

INTRODUCTION

When our Lord Jesus was having His last supper with His disciples, He designated the wine in a cup on the table as the symbol by which we, His disciples, are to remember that He has shed His blood for us, to save us from the wrath of God to come, gaining for us forgiveness of sins. He ordered that we keep doing that until He comes again. And all over the world, from that time until now, Christians do eat the bread that represents His body, and drink the wine that represents His blood, even now, 2,000 years after. We believe that for however long we have to wait, our Lord Jesus will sustain us in remembering and proclaiming His blood shed for us by drinking the cup of wine as He told us to do. That is the beautiful ceremonial use we make of wine in the house of God.

But what of the practical use of wine, not as a symbol, but for its physical effects? That, also, is a matter in which we are instructed by our Lord's apostle. That comes next in this study through 1 Timothy, so we take that up today.

TEXT

1 Timothy 5:23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

BODY

I. The Wisdom of the Old Testament Scriptures Regarding Drinking Wine

A. Wine is a blessing that God provides to make man's heart glad

1. Psalm 104:14-15 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the service of man, That he may bring forth food from the earth, (15) And wine that makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make his face shine, And bread which strengthens man's heart.
2. God is to be praised as our provider, who gives us means by which to produce our food
 - a) He provides grass for the cattle
 - b) He provides that vegetation grows for man, by which growth man can enjoy
 - (1) wine
 - (2) oil
 - (3) bread

B. Wine is a danger to those who tarry or linger long at it

1. Proverbs 23:29-32 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? (30) Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. (31) Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; (32) At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.

II. Our Lord's Own Practice and His Commands Regarding Drinking Wine

- A. Luke 7:33-34 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' (34) The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'
 - 1. our Lord Jesus drank wine while He was here walking among us
 - 2. in drinking wine, He was wrongly accused of being a winebibber or drunkard
- B. Luke 10:7a And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages...
 - 1. our Lord Jesus told His disciples to drink what they were given while they were His missionaries
 - 2. as the Lord Jesus came "eating and drinking," so He told His disciples that they were to be "eating and drinking"
- C. Luke 21:34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly."
 - 1. our Lord Jesus warned us to take heed to ourselves, lest our hearts be weighed down with drunkenness
- D. See that our Lord Jesus Himself practiced and commanded the drinking of wine, but warned against drunkenness
 - 1. He drank wine, but was not a winebibber or drunkard
 - 2. He told His disciples to drink, but not to drunkenness
- E. Note that our Lord's example and instruction is perfectly in keeping with the Old Testament scriptures
- F. Our Lord Jesus is the perfect example of a man not sharing in the sins of others, but keeping Himself pure. Note that our Lord Jesus would draw the line
 - 1. not between total abstinence, and using a little wine,
 - 2. but between using a little wine, and drunkenness

III. The Apostolic Doctrine Regarding Drinking Wine

- A. As expressed for the congregation's officers
- B. 1 Timothy "Use a little wine"
 - 1. use wine
 - 2. but only a little
- C. 1 Timothy 3:2-3a A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; (3) not given to wine...
- D. 1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money
- E. Note that the apostolic doctrine regarding drinking wine is perfectly in keeping with both the Old Testament wisdom and our Lord's example and instruction
 - 1. take a moment to contemplate that regarding Bible interpretation in general
 - 2. the Bible is the word of God, written by holy men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit
 - 3. what the Bible teaches is consistent and sensible from beginning to end
 - 4. it contains some things hard to understand, which unstable men twist, so that it seems not to be consistent
 - 5. there are ceremonial and judicial commands in the Bible that were specifically for the nation of Israel until the time that Jesus died on the cross, which commands are not to be followed now
 - 6. but, rightly understood, all the scriptures make sense together

IV. Refusing to Drink Any Wine Is Not the Biblical Way to Keep Yourself Pure

- A. You see that right after "Do not...share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure." the Bible says, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine..."
- B. You might read some of what the Bible has to say about drinking wine, and think that the will of God for Christians is that we abstain completely from wine
- C. But these things the scripture says are not commands against using a little wine
 - 1. warnings about wine are warnings against being led astray by it, and lingering long at it
 - 2. the sin regarding wine lies not in using a little of it, but in using a lot of it
 - 3. the sin is not in the drinking, but in the getting drunk
- D. In today's text, the idea that the scriptures teach the Christian not to use a little wine is explicitly denied
 - 1. if, in your reading of the scriptures, you come to the conclusion that for a Christian to keep himself pure from sin, he must not use any wine,
 - 2. today's text tells you that you have made a wrong judgment; you are mistaken
 - 3. you might have heard that from a very well-meaning person
 - 4. someone might have put the case for total abstinence to you in very strong terms, that sounded convincing
 - 5. but here that question is settled definitively for us
- E. Using a little wine cannot rightly be thought sinful
 - 1. do not share in the sins of others + use a little wine
- F. The line between sharing in the sins of others and keeping yourself pure
 - 1. is not the line between drinking only water, and drinking a little wine
 - 2. but is the line between drinking a little wine and drinking to excess

- V. God Has Provided Wine for Man's Well-Being
 - A. The Old Testament tells us that bread and oil have good effects on us, and that wine does, too: it makes man's heart glad
 - B. It is helpful for people who have chronic stomach trouble and frequent infirmities
 - 1. how exactly it helps, the Bible doesn't say
 - 2. how much it helps, the Bible doesn't say
 - 3. but what Paul wrote to Timothy was inspired by God, so I don't doubt the truth of it

