

Drink, Drank, Drunk
1 Timothy 5:23

SLIDE 1

I. Intro

● The Border

- It was July 31st 2009, when the U.S. State Department began investigating the reports...
- ...that three American tourists had been detained by Iranians while hiking near the border of the self-ruled Kurdish region in northern Iraq.
- And to the shock of many - military intel revealed that Sarah Shourd, her boyfriend Shane Bauer, and their traveling companion Josh Fattal...
- ...had been surrounded by the Iranian military - and placed under arrest...
- ...after allegedly straying across an unmarked border into Iran while hiking in Iraq's Kurdistan region.
- And after sitting in an Iranian prison for over a year - on Tuesday, September 14th...
- ...the Iranian government decided to release Ms. Shourd - who was happily received by family and friends.
- And during a press conference held on Sunday September 19th, Shourd insisted that.....
- "We in no way intended any harm to the Iranian government or its people and believe a huge misunderstanding led to our detention and prolonged imprisonment."
- She also revealed that they were unaware of the border while hiking...

- ...and if they did cross it, it was only because it was unmarked and indistinguishable.
- You could also hear the pain and regret in her voice when she said...
 - "I never saw it coming. And I never imagined my family would have to suffer like this."
- Without a doubt - this was a tragic situation that should've never happened.
- And yet - as I read about the events that resulted in the arrest of these three American hikers...
 - ...I can't help but to consider how many Christian also end up - in bondage to sin...
 - ...simply because they decided to go hiking near the unmarked border of liberty and licentiousness.
 - And while there are many blurry borders that every believer must be careful approaching...
 - ...none are more difficult to navigate - than the border of sobriety - and drunkenness.

II. Outline

● Points

- Here in our study today - we're going to focus on the question of Christians and Alcohol
 - And as we turn our attention to 1 Timothy 5 - we're going to ask Three questions about the blurry border of this controversial topic.

SLIDES 2-4

1. Does the Bible present Believers with the liberty to Drink Alcohol?
2. Is there reason to believe that the 1st century followers of Christ Drank alcohol?

3. And finally - we're going to consider the consequences of the Bible characters who did get Drunk?

- And so - with this as our outline - let's turn our attention to 1 Timothy chapter 5...

SLIDE 5

- ...because there in verse 23 - we find Paul encouraging Timothy to...

III. Drink

SLIDE 6

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

- What is Wine

- Here in this verse - we find Paul encouraging Timothy to use a little wine.

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- And so - when it comes to the question - about Christians and alcohol - this appears to support the pro side of the argument.
- And at face value - Paul was clearly telling Timothy to use a little wine...
- ...which seems to suggest that wine wasn't entirely off-limits for Pastor Timothy.
- But then - I must wonder - why is it that Timothy needed Paul's approval.
- ...if drinking wine - was commonly accepted in the Christian circles of the early church?
- Without a doubt - there are many Christians who believe that they have the right to drink alcohol.
- And this is one of the verses they use - to prove that the casual consumption of Alcohol is approved of by Paul.

- However - before we use this verse as a proof text for drinking...
 - ...we would do well - to first develop a deeper understanding of the different drinks that could be called - wine
 - And in order to do this - we should take a moment to consider the of the meanings of this word.
- And so - let's begin by first considering the meaning of this word - in light of the Hebrew.
 - And i first want to point out that the Hebrew word - yah-yin...
 - ...which is often times translated into our English word - wine - appears in the Old Testament 141 times.
 - And according to Robert Teachout's tabulation of the 141 references to yavin in the Old Testament...
 - ...71 times the word refers to unfermented grape juice...
 - ...and the other 70 times - it refers to fermented wine.
 - Therefore - when we find the word - wine - in the Old Testament...
 - ...it would be wrong to automatically assume that the author was writing about alcoholic wine.
 - Not only that - but we should also consider the way that the Greek word for wine was used in the Septuagint.
 - And for the sake of clarity - I should point out that the Septuagint is...
 - ...an inter-testamental Greek translation of the Old Testament...
 - ...which was used by the apostles in the early first century.

