

# DO NOT BE WEIGHED DOWN

Peter Hay, prepared for word ministry, 6 June 2021

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## Introduction

In this session, we will consider the distinction between the 'drunkenness' that is associated with the oppression of unclean spirits, and the 'sobriety' of faith that belongs to those whose conversation is their participation in the *agape* meal.

## Partaking of Babylon - spiritual drunkenness and oppression

In our last session, we noted that everyone who is not submitted to the lordship of Christ – and that lordship is expressed through His word, which is ministered by a presbytery – is part of the 'woman', Babylon. There are two 'women' in the Scriptures; one is a bride, and the other is a harlot, called Babylon.

Everyone who is part of Babylon is vulnerable to the oppression of unclean spirits.

We read, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.' Rev 18:2-3.

Babylon, then, is a body of people, and it is a dwelling place for demons. *All nations* have 'drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication'. There is a 'mixture' associated with drinking the wine. And that wine, which is associated with Babylon, results in 'drunkenness'.

## The way of Babylon – a way of living and relating that causes us to stumble

Jesus exhorted every believer 'to take heed' to themselves, which means 'to examine' themselves, so that they would not be *weighed down* by drunkenness associated with a *connection to Babylon*.

Jesus said, '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.' Luk 21:34. That is the day of His visitation, or the day of His judgement.

Christ's exhortation was not a direction to avoid the excessive consumption of alcohol. Neither was it His direction to abandon the investment of oneself in the affairs of this world, even though those things *will* cause us to go to dissipation, and to fall away.

He particularly addressed *a way of living and relating with others* that affects a person's perception of reality, or truth, and causes their feet to stumble, so that they deviate from the pathway of salvation.

*Oppression* is associated with Babylon, for those who have become 'drunk' by 'drinking wine'.

Jesus is saying to us, 'Don't be *weighed down* by engaging in carousing, drunkenness and the cares of this life.' He is specifically talking about *a way of living*. This is a way of living that is descriptive of the principle of Babylon.

## A way of living that invites oppression

King Solomon also addressed this subject. In fact, throughout the Scriptures, you will find that this principle of 'wine' and 'drunkenness' is quite apparent; but Solomon was specifically instructive.

He wrote, 'Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of *mixed* wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a *serpent*, and stings like a *viper*.' Pro 23:29-32.

We see here the connection between the drinking of 'wine' that leads to drunkenness, and its *outcome*, which is a bite like a serpent and a sting like a viper. It invites *unclean spirits*.

Then he said, 'Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things.' Pro 23:33.

## Take heed to ourselves, be yoked to Christ and find rest for our souls

'Sorrow' refers to incessant depression. It refers to the state of those who are always depressed, and are unhappy with themselves and their lives.

According to Solomon, woe, sorrow, contentions – strife, or fights – complaints, wounds without a cause and persistent fatigue are indicators that a person is becoming *weighed down* with carousing and drunkenness.

Jesus said, ‘Don’t be weighed down by these things’; so, *take heed to yourself* that you are not being weighed down by these things.

A person who is weighed down is obviously a person who is ‘weary and heavy-laden’. If we are weary and heavy-laden, it means that we have not taken on *the yoke of Christ*; we are not yoked to Christ. And we are not finding *rest* for our soul. Mat 11:28-30.

The purpose of this and the next session is not to discuss how bad it is to have unclean spirits, because we *know* that. We also know that we need to be delivered from our sin and uncleanness.

The purpose of this word is to declare that the Lord wants us to be *yoked to Him*, and to find actual, substantial rest for our soul. That ‘rest’ is the obtaining of *the blessing that belongs to the children of Abraham*. This message is calling us all to *that treasure*.

### **‘Wounds without a cause’**

In this list of things that Solomon wrote, he made a curious statement about ‘wounds without a cause’.

How can we have a wound or an injury or an illness that has no cause? What did he mean by this?

This may refer to people who manifest illnesses or physical distress that have no diagnosable cause.

In preparation for this session, I noted that there are many of these; and that doctors often diagnose them by exclusion. They test for a range of conditions with similar symptoms and eliminate those. The cause of the illness or difficulty is hard to find.

Individuals who are ‘wounded’ in this way, or who are infirmed in this manner, often seek many remedies for their pain.

This pursuit of remedies for undiagnosable conditions replaces *believing for participation* in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

### **Continuing accountably, in suffering, in the fellowship of offering**

Such ailments become justification for their *retreat* from fellowship, from offering, and from the works that belong to their sonship.

These ones may feel weary and sick, but they do not *turn to the Lord* and say, ‘No, I am to *participate*, and I have a work to do. I am joined to the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, who was also *doing a work as He suffered*.’