- VI. There Is Help For Us Here In The Doctrines of Sanctification and of Christian Liberty
 - A. Sanctification consists not in obeying laws made by men, but in obeying laws made by Christ
 - 1. 1689.13.3 ...in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them.
 - B. Christian Liberty: God commands us; we are free from the commands of men
 - 1. 1689.21.2 God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it.
 - C. Your conscience is strengthened by right understanding of these things; it is weakened by wrong understanding of these things

VII. APPLICATION

- A. If you have chronic illnesses, especially of the stomach, this scripture applies very pointedly to you
- B. If you enjoy excellent health, you could legitimately judge that this word does not apply to you
 - 1. if the reason Timothy should use a little wine is because he is chronically ill
 - 2. then if you are not chronically ill, that particular reason to use a little wine would not apply to you
- C. Do not allow the issue of drinking wine to separate Christians into two groups by setting yourself against the use of a little wine
 - 1. if people who claim Christ insist that purity of life means total abstinence from wine, they probably will remove themselves from fellowship with other Christians because those other Christians drink wine, and they themselves abstain from any wine
 - 2. Jesus Christ has torn down the wall of ordinances that used to separate Israel from the other nations - Ephesians 2:14-16 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, (15) having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, (16) and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.
 - 3. do not, then, pass a new ordinance, "Thou shalt not drink any wine," and, in so doing, erect a new wall between those who use a little wine and those who do not
- D. Do not allow the issue of drinking wine to separate Christians into two groups by using much wine rather than a little
 - 1. if people who claim Christ linger long at the wine, making themselves winebibbers or drunkards, others who claim Christ will have to separate from them - 1 Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.
- E. Never let the enticements of the world lure you into drinking much wine, and so becoming a winebibber or drunkard; rather, be filled with the Spirit
 - 1. Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

CONCLUSION

Let us be wise to praise God for His provision of good things for us, wine being among them, while at the same time not being so foolish as to linger long at that wine.

Let us follow the example and instruction of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, who came eating and drinking, and who told His disciples to do the same

Let us heed the apostolic doctrine that we are not to drink much wine, but we are to use a little wine, which is not in conflict with keeping ourselves pure.

Let us practice true sanctification, in obeying the commands of our Lord Jesus, not the commands of men.

Let us enjoy our liberty in Christ, obeying his commands in good conscience, not thinking we have to obey the commands of men.

Jeremiah - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 104:33-34

Thad - Scripture Reading - Psalm 104:1-30

Stephen - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Psalm 104:31, 35

Allison - Prelude

Allison - Trinity 500 "He Leadeth Me" - Andrew lead

Rita - Trinity 461 "From Depths of Woe"

Rita - Trinity 133 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" - Alex lead

Matthew 26:27-29

Henry:

The blood of Christ is signified and represented by the wine; to make it a complete feast, here is not only bread to strengthen, but wine to make glad the heart

MacLaren:

these outward symbols of bread and wine

Broadus:

There was a cup on the table for drinking wine according to the custom of the paschal meal...The paschal wine was usually mixed with a double quantity of water (Edersheim).

...this wine represents my blood

Clarke:

...eating this bread and drinking this wine...

Psalm 104:15 And wine that makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make his face shine, And bread which strengthens man's heart.

Calvin:

Nature would certainly be satisfied with water to drink; and therefore the addition of wine is owing to God's superabundant liberality.

As the prophet in this account of the divine goodness in providence makes no reference to the excesses of men, we gather from his words that it is lawful to use wine not only in cases of necessity, but also thereby to make us merry. This mirth must however be tempered with sobriety

Henry:

First, Does nature call for something to support it, and repair its daily decays? Here is bread, which strengthens man's heart, and is therefore called the staff of life; let none who have that complain of want.

Secondly, Does nature go further, and covet something pleasant? Here is wine, that makes glad the heart, refreshes the spirits, and exhilarates them, when it is soberly and moderately used, that we may not only go through our business, but go through it cheerfully. It is a pity that that should be abused to overcharge the heart, and unfit men for their duty, which was given to revive their heart and quicken them in their duty.

Gill:

wine, that has such a virtue in it, as to cheer the heart of man, even of a miserable, distressed, and afflicted man, as the word (p) is supposed to signify, Jdg_9:13

Of this nature are (and therefore are compared to wine, or expressed by it) the love of God and Christ; the blessings of grace, the doctrines of the Gospel, the ordinances of it; particularly that of the Lord's supper, and even the joys of heaven.

Clarke:

Wine, in moderate quantity, has a wondrous tendency to revive and invigorate the human being. Ardent spirits exhilarate, but they exhaust the strength; and every dose leaves man the worse. Unadulterated wine, on the contrary, exhilarates and invigorates: it makes him cheerful, and provides for the continuance of that cheerfulness by strengthening the muscles, and bracing the nerves. This is its use. Those who continue drinking till wine inflames them, abase this mercy of God.

Spurgeon:

By the aid of genial showers the earth produces not merely necessaries but luxuries, that which furnishes a feast as well as that which makes a meal. O that man were wise enough to know how to use this gladdening product of the vine; but, alas, he full often turns it to ill account, and debases himself therewith. Of this he must himself bear the blame; he deserves to be miserable who turns even blessings into curses.

Matthew 11:18-19 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

Broadus:

He was accustomed to drink wine, as was common, almost universal—those light and pure wines which abounded in that country, and which, taken in moderate quantity, and mixed with a double quantity of water according to custom, would stimulate about as much as our tea and coffee.

F.

1. commands to priests - Leviticus 10:8-11 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: (9) "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, (10) that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, (11) and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."
2. wisdom for government officials - Proverbs 31:4-5 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink; (5) Lest they drink and forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted.
3. warnings about wine
 - a) Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.
 - b) Proverbs 23:29-32 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? (30) Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. (31) Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; (32) At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.