- And in this Greek translation of the Old Testament - we find the Greek word - oinos -
 - ...being used to translated the Hebrew word - tirosh...
 - ...which is Hebrew word that was used to refer to freshly pressed grapes.
 - Therefore - this Greek word - oinos - which Paul actually used here in our text today...
 - ...is a word that was used to point to both fermented and unfermented grape juice.
- And to further support this point - we must understand that the English word - wine...
 - ...was originally used to refer to the juice of pressed grapes - both fermented and unfermented.
 - For example - in the the 1759 edition of Nathan Bailey's New Universal English Dictionary of Words and of Arts and Sciences...
 - ..."wine" is defined as that which "comes from the grape, without any mixture or sophistication."
 - And so - according to this early English definition - wine - isn't strictly an alcoholic drink.
 - Bailey's definition goes on to state that, "Adulterated wine is that wherein some drug is added to give it strength, fineness, flavor, briskness, or some other qualification."
 - And so - this definition of wine refers to the juice of grapes - both fermented and unfermented
 - Not only that - but in Benjamin Marin's New English Dictionary, published in 1748.

- Marin defined "wine" as primarily - the juice of the grape.
 - And so - again - we see that the word - wine - doesn't always refer to fermented grapes.
- Finally - I want to point out that the American Heritage Dictionary defines the word - wine...
 - ...as "the juice, fermented or unfermented, of various other fruits or plants, used as a beverage, sauce, etc..."
 - So - here again in this modern dictionary - we see that wine can refer to both fermented and unfermented grape juice.
- Not only that - but the same dictionary also reveals that the word - wine...
 - ...is also a word that is also used in Pharmacology...
 - ...which refers to the science dealing with the preparation, uses, and esp. the effects of drugs.
 - And as a pharmaceutical - wine - has been used throughout the ages in - to create a medicinal solutions.
 - And this is exactly what Paul was encouraging Timothy to take - here in our text today.
- Notice again - there in verse 23 - where Paul directed Timothy - by writing...

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- "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities."
- Here we see that Paul wasn't writing about the casual consumption of alcohol at all...

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- ...but instead - he was prescribing a little wine - as a means of dealing with the intestinal infirmities of Pastor Timothy.

- Now - as I consider Paul's medical advice...
 - ...I can't help but to remember a time when I traveled to Austria - with a missions team from Calvary Austin.
 - And in preparation for this mission trip - we put together a little acoustic band...
 - ...so that we could attract crowds - by playing live music in coffee bars - and public parks.
 - And as the crowds would gather - we would pass out tracts - and share Christ with the Austrians.
 - Not only that - but John Newberry also brought his skateboard so that we could reach out to the local skaters.
 - And one day - after John spent some time skating with the locals - they all went over to a rustic wooden Aqueduct...
 - ...and all of the locals began to drink that water that was coming down from the Mountains. (Aqueduct story)
 - Thankfully - we were able to find a local doctor who was able to prescribe the right medication...
 - ...which was created to kill the bacteria that was making John sick.
- Now - as we consider this problem commonly called - Montezuma's Revenge...
 - ...It's interesting to note that Paul seems to be the first "world traveler" to declare...
 - "...don't drink the water!"

- Medicinal

SLIDE 10

- Look there again at verse 23 - where Paul told Timothy, "No longer drink only water..."
- From this - it seems likely that the water in Ephesus was making Timothy ill.

SLIDE 11

- And listen - every world traveler knows how easy it is for a person to become infected with bacteria and parasites after drinking unclean water.
- As a matter of fact - according to a 2006 report produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention...
 - ...20–50% of international travelers are infected with Traveler's diarrhea - on an annual basis...
 - ...simply because of contaminated food and water.
 - In other words - every year - there are 10 million people whose international trip...
 - ...results in the intestinal infirmity of abdominal cramps, nausea, bloating and dreaded diarrhea.
- And while traveler's diarrhea usually passes within three to five days...
 - ...one report revealed that - 20 percent of those infected - end up so sick - that they can't even get out of bed.
 - And 10 percent of cases actually last more than one week.
- The same article revealed that - in the very worst cases reported...
 - ...travelers diarrhea can occasionally be life-threatening.
 - And all I can say - is that traveler's diarrhea would be a stinky way to die.