Rather, they look for an alternative or for deliverance from their condition, and they excuse themselves from *the fellowship of offering*. This occurs in a practical way; they do not actually *participate* in any offering activities.

They *excuse themselves* from the works of sonship that belong to their day, whether it is in their houses or in their workplaces. They begin to retreat from these.

They are not *becoming the righteousness of God in Christ*, because they are *not joined* to the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

These are ‘wounds without a cause’.

### **Relational wounds without a cause**

The term can also refer to those who consider themselves to be victims of relational hurts – hurts which may have been imagined or were the outcome of a misunderstanding. They feel emotional pain and hurt, because they feel that they are the *victim* of an offence.

Although the offence may be simply their imagination or a misunderstanding, they cannot let go of it, so they remain injured.

Some people carry wounds that are, in reality, *unresolved offences* stemming from historical and vaguely recollected incidents. Over the course of time, they maintain this hurt; but they cannot actually identify, or pinpoint, the cause of it.

Some people apportion blame for that hurt to *places* that actually had nothing to do with, or even to *people* who had nothing to do with, the particular incident.

Not only are these wounds without a cause, but this is a ‘drunken’, or perverse, view of themselves and their lives.

### **‘Mixed wine’ brings infirmity – entertaining a word other than the gospel of sonship**

In this regard, Solomon asked, ‘Who has woe?’

If you are feeling ‘woe is me’, if you have sorrow, if you find yourself in contention with others in the church, or if you have a list of complaints and questions, the question is, ‘Why?’

Solomon said that those who have all these things are those who ‘linger long at the wine’ and who ‘go in search of mixed wine’. All of those characteristics, then, are indicative of a person who is lingering near, or putting themselves in proximity to, this wine; and they are going in search of it.

We need, then, to understand what ‘mixed wine’ is. To ‘look on mixed wine when it is red’ describes the inclination of a person who gives their attention and voice to a conversation that is based in a word that is *other* than the gospel of sonship.

The wine, the cup, is a *fellowship* in ‘something’. It is a conversation, or a participation, in something. The one who looks on mixed wine, which *causes these infirmities*, is a person who has given their attention to a conversation that is *based* in a word that is *other* than the gospel of sonship.

We know that we are supposed to be part of the bride of Christ, who is *established in the gospel of sonship*, and who is traveling to bring forth those who are born as sons of God.

There must be, then, in the case of *mixed* wine, a conversation, or an engagement, in a word that is ‘other’ than that gospel.

### **Mixed wine brings oppression – mixture in the culture of the house**

For some people, ‘mixed wine’ may be the presumption of participating in the *agape* meal while they accommodate and entertain unsanctified, and even immoral, influences in their houses through the media that they consume and the activities that they engage in.

We read that the ‘wine’ is the wrath of Babylon’s fornications. You can be saying, on the one hand, ‘I am walking in the *agape* meal’, and, on the other hand, be engaging with the media – movies, television programmes, social media – which bring a mixture into your house. This affects your

sense of reality, and of what is acceptable as the conversation and conduct in your house.

It also brings oppression into your house, particularly where those alternative influences have an immoral element to them.

These are ways of ‘*seeking mixed wine*’. There is mixture in the *source* of conversation and expression in the house.

Furthermore, conversation can be the pursuit of a particular lifestyle in preference to, or over and against, *devotional application* to the word. Again, it is a *mixture*.

### **Walking each step in the light of the word that is shining today**

People can ‘seek mixed wine’ when they mix the gospel of sonship with *their own understanding of God’s word* or with knowledge that they have *accumulated* over the years.

Let us be clear that we are to walk each step in the light of the word that is shining *today*.

Paul said, ‘*Today*, if you will *hear His voice*, do not harden your hearts.’ Heb 3:15.

He did not say, ‘In all the things that you have remembered from your past, do not harden your heart.’

He said, ‘The word comes *today!*’ This is the *light* of present truth.

However, if we hear that word and we mix it, or if we put it into a frame of reference that is based on history, all of a sudden, it is a *mixed conversation*. It is not the word, *today*; so we are *not* walking in the light of His word, today.

We are actually walking with the ‘baggage’ of historical, theological tradition, that we are *trying to carry with us* at the same time as the word is proclaimed to us.

### **Thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought - presuming to judge the word’s relevance**

Paul described such a person as one who ‘thinks more highly of themselves than they ought’. This description does not necessarily refer to a person who presumes a ministry profile, although this does occur.

Fundamentally, it describes someone who presumes to *arbitrate* the *relevance* of the word to themselves.

