

Divine Intoxication: The Summons

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

One of the men from my home area who made a great impact on my life and ministry was Rev. W. C. “Buck” Huntley. Not only was he very gracious to invite me to preach through the years, but he was very helpful in coaching me along the journey. I’ve never heard anyone else use this terminology, but when referring to the Spirit-filled life, Brother Huntley would say, “We need to be divinely intoxicated.”

In the above text, it appears that the great Apostle was speaking both of human intoxication and divine intoxication. A warning about human intoxication is certainly realized in the statement, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.” But a word about divine intoxication is clearly resounded in the phrase, “but be filled with the Spirit.” The message heralded is that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be divinely intoxicated.

Many believe that all Christians are filled with the Spirit from the time of conversion. However, the fact that this summons is given to the Ephesian believers, who had already been indwelt (see Eph. 2:22), sealed (see Eph. 1:14; 4:30), and baptized by the Spirit (see Eph. 4:4, 5), indicates that it is possible to be a Christian and not be filled with the Spirit. The fact that the followers of Christ in the early church were filled again and again (see Acts 4:13; 4:31) also suggests that a believer can be previously filled with the Spirit, and need to be filled afresh.

The summons for divine intoxication is a commanding summons! The words, “but be filled with the Spirit,” are not just words spoken into the air. They are given in the form of a command. As we learned in our English grammar class, the “you” is understood in a command of this nature. The phrase might be read, “but (you) be filled with the Spirit.” Although the Epistle was written to Christians of another day, the command to be personally responsible in yielding to the Spirit’s fullness applies to us as well.

The summons for divine intoxication is a continuing summons! The three words in the text, “but be filled,” might be rendered “being continually filled.” Because we constantly come short of God’s glory and consequently grieve and quench the blessed Holy Spirit, we need to be constantly filled with the Spirit. Thus our constant prayer should be, “Lord, please empty me of myself and fill me with Thy Spirit.”

The summons for divine intoxication is a compelling summons! Although he is the human penman, these are not just the words of the Apostle Paul. These are the words of the Holy Spirit Himself. Being filled with the Spirit, being divinely intoxicated is of such importance, the Holy Spirit compels us to be filled with the Spirit. May His desires be our desires, His interests our interests, His concerns our concerns.