- Now - in light of the seriousness of traveler's diarrhea - Paul was encouraging this young pastor to do something...
- ...that Timothy seemed to be opposed to doing.
- You see - if Pastor Timothy already believed that drinking wine was a Christian liberty...
 - ...then Paul's advice would've been - to a large degree - pointless.
 - And the reason why is because - Timothy would've already been drinking wine - and therefore - free of dysentery.
- And so - Paul's advice seems to suggest that Timothy wasn't drinking wine - not even in moderation.
- And knowing that it would be better for Timothy's health - to consume a little wine.
- ...Paul encouraged him to use a little wine for (his) stomach's sake...
 - ...which was clearly a medicinal prescription.

● Application

- Drink?
- From this - we must understand that Paul wasn't promoting the casual consumption of alcohol...
 - ...by telling Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach.
 - But instead - he was supporting the use of wine - as a medicinal means for maintaining the health of a Christian.

- Therefore - the main lesson that we learn from this verse - is that Christians who contract traveler's diarrhea...
 - ...should take some sort of medicine that will kill the bacteria that's causes intestinal issues.
 - And so - if your feeling queazy this morning - after a trip to Mexico - then go get some pepto-bismol.
- And based on Paul's to advice to Timothy - I believe that - when I'm feeling sick - and I'm under the weather...
 - ...it's okay to take the recommend dose of Nyquil - knowing that it contains 10% alcohol.
 - And the reason why is because it's going to help me to regain my health faster.
 - So - Don't you judge me if you find a bottle of Nyquil in the medicine cabinet at my house.
- Now - there are some Christians who will argue that having a glass of wine in order to wind down after work - is medicinal.
 - And while it's not my intention to force my convictions upon you...
 - ...I will suggest that this would be stretching the limits of what Paul was intending to communicate to Timothy.
 - Especially since - Jesus and Paul both presented spiritual solutions for worry and anxiety...
 - ...and neither of them prescribed wine.

SLIDES 12-13

Phl 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Phl 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

● Transition

SLIDE 14

• Points

- And so we see that - according to Paul - the use of Alcohol isn't entirely off limits.

1. And yet - according to Paul - the wine that Timothy was commanded to Drink was for medicinal purposes...

- ...and not for moderate or casual consumption.

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2. At the same time - I realize that a Christian might argue that since Timothy Drank wine with alcoholic content...

- ...then - shouldn't it also be a liberty that every Christian can exercise?
- And in order to answer this question - let's look back at 1 Timothy 5...
- ...beginning again there at verse 23 - where Paul declared...

IV. Drank

SLIDE 16

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

- Using Wine
- As we read this verse again - it's interesting to note that...
- ...Paul wasn't actually telling Timothy to go and "drink" wine - but rather - to use wine in a medicinal way.
- Notice again there in verse 23 - where Paul declared...

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- "No longer drink only water, but **use** a little wine"
 - Or in other words - Paul was telling Timothy to "use" a little wine - in order to kill the bacteria that was making him sick.
- Barne's explains this by writing that Paul was...
 - "...prescribing the use of a small quantity of wine, mingled with his water, as a suitable medicine in his case."
 - Or in other words - he was telling Timothy to put a little wine in his water.
- And according to the Greek rhetorician and grammarian named Athenaeus - the Greeks often mingled their wine with water.
 - Sometimes one part of wine to two of water; three parts of water to one of wine;...
 - ...and at other times three parts of water to two of wine.
 - This also seems to be the advice that Paul was giving - when he told Timothy to...
 - ...stop drinking only water, but use a little wine.
- So - the Christian who wants to use this verse to justify their liberty for drinking a glass of wine...
 - ...should also be true to the text by mixing water into their glass of wine.
 - This being the case - we must conclude that the moderate or casual consumption of uncut - fermented wine...
 - ...really can't be justified by our text today.
 - Because - it's easy to see that Paul was only encouraging Timothy...

