

Living Under The Influence



On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were gathered together, when suddenly “there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.” The wind was accompanied by tongues of fire, both emblematic of the Holy Spirit. And the believers were so filled with the Spirit that they poured out of the house and into the streets, proclaiming the Gospel in virtually every human tongue, as the Spirit gave utterance.

Some in the crowd were skeptical, of course. That is true in every crowd, I imagine. And the skeptics dismissed the activity of the Spirit within the believers, suggesting, “They are filled with new wine.” Peter rose up and disputed them, however, saying, “These are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.” (Peter had never been to certain college campuses on St. Patrick’s Day.)

The juxtaposition of wine with the Holy Spirit is interesting, for it is not limited to this episode. The Apostle Paul sets them side-by-side, too, in his encouragement to “not get drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit.”

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So it is that you and I are invited live “under the influence.” Not to walk or drive around under the influence of alcohol; but rather to live our whole lives under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

To understand the nature of our opportunity, wine serves as a helpful analogy. Let us imagine that we are too fond of wine, and our daily endeavor is to keep a constant “buzz.” What would we do?

We would have a drink first thing in the morning and we’d take a bottle with us to work. Even if we couldn’t openly drink at work, we’d grab the chance for a sip during every break, and likewise at lunch. Perhaps we’d stop for a little something on the way home, too. We’d surely have another glass with dinner. And we’d indulge ourselves in a nightcap before bed. Such an approach would surely keep us under the influence.

So let us observe such a strategy with the things of the Spirit. Identify the “containers” from which we partake of Him-- Scripture, prayer, and fellowship come to mind; likewise worship and certain music; teaching and preaching, too, along with certain publications. And then may you and I be as deliberate as that unwholesomely thirsty person -- partaking as often as possible throughout every day.

It may be, of course, that some folks around us will misunderstand us, just as at Pentecost. But a little teasing is a small price to pay for the power and beauty of living under The Influence.

Produced by
The Alcohol Problems Council of Wisconsin
www.alcoholproblemswi.org

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