They have a large body of knowledge through which they arbitrate, or judge, the relevance of God's word to themselves. They thus consider themselves more highly than they ought.

### **Lifting up our voice for understanding - faith to see and embrace His word**

But that is not the biggest problem. The biggest problem is that they *cannot receive the faith* that comes by hearing that word. That faith *enables* us to engage, or to understand ourselves, with 'sobriety', or in the *truth*. Rom 12:3.

What is the nature of the person who thinks more highly than they ought to think? How do we know whether we are engaging with that mixture?

Such a person may have very little contribution to make in fellowship with others, because *they do not understand the word* or because *they do not recognise its implications for their life*.

They may say, 'Well, the messengers haven't made it very clear.' However, in the end, we have to realise what is *affecting* our understanding. And we must know whether we are actually *lifting up our voice for understanding*. Are we *applying ourselves* to the word?

Alternatively, it may be a person who *offers reflections and commentary on the word*, but with little testimony or illumination regarding the *transformative implications* of the word for their own life.

This expression is not according to 'the measure of faith' that comes by *hearing and receiving* the word of God. Rom 12:3.

### **Committed to a conversation true to the word of the gospel delivered**

A third way in which we 'look on mixed wine' or 'go searching for mixed wine' is by *giving our ear and speech to another gospel and conversation altogether*.

Paul said that if anyone preaches a gospel other than the gospel of sonship that he laid down – the gospel of the cross – they are to be *accursed*. Gal 1:8. We will not dwell on the 'accursing' aspect today.

We are dwelling on the fact that there are many *other gospels* to which we can give our ear.

One way in which we can give our ear and speech to another gospel and conversation is to actually go and look for more 'palatable' teachers and doctrines. I would say that there are some who do that - and they will get what they seek for.

However, 'another gospel' can also be our *reinterpretation* of the word as we socialise together, and presume to apply the word to or to advise one another in life.

For most of us, the trap lies where we hear the word and *reinterpret* it or *reapply* it within a carnal, fleshly framework.

This unhelpful conversation can be a familiar way of relating in the family. A 'familiar' way - connecting with the notion of familiar spirits - becomes what we believe is a normal way of relating and conversing about the word, which we think is acceptable to the Lord, but is actually motivated by a different spirit – a familiar spirit.

### **The word emptied of its effect through fleshly reinterpretation**

In this case, we hear the word, and it has access to our heart. We go home, and we talk about it.

Then someone may say, 'Oh no, it doesn't mean *that* for you. Oh no, you don't need to worry about that. No, they were being a bit definitive, maybe to give an example, but that doesn't apply to you.'

All of a sudden, the word from heaven, the word of God, that is proclaimed to a family, has been *emptied of its effect*. It has been reinterpreted and reapplied.

Those who engage in such a conversation are seduced by a message that seems to 'sparkle with wisdom', as it is communicated in a manner that appeals to the natural senses.

We read, 'Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly.' Pro 23:31.

'Swirling smoothly' describes sophistication that masquerades as wisdom. So, there is sophistication and there is confidence.

That confidence, which is *from the flesh*, communicates that this 'wisdom' is dependable and will bear the fruit of a good life.

The apostle James called this wisdom, *which does not proceed from the fellowship of the presbytery*, 'earthly, sensual, demonic'. Jas 3:15.

It is 'earthly' because it is coming from the wisdom of men. It is 'sensual' because it appeals to the senses of those who are hearing it. And then it leads to 'demonic' vulnerability.

We can be easily seduced as we begin to feel wise and sophisticated through our connection to this 'sparkling' conversation.

### **Guarding the truth of the word delivered – protecting the Christian culture of our homes**

Sometimes, we may find ourselves in a context – at a barbecue, for example – where we are sitting down with other believers, and the conversation begins to take on an 'edge', where people have little reflections and applications and comments to make.

We can be seduced by it and begin to converse in it as well, because we are drawn into the appeal of that sophistication and of being one who 'sparkles' in the same way. But it is *seduction*.

In such a conversation – when we may sit down with our friends, and talk in this way, and begin to *reinterpret* the word – our understanding of Christian culture in our houses can become perverted.

Some practices which are *contrary to sound doctrine* – to do with the way in which a family functions, for example; or to do with, for example, teenage relationships with each other – begin to gain traction and promotion within the church as being acceptable.

*Another doctrine* has started to enter the fellowship of households.

### **Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil**

The Scriptures describe this as 'calling evil good, and good evil'. Isa 5:20.

When we think this way, we begin to say, 'What the presbytery is saying is actually wrong; that is actually going too hard on the point. We need to be a bit more clear that life is a bit more like *this*.'