SLIDE 18

- ...to mix the fermented wine into his water - and again - strictly for medicinal reasons.
- And while it's clear to me - that Paul was in no way promoting the liberty of drinking in moderation - here in this verse...
 - ...the average Christian tends to believe that the moderate and casual consumption of Alcohol is justified in the Bible...
 - ...because of a few misinterpreted sections of scripture - that are found in the New Testament.
- And so - hold place - 1 Tim 5 > John chpt 2 - and let's take some time to consider these scriptures...
 - ...so that we can properly investigate these New Testament characters who allegedly drank alcoholic wine.
- Wedding
 - And as you turn to John chapter 2 - I wanted to share something with you that recently happened to me.
 - You see I was invited to a Birthday party the other day - by an old friend that i knew before i became a Christian.
 - So - Brenda and I went - and when we got there - we could tell that everyone had been drinking.
 - And not just a little bit - no - these people had been drinking a lot.
 - But - Brenda and I were hoping for an opportunity to share the gospel with some of my old friends...
 - ...and so - we were willing to hang out a little longer.
 - And about that time - the host of this party told me that they had floated the last keg - and he couldn't afford to buy more beer.

- And so he asked me if I could help him out...
 - ...and spot him some money - so that he could go and get some more beer for the party.
- Well - I couldn't afford to buy anything - and so - that's when I decided drive him to the party barn...
 - ...and we picked up a few more kegs of beer -and just charging it all - to the church credit card.
- Okay - Okay - this never happened! - there was no party and I never purchased beer with the church credit card.
 - And listen - any Christian in their right mind would be sorely disappointed to learn that there pastor used church funds...
 - ...to supply alcohol to a bunch of people who were already drunk.
 - And yet - how many Christians also believe that Jesus did this same sort've thing...
 - ...at the beginning of His Earthly ministry?
- Check out John 2 - beginning there at verse 3 - where John tells us that...

SLIDES 19-23

Jhn 2:3 ...when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

Jhn 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

Jhn 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Jhn 2:6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

Jhn 2:7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

Jhn 2:8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.

Jhn 2:9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.

Jhn 2:10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

- Now - as we read these verses - it's common for a Christian to believe that Jesus took 180 gallons of water...

- ...and miraculously turned it into 180 gallons of fermented wine...

- ...which allowed those who already had too much to drink - to get even drunker.

- However - I would like to suggest that it's much more probable that Jesus actually made a non-alcoholic wine...

- ...that actually tasted better - than the wine that they started off with.

- And one reason why I believe this - is based on all of the derogatory passages about wine - that are found in the Bible.

- For Example - in Isaiah 28:7 - the Lord rebukes those who...

"...have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment."

- Then there's Habakuk 2:15 - which says...

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SLIDES 25-26

SLIDE 27

Hab 2:15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor,
Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk...

- And Proverbs 20 - verse 1 tells us that...

"Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever
is led astray by it is not wise."

- Now - in light of these verses - I have a hard time believing that Jesus would kick off His entire Earthly ministry...

- ...by miraculously supplying fermented wine to a bunch of people who were already drunk.

- Secondly - apart from the traditional interpretation - there's no textual reason to believe that Jesus made fermented wine.
 - Because - as I already pointed out - the Greek word - Oinos - which is translated wine - here in John chpt 2...
 - ...can refer to both fermented - and unfermented wine.
 - Not only that - but the compliment about the quality of the wine was in reference to the flavor and not the alcoholic content.
 - In other words - the master of the feast was simply saying that it was the best tasting wine of the day
- Finally - and philosophically speaking - if Jesus used the power of the Holy Spirit...
 - ...to supply 180 Gallons of fermented wine to a party where everyone was getting drunk...
 - ...then we should also have no problem with a pastor using church funds to supply kegs of beer to a secular party.
 - And yet - the conservative Christian would be rightly disappointed with their pastor...

