

Sermon for Sunday, October 19, 1975, by Andrew A. Jumper, D. D., Pastor
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"THE DRUNK AND THE REDRUNK"

Ephesians 5:1-20

Text: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart..."

Ephesians 5:18,19

This morning I want to share some thoughts with you in a sort of teaching way rather than a preaching way about what St. Paul has to say concerning how we as Children of the Light should walk. The Bible tells us that man has two natures. As we read the story of creation in Genesis, the Bible tells us that God formed man of the dust of the earth. You and I are inextricably a part of God's created world. We are of the earth. And yet, the Bible tells us that we are also made in God's image. The Bible says, "Let us make man after our own image." We are made in the image of God, and when God created us of the dust of the earth, the Bible says that God then "inspired" us--breathed into man the breath of life. That is, we are more than just a part of the created world. We are made in God's image--inspired by God, and the Bible then says that man became a whole personality. You and I, then, are unique. We are a part of the created world, but we are more than that. And that is what makes us a whole personality.

Now, the fact that we are made of the earth, earthy means that we have what St. Paul calls a carnal nature, we are subject to the passions and the lusts and the greeds that all of God's creation experiences. We are in that sense, then, captive to our carnal nature. After the fall, when man broke his relationship to God and sin became a part of his life, the spiritual nature of man was cut off. Man was separated from God, and therefore, the carnal nature dominated man's life. If you can, imagine a throne room in your heart, and on that throne is seated not God, but you. Your own will, your own ego, ruling your own life. That's the way we are. We are ruled by our own carnal nature. Now the Bible tells us that there is a sort of war going on inside of us. Because we are more than carnal, we were made for fellowship with God. The question is: which of these natures--our spiritual nature or our carnal nature--will dominate our lives? You see, we are indeed made for God. The Bible tells us that being made in God's image, we have a capacity for God that no other part of God's creation has. As someone has put it, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." There is in us a God-shaped vacuum that longs for God, and yet, we are aware that there is a brokenness in us. We are not what we ought to be--we are not even what we want to be. Most of us this morning would be deeply ashamed for the rest of those around us to know what sort of thoughts we sometimes think, what sort of lust and greeds come into our hearts. Yes, all of us would be ashamed to have that exposed. Not very many of us would be willing to let someone else look into the inner recesses of our minds and our hearts because of the darkness they would see. Yes, there is a brokenness in us. We try to fill this brokenness. There is this hunger within us and we try to fill it. We use all kinds of secular substitutes to try to fill this vacuum in us, this hungering in us. Some people strive for success, and feel that if they can achieve fame and the admiration of men that this hunger will be met. Others try to achieve friendship. They go about everywhere trying to make friends, trying to create a cadre of people who will love them, hoping that the ache within will be filled. Others look for riches and things to fill the vacuum in life. There are those who do not do as St. Paul says, "Do not get drunk with wine..." Why? Because there is an ache inside of them and through drugs and other means, people try to fill the vacuum in their lives. Yes, the dreadful hunger that you and I know about, the dreadful need that we carry in life.

We are trying to fill a God-shaped vacuum with things that are out of shape. It is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole--it is the wrong thing for the vacuum. Only God fits the mold. So, our efforts to fill life with all these other things never work out very well. You know that; that's partly why you are here this morning. All the things that you seek for and achieve and accumulate don't really meet that need in your life. You and I have seen the tragedy of people who reach out in all directions to fill that inner vacuum and get into all sorts of dreadful trouble, go to all kinds of excesses and extremes, and yet there is still that void in their lives. And when they achieve the things they struggle for, that does not satisfy, and then they must reach beyond that, and still nothing satisfies. The rich young ruler came to Jesus. He had everything, one would think. Yet, there was a vacuum in his life. "What must I do to be saved?" he said. Yes, a God-shaped vacuum.

St. Paul says that the answer to our problem is in a new relationship to God. He says we have to go into the heart--into that throne room--and depose the one seated there. We must depose the ruler of the human heart. We must unseat ourselves, and then must establish as the ruler of our wills, the king of our hearts--Jesus, the Lord of Life. We must be filled with God's Spirit, and Jesus must displace ego at the control center of life for each of us. We must be filled with God's Spirit. Now, many of you have had religious experiences. Some of you have shared them with me. All of us can remember back in times past when God was very real to us. Many of you can remember when you were a young person on a retreat somewhere, or when something happened in your life, when you felt especially close to God. Some of you have been to the Billy Graham crusade when it was here, and some of you went forward and accepted Christ. That was a high moment in your life. Many of us, most of us, dare I say all of us, have had religious experiences of one sort or another at one time or another. And yet, they were not enough, were they? They have not sustained us, these experiences. Somehow as the time went by, the weeks and the months and the years, the glow of that experience began to dim and, while we remember it, it still does not move us deeply, it no longer warms our heart. Those experiences faded away. Let me remind you then, of what St. Paul said for you and me. He says that we are to be filled with the Spirit. The Greek there is the present imperative, which means, not only to be filled, but to keep on being filled. The problem with many of us is that we have had an experience with God back here, but in the interim, nothing spiritual of significance has happened to us. We are trying to warm our spiritual hands at the coals of a fire that has burned low. St. Paul says that we need to rebuild that fire. We need not only be filled with the Spirit, but to keep on being filled.