All of a sudden, what we are calling 'good' is actually evil.

The word, the 'yes' and 'no' in Christ, makes a *division* between these two. However, we start to bring that division down by calling evil good, and good evil.

The Lord said that this causes 'woe'. Isa 5:20.

### **Unsanctified conversations bring a 'drunken' perspective**

In these conversations, we may become loose in our speech, indicating that our conversation is more Babylonish, and affected by *her* wine, than it is 'bride-ish' – the 'sobriety' of faith.

We begin to think, 'Did the messenger really mean that? Is it really as treacherous as they make it out to be? Will my salvation really be lost if I don't walk blamelessly?'

These questions sound like those of Satan, who said to Eve, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"? For you shall not die if you eat of it.' Gen 3:1,4.

This is what happens – we become caught in this conversation and, suddenly, we do start thinking, 'Well, no; we're doing pretty well; we're committed. Making that distinction in terms of that culture in our house – that's a bit hard.' All of a sudden, does it really matter?

We are becoming 'inebriated'. Our perspective is starting to be like that of a drunken person. *We are not seeing clearly*.

### **Guarding our sanctification through guarding our conversation**

As we continue to entreat and engage such a conversation, we can *lose our sanctification* in the same way that a drunk person can lose their inhibitions.

Have you heard of 'liquid courage'? It refers to the situation where people, when they lose inhibition because they drink, engage in activities that they would not otherwise engage in.

The same can happen in our conversation. As we *give ourselves to it*, we begin to comment on things that we would otherwise either not have thought of or would never have presumed to speak into.

We begin to speak about matters for which we have *no accountability*. When we do this, we are *unsanctified*, because sanctification has to do with understanding the *parameters* and authority of our *name*.

And, as we start to speak into matters that are not part of that accountability, we are *unclean*.

### **Caught up in complaint – mistrust, opinion and presumption**

In this state, we can become increasingly susceptible to, and engaged in, *complaining*.

All of a sudden, we begin to get caught up in the complaints of others. We think, 'Yes, you have been really mistreated there.'

There is mistrust of the presbytery. We may begin to make character and competence assessments of others. We may even do this on the presumption of familiarity with them, as though our familiar connection with someone who is a messenger gives us the opportunity and the 'clarity' to be able to make comment about their character or their competence.

This is being *unguarded* in our speech. *This is not sanctification and honour*, is it?

We can even begin to become assertive regarding the direction that the church should or should not take.

### **Satan gains advantage through our unsanctified engagement**

This is where unclean spirits gain an advantage – in the *agitation*, and then *compulsion*, to reflect in this way.

You go home from the barbeque and are chatting with your wife, and say, 'Have you thought about this?' All of a sudden, you are becoming 'riled up' about a matter with which, in reality, you have no connection.

That agitation and compulsion to engage in that way is the *evidence of uncleanness*, and is also the effect of *oppression*.

You are not *at rest*, are you? You are obviously not 'yoked to Christ' at this point, because now you are weighed down by burdens that are actually *imaginings*. They are not a load for *you* to carry.

Significantly, Solomon warned that when a person participates in a conversation such as this, 'at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.' Pro 23:32. Satan gains advantage in a person's life.

Not only are they ensnared again to fear; but also, they become inflamed, and even embittered toward Christ and His messengers.

### **Entertaining the wisdom from beneath leads to darkness**

The one who consumes 'mixed wine' by entertaining and engaging fellowship that is based in wisdom from beneath will begin to see 'strange' things. And their heart will utter perverse things. Pro 23:33.

The 'utterance of perverse things' is not only the conversation, or the speech. Remember that your 'speech' is your conversation and your *conduct*.

The *actions* that you take, then, will be in accordance with this perverted, or 'strange', perception.

What does this mean? It means that these ones define and express themselves *from the basis of their delusion*. This is because they are *unable* to receive the word of truth which comes by *illumination*.

They have no understanding concerning the way of life that is *in Christ*. They are left with only a *perverted understanding* of the word and its expression, which is *based in their own understanding*.

Their life and works will be *at odds* with whom the *Lord* has named them to be, even while they remain convinced of their acceptability before Him.

This person calls their darkness, 'the light'. Jesus said that when we do this, 'how great is that darkness!' - we cannot believe that what we are 'seeing' is not true. Mat 6:23. It means that we cannot receive the *actual* truth.

The key is not to be afraid of that; the key is actually to *fear the Lord*, to walk in the *light of His word*, and to have *fellowship* with His brethren.

### **We can all become caught in unsanctified conversations**

Jesus resisted this kind of speech when it was exemplified by Peter. So, we are not talking about 'heinous' people here.