- ...if he used church funds to throw a kegger.
- Therefore - it only makes logical sense that Jesus was - in no way - providing fermented wine...
- ...to the people at this wedding feast in Cana of Galilee.
- Having said all of that - I leave it up to you - to decide for yourself...
- ...whether or not you believe that Jesus miraculously made fermented wine for this wedding party.
- And while the conclusion of this question is open for debate...
- ...one thing that we definitely don't find - here in John 2...
 - ...is the evidence that Jesus - or any of the disciples for that matter - drank fermented wine.
- Well - despite the lack of Biblical evidence - one poll revealed that 53% of Christians believe that Jesus drank fermented wine.
- And many of them point to Matthew chapter 11 - in order to support their belief.
 - So - let's turn to Matthew chpt 11 - and we'll continue to consider whether or not Jesus drank.
- Winebibber
 - As you turn to Matthew 11 - I want to remind you that...
 - ...the religious leaders of the early 1st century were constantly accusing Jesus of all sorts of things.
 - For example - they accused him of being demon possessed.

- And they accused Him of working with Beelzebub - in order to cast out demons.
- They accused Him of being an illegitimate fatherless child - - and they also accused Him of Blasphemy.
- And here in the gospel of Matthew - Jesus revealed that they were also accusing Him of being given to wine.
- Check out Matthew 11 - beginning there at verse 18 - where Jesus tells us that...

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Mat 11:18 "...John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'

Mat 11:19 "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."

- Here in these verses - Jesus was using exaggerated statements - in order to dispel the accusations that He was a wine drinker.

SLIDE 31

- Notice again - there in verse 18 - where Jesus tells us how John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking.
- Now - was Jesus really suggesting that John never ate anything? - - of course not!
- And there in verse 19 - was Jesus really admitting to gluttony...
 - ...when He admitted to being a food eater? - Certainly not!
- Christian - listen - Jesus wasn't admitting to drinking wine - here in these verses...
 - ...but instead - He was using a literary form of hyperbole to dismiss the accusations of those who called Him a wino.
- And so we see that - there's no good reason to believe that Jesus turned water into fermented wine...

- ...and His claim to come eating and drinking was presented as a hyperbolic statement...
 - ...that was designed to dismiss the idea that He was drinking wine.
- But now - what about communion?
 - Didn't Jesus command all of the disciples drink wine - at the last supper?
 - Well - in order to answer this question - let's turn to Mark chapter 14.
- Communion
 - And as you turn to Mark 14 - I should point out that throughout the years...
 - ...different churches have used alcoholic wine for the sacrament of communion.
 - And there are those who might even ask - why did the church change this practice.
 - Here in Mark 14 - we find Mark's report of the Last supper.
 - And beginning there at verse 21 - Mark tells us that Jesus declared...

SLIDES 32-34

Mar 14:21 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Mar 14:22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mar 14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

Mar 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."

Mar 14:25 "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

- Here in these verses - we find Jesus referring to the fruit of the vine - which is a clear reference to grape juice.

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- However - the question that we must ask is this, "was this cup filled with fermented - or unfermented grape juice?"
 - And I believe that this is a question that must be answered by the early church.
- Well - according to one document which circulated in the second and third centuries of the Christian era...
 - ...the communion cup at the Lord's Supper was filled with freshly pressed grape juice.
 - "Bring as an offering the holy bread; and, having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me, as the Lord Jesus showed us how to offer up when he rose from the dead on the third day."
 - From this - we see that the fruit of the vine that Jesus served was probably more like our grape juice...
 - ...then the wine you can purchase at the liquor store.
- It's also evident that when fresh grapes weren't available - the church would use a wine and water mixture for communion.
 - For example in the 2nd century - Clement of Alexandria declared...
 - "...as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man...and the mixture of both - the water and of the Word is called the Eucharist."