I want to tell you, that brings a sense of relief to me, because it means several things. I wondered once. I had surrendered my life to Christ. I had accepted Him as my Savior. He meant a great deal to me. For a while, it dramatically changed my life. But then, as those fires burned low, my faith dimmed, my loyalty wavered. Indeed, I was not living as Christ wanted me to live any more. But the Bible tells me that we are not to have one experience of God, but many. I am to surrender as much of me as I can to Christ, over and over again. You and I should be re-surrendering our lives every Sunday, every day, to Jesus. We should be having new experiences of God every day, and that excited me. You know, when I accepted Christ it was a thrilling experience. When I surrendered my heart to Him, there was a glow and a joy in me such as I had never known, and I wanted life to be that way; and the Bible tells me that is the way life is supposed to be. We Christians are indeed to live on a high, exciting, spiritual plane. We are not only to be filled with the Spirit, we are to keep on being filled. I need that. I have a spiritual cup, and the Lord fills it up to overflowing, it just sloshed all over

my soul. But the problem is, my cup leaks and drains out; and I not only need to be filled, I need to be re-filled with the power and the presence and the Spirit of the Lord.

So, I surrender as much of me as I am able to the Lord. Some people think that is the end of it. But let me tell you a secret: when you surrender yourself to Jesus, as much of you as you are able to, as much of you as you know, then God begins to work in your life. Here is what He does: He discovers to you, He exposes to you, new areas, new arenas of your life that you didn't know about, that you weren't aware of and you have not yet surrendered to Him. Therefore, it is not a matter of surrendering my life, I surrender all I can, but then God's Spirit comes and He reveals to me new parts, new areas of my life that I need to surrender. Sometimes I don't want to do that. I become a Christian and I accept Christ, and I feel good about it. But then when God begins to work in my life, He begins to show me some areas of my life--maybe some things I am doing, maybe some attitudes I have, that I don't want to surrender. He exposes those to me and says, "Andrew, what about this closet you have shut and you haven't let me in?" And I think, "Lord, you don't want in there. It is a Fibber Magee closet, you open it and everything spills out." And the Lord says, "I want in that closet." You have closets in your life. I know it and you know it. We don't want the Lord in there, but our experience of the Lord begins to dim because there are areas of life that He wants into and we won't let Him. So, I have to re-surrender. I give up some more of me to Him. He fills that part of me with His Spirit. And then as He does that, the process repeats itself. He discovers new areas of need. You see, there are depths of me that I am not aware of, things in me that have been pushed down in my unconsciousness, ways of acting that I am not aware of, things I do that I don't know why I do them, and then as God's Spirit works in me and reveals these things to me, I have to re-surrender over and over. Is that not your experience?

Part of the problem that you are having with your spiritual life this morning is the fact that you aren't continually re-surrendering your life to Jesus. You see, He cannot re-fill you until you re-surrender. To surrender and re-surrender, to fill, to be filled, and to keep on being filled is how we have new experiences of God. St. Paul says, "Don't get drunk with wine..." A lot of people do to meet that need in their lives, to fill that vacuum in their lives. People drink wine and that's debauchery. He says: "Get drunk on God. Get filled with the Holy Spirit. And not only be filled with the Spirit, but keep on getting re-drunk. Get drunk on God and re-drunk on God and re-drunk on God. Surrender and re-surrender, fill and be filled again with the Living Lord."

You remember what St. Paul said in his second letter to Timothy. He talked about a man named Demas. Demas had met Paul. Wouldn't that be exciting to meet the leading evangelist in the history of the Christian church! He had become a Christian, he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he had been working with the apostle Paul. What an exciting thing that would be! Can you imagine working with Paul? And yet, Paul writes Timothy and says, "Demas is in love with the present world and he has deserted me." What has happened to Demas? I can tell you. The Bible doesn't say, but I know. Demas had an experience with God, he surrendered himself, and God filled him with His Spirit. As a consequence, he gave his life to a missionary enterprise, but he did not re-surrender his life. He was not re-filled with the Holy Spirit, and his love grew cold.

I see that happen to my minister friends. One of the most astonishing things I can think of is the fact that my graduating class from seminary--over half of those men, all of them ordained--are now out of the ministry. What happened? It is incredible to me. And I say, "What happened to them?" I know. Their love grew cold. They surrendered, but they didn't keep on re-surrendering. They were filled with the Spirit of God, but they didn't keep on being filled. Like Demas, they fell in love with the present world and deserted the Lord.

If you are filled and re-filled with the Spirit of God, there are two things that happen to you according to our text this morning. We address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. In other words, our fellowship with each other is restored and renewed and healed. Do you want to get right with your wife, your husband, your children, or your parents? Do you want all these relationships to be healed and made right? Then you get right with God. It spills over into our relationship with each other, and we will start addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The second thing that happens is you get right with God, because He says "singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." And when you do that, when your relationship to another is healed, and when your relationship to God is whole, then that God-shaped vacuum in your life and mine is filled, and we address one another in spiritual hymns and songs.

The drunk and the re-drunk. Have you ever been drunk on God? Just intoxicated with love for Him and inebriated with joy? And that was a long time ago, and you are sober now? What you need is to get re-drunk. Not only to be filled, but to be filled again and again with the Spirit of the Lord. Whoever you are, whatever your need, I suggest to you right now, re-surrender your life to Jesus. Not only be drunk on God, but get re-drunk and filled again with the Spirit. Keep re-surrendering your life to Jesus. The drunk and the re-drunk.