chapter of Ephesians reminds us that "being filled with the Spirit" is the very, cold, sober work of cutting off our sin in daily repentance and washing in the holy, precious blood of Christ. He was abandoned instead of you and me that we may be cleansed in Him. Yet, He never abandoned His Father's will that we may put on the clothing of His righteousness. Being filled with the Spirit is living by and for Jesus coming, by His coming into our hearts for His coming again. For He is the only saving way. Yes, this world and Satan would like to intoxicate you to make choices that lead to dissipation. But that makes your life nothing but a biological crawl from womb to tomb. Instead, "be filled with the Holy Spirit for the LORD's coming," saying that embattled "no" to our flesh and a triumphant "Yes" to all the promises of God in Christ Jesus. For in Him, you will ride the cresting wave of God's purpose which will break upon the shore destined to be your everlasting and delightful home! Amen. To God alone be the Glory. John Ude Hymn 87

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In the Name of Jesus

How do you get out of a slump? Your shot, the one you seldom miss just won't go in. That high note you've nailed so often, you keep missing. The attitude of faith, you know you should have, is shrouded with despair. Your coach may tell you to get your mind focused, to eliminate a bad form, or to be confident. If our minds are dwelling on a nagging problem, a person in the audience, or just doubting that we can hit it, it may throw everything off. That was exactly the problem in our text. Christ came to His own people, for a while virtually all of them had been enthralled with His message and miracles, but most of them had not received Him. Their minds were dwelling on the earthly bread king they wanted, on the hard sayings which they didn't want, and on the accusations which the Jewish leaders raised against Jesus. We've been there again and again haven't we? We don't intend to sin, but we get so caught up in what we want that we are not focused on Jesus and our spiritual life is in a slump. Even every spiritual effort we make is contaminated with this idolatry, so we are always missing the mark. Our Coach supplies the remedy to our slump. "Repent," Our Coach, the Holy Spirit says, get your mind back where it belongs, focused on Jesus. But even with a nagging earthly problem, we, at times, can't turn the problem off to truly focus where we belong. But our Coach reminds us of all that Jesus has done for us, dying to redeem you and me from sin, rising to deliver you and me from death, ascending to provide you and me all good things, and so enabling us once again to repent, to get our mind focused on Jesus where it belongs.

Sometimes our coaches have to point out how we have fallen into a bad form. Yet even when they point it out, we have a hard time breaking the bad habit that's throwing our shot off, our note off, our attitude off. That had happened with Jesus' people then. At His birth, they were too busy to be bothered to follow the Star to worship their new born King. At His arrest, they went along with the crowd, maybe even joining in the shouts, just a few weeks before the time of our text: "Crucify Him." Now that they had done it, they couldn't turn back without exposing and condemning

themselves. How often does it happen with us that we go along with the group: perhaps teasing and making fun of another or pursuing entertainment that excites our lust, and our spiritual life is in a slump? Our Coach supplies the remedy to our slump. "Eliminate the bad form," Our Coach, the Holy Spirit says. Our flesh finds all kinds of excuses: "everyone is doing it," "I can't help it," "It won't really matter." Beware! Staying in a spiritual slump in sin can lead to being cut from the team. Our Coach, the Holy Spirit directs us, as He did Christ's people then, to our baptism. We may not want to condemn our self, but baptism assures the repentant that we are clothed in the spotless, sparkling radiance of Christ's own righteousness. There is no condemnation to those who through baptism are clothed in Christ. And so, God Himself enables us in that baptism to drown our sinful flesh, to seize our sinful habits by the throat, and to hold them under the water til they perish. And every time they rise out of the water again, to drown them again. Baptism is God's promise to us: "You are My holy children in Jesus." A promise that empowers us to strive to live like Jesus wants us to live.

Sometimes our coaches have to tell us to be confident. Our own doubt and second guessing is throwing everything off. But like whistling in the dark to conquer fear, telling those, who are doubting, to just be confident, just doesn't work very well. That was true with Jesus' people then. Acknowledging that they had crucified the LORD, they cried out, "What shall we do?" In themselves they found no hope. "How can we possibly be saved?" When we realize how we have sinned against Jesus, how can we ever be confident? Our Coach supplies the remedy to our slump. Our Coach, the Holy Spirit says: "Be confident," for (1 John 1:7) the blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son cleanses you from all your sin. 2:2 And He promises, Christ Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. Our sin proves we are part of the world He died for. Therefore, His blood cleanses all our sin. In Him we have absolute confidence. Our Coach, the Holy Spirit

continually trains us to turn our focus to Jesus and to eliminate our bad forms. It's through this Spirit powered daily battle with our sin that He brings us out of every slump renewing confidence in Christ. For in Christ we've already won. For Him, we'll give our best shot. Amen. To God alone be Glory John Ude Hymn 226 2,3