- And in the same time period - Justin Martyr also revealed that - after the prayers were ended...
 - "...there is brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water."
- Now - as we consider all of this - it seems obvious to me that the communion cup at the Lord's supper...
 - ...was probably filled with freshly pressed grape juice - and possibly with a water and wine mixture.
 - Therefore - there's no good reason to believe that Jesus was encouraging His disciples to drink pure uncut fermented wine.
 - And from this - I strongly believe that the use of grape juice in communion - is the best choice for the church today.

● Application

- Should we Drink?
 - So - as we consider all of these - go to - verses that are often times used by Christians to argue...
 - ...that Jesus approved of the moderate or casual consumption of alcohol - the facts actually reveal the opposite.
 - And since there's no good Biblical reason to believe...
 - ...that Jesus presented a positive argument for the moderate consumption of alcohol...
 - ...then there's no Biblical case for believing that the first disciples of Christ were moderate drinkers.
 - Therefore - there's no Biblical Justification for arguing for the moderate consumption of uncut alcohol.

- At the same time - we find plenty of verses in the Bible that discourage the consumption of alcohol...
 - ...which leads me to the conviction that it's better to stay away from this blurry border - through abstinence...
 - ...then it is to walk on the edge of this border - and risk the bondage of alcohol addiction.

● Transition

• Points

- And so we see that...

1. ...the Bible does present Believers with the liberty to Drink Alcohol...

- ...in so far as it is being used for the health of the Christian.

2. As for moderate and casual consumption...

- ...I don't believe that there's a good reason to think that the Christians in the 1st century church...

- ...were in the habit of drinking uncut fermented alcoholic wine.

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3. And finally - I'd like to conclude this study...

- ...by considering the consequences of the Bible characters who allowed their drinking...

- ...to become Drunken mistakes.

- And so - let's turn in our Bible's to Ephesians chapter 5

V. Drunk

● Examples

- Noah

- And as you turn to Eph 5 - I should point out that Noah was the first man in the Bible to get drunk.
 - And as a result - there were relational difficulties between he and his sons.
- The second man that we find getting drunk is Lot...
 - ...and his drunkenness resulted in the horrible sin of incest.
- Samson - the judge of Israel was a drunkard...
 - ...and he ended up chained to the pillars of a pagan temple - with his eyes gouged out.
- Nabal was a drunkard who refused to help David...
 - ...and as a result - God took his life.
- Amnon was drunk when he was killed.
 -
- Application
- Drunk?
 - Christian - listen - nothing good will come from getting drunk.
 - And please hear me when I tell you that - the more intoxicated that a person get's...
 - ...the more likely they are to sin in other ways.
 - And knowing this - Paul pointed Christians in the opposite direction altogether.
 - Check out Ephesians 5 - beginning there at verse 15 - where Paul declared...

SLIDES 37-38

Eph 5:15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

Eph 5:16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

- Here in these verses - Paul encouraged the Christians who were attending Timothy's church - - to walk circumspectly.
 - Or - in other words - he was telling them to walk in a way that was diligent and precise.
 - And in order to do this - we must be wise about the decisions we make...
 - ...so that we can redeem the time that we have - here in this world.
 - And from this - i'd like to suggest that - if you want to go hiking in a foreign country...
 - ...it would be wise to stay away from the unmarked borders of Iran.
 - Because the chances are - you'll will be arrested and detained by their military.
 - In similar fashion - before you decide to go hiking around the border of sobriety and drunkenness...
 - ...I would encourage you to remember that drunkenness is a bondage that has taken many Christians captive.
 - And so - rather than trying to navigate that blurry border - it makes more sense to hike somewhere safer - altogether.

- I know a Pastor who tried to navigate this border.
- Without question - all things are lawful for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ.
- And while it's easy for us to claim that freedom in Christ...
 - ...we often times forget that while all things are lawful, NOT all things are helpful.
 - And so - when it comes to the question of Christians and alcohol - I encourage you to walk circumspectly...
 - ...by steering clear of the alcohol that has destroyed the lives of so many.

COMMUNION