However, this seduction can enter our conversations more easily than we may have acknowledged or understood.

It can cause a root of bitterness to take root, leading to *the defilement of many*.

We see that this occurred with Jesus and Peter. Peter rebuked Jesus for openly teaching that He would suffer many things, be rejected by the

Jewish leaders, and be killed; and that He would be raised on the third day. Mat 16:21-22.

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus? It was because he *already* had a doctrine, or a theology. And, as the word came to him, he would not *let go* of his doctrine, or theology.

He was now *emboldened* to speak against Christ, *the Messenger!* That is amazing, isn't it?

What did Jesus say to him? He said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, *Satan!*' Mat 16:23.

Peter was His best friend! He had been with Him in the ministry for three and a half years. And the answer to this *alternative* word was Jesus saying, 'Get behind Me, *Satan!* You are not mindful of the things of God.' Mat 16:23.

When we become 'drunk', our perception, or our ability to reason, becomes unfruitful. The reasoning and perception of a person who is 'not mindful of the things of God' is based in *another source*; and it is *perverted*.

They are not mindful of the things of God, but of the things of *men*. Mat 16:23. 'The things of men' refers to the things of *those who belong to Babylon*.

We can *all* become caught in these conversations. I know that I have been at places, and been caught up in the conversation. I have gone away and have felt uncomfortable. I have realised that I have spoken about matters that are *actually none of my concern*.

In cases such as these, we have tried to measure ourselves to the 'wisdom' and sophistication of others. This is *uncleanness*, and we have been affected by it.

But it does not disqualify us from our sonship.

### **Our repentant testimony of commitment to the truth**

Solomon noted that, at the last, *it bites like a viper*. In this, he was saying that when this becomes a *regular* way of relating, we are *overtaken* by oppression.

When we feel that we have been caught in an unhelpful conversation, our repentance may be to *reconnect* with some of those with whom we have engaged, and have 'run to dissipation' with, and to actually *affirm to them our commitment to the truth*.

We do not say to them, 'Your conversation was hopeless.'

We can say, 'When I was involved in this conversation, I feel that I overstepped the mark. I actually do trust the presbytery. I do believe the word that is being proclaimed. And we are committed, as a family, to reforming our culture in that way.'

We do not accuse someone else. But that *testimony* then becomes part of 'the fountain for sin and uncleanness' that will be ministered to those who also will have been affected by that conversation. Zec 13:1. This is what it means to 'resist the devil, and he will flee from you'. Jas 4:7

When they hear your testimony, they will either say, 'Yes, you are right; we were engaged in that', and will be connected to you; and both of you will be recovered to fellowship – or, they may say, 'Who are you to say that? See you later!'

Either way, our personal commitment and recovery *requires us to turn from that conversation*, and to be established in the conversation *in the light*, which is actually the basis of the *agape* meal.

### **Examine ourselves, watch and pray – eat and drink in a worthy manner**

Jesus concluded His exhortation to examine ourselves, by saying, 'Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.' Luk 21:36.

It is very hard to stand before the Son of Man when we are intoxicated!

This reminds us of Paul's exhortation to examine ourselves. Jesus said, 'Watch therefore, and pray'. Paul said, 'Examine ourselves', so that we do not eat and drink the *agape* meal in an unworthy manner. 1Co 11:27-28.

Jesus said, 'Watch and pray that you may be counted worthy'; and Paul wrote, 'Examine yourselves, so that you don't eat in an unworthy manner.' Why?

It is because eating and drinking in an unworthy manner causes us to become weak and sick, and to die before our time, or to fall asleep, spiritually. 1Co 11:29-30.

To 'eat in an unworthy manner' is to be *weighed down* with carousing, drunkenness and the cares of this life.

### **Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth**

The *prayer of response* to the word of Christ, through which we are *preserved* from the *oppression* associated with these unsanctified conversations, was exemplified by King David.

'Lord, I cry out to You; make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. Let my prayer be set before You as incense [This is prayer in the Holy Spirit, that joins us to the conversation of the Father and the Son.], the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.' Psa 141:1-2.

This is exactly the verse that Paul quoted when he wrote, 'I want men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.' 1Ti 2:8.

The 'lifting up of holy hands' is actually our *submission* to the *lordship* of Christ.

'Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.' Psa 141:3. This is a beautiful verse! These are lips that have grace on them, and are seasoned with salt. Col 4:6.

'Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.' Psa 141:4.

King David was saying, 'Preserve me from a conversation that is *other than* the one that is at *the tree of life*.'

We will continue this conversation in the weeks to come.