

Intoxicating Spirits

Ephesians 5:15-21

#26 in our series from Paul's letter to the Ephesians

July 7, 2013

Peter Hiatt

"You Go to My Head"

Songwriters: COOTS, J. FRED / GILLESPIE,
HAVEN

You go to my head
You linger like a haunting refrain
And I find you spinning round
In my brain
Like the bubbles in a glass of champagne
You go to my head
Like a sip of sparkling burgundy brew
And I find the very mention of you
Like the kicker in a julep or two
The thrill of the thought
That you might give a thought
To my plea, casts a spell over me
Still I say to myself
Get ahold of yourself
Can't you see that it never can be
You go to my head with a smile
That makes my temperature rise
Like a summer with a thousand Julys
You intoxicate my soul with your eyes
Though I'm certain that this heart of mine
Hasn't a ghost of a chance
In this crazy romance
You go to my head, you go to my head

Though I'm certain that this heart of mine
Hasn't a ghost of a chance
In this crazy romance
You go to my head, you go to my head

You Go To My Head lyrics ©
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Prayer

Father we ask that by the power of your Spirit, in the name of Jesus, you would cause us to preach.

Amen

Message

Ephesians 5:15-21

Look [well] then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ["redeeming"] the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. [That is] do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

"Do not get drunk with wine."
That's pretty clear.

Last Thursday night, the 4th of July, a truck hit five pedestrians near Grand Lake killing the father and injuring four of his family. The driver was drunk. I read somewhere that: one-fourth of emergency room admissions, one-third of all suicides, and one-half of all homicides and instances of domestic violence are related to alcohol abuse. I've watched relatives struggle and die from alcohol. I've witnessed the almost demonic hold it has on friends. And I've abused alcohol myself. The cost to the U.S economy is estimated to be about 230 billion dollars per year. The cost in human pain and suffering is immeasurably more.

1 Corinthians 6:9 Paul writes, "Be not deceived...neither the sexually immoral...nor greedy nor drunkard will inherit the Kingdom." So why do we tolerate alcohol at all? Well the problem is in the Bible. Even though we're repeatedly warned about the abuse of alcohol, alcohol is not only tolerated, it's sometimes mandated in the Bible.

In Numbers 28:1-8, through Moses, God instructs Israel to feed Him each day. He says "this is my food: Lamb, one lamb in the morning and one in the evening and two other things, bread and strong drink. The Hebrew word literally means: "intoxicating drink." In fact, it's a form of the Hebrew word for intoxicate. So God basically says, "Feed me bread and wine (and grape juice doesn't count.)"

In Deuteronomy 14 God commands all Israel to take one-tenth of their income each year and use it to purchase, "*whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink...*" And then they were commanded to consume it before Him. In Proverbs 31:4 (My friend Nate pointed this out to me.) "*It's not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to take strong drink.*" In Proverbs 31:6 "*Give strong drink to the one who is perishing and wine to those bitter in soul. Let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.*"

Well, that's the crazy world of the Old Testament - Right?

John Chapter 2. Jesus' inaugural miracle:

He changes water to wine to save a wedding banquet, where it appears that people are already tipsy. The water was in six stone jars, which represent the six days of creation and the party was on the seventh day, which represents the finished creation. The jars contained water for purification, which clearly represents the law. It's like Jesus is saying, "I have come to fill all space and time with wine from the seventh day and fully fill all the law with an intoxicating Spirit which will fuel a wedding party that is eternal.

And then of course the ultimate offense to prohibitionists, on the night He was betrayed (The Passover meal where we eat roast lamb) Jesus took bread and then He took a cup of wine saying,

“This cup is the covenant in my blood.” “Drink of it all of you.” And, “I will not drink again of this cup until I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” “As often as you drink, do it in remembrance of me.” This cup- my blood.

Clip from *Family Guy*

[While going up to take communion, Peter Griffin spits out wine, surprised by its strength.]

Peter Griffin: Whoa!! Was that really the blood of Christ?

Priest: Yes.

Peter Griffin: Man that guy must’ve been wasted twenty-four hours a day eh?!

So why don’t we prohibit all alcohol consumption?

Think about it:

If you outlawed all potential causes for greed, you’d outlaw all creation and all potential means of giving.

If you outlawed all potential causes of sexual immorality, you’d outlaw all sex and the very future of humanity.

If you outlawed alcohol, well, technically speaking, you’d outlaw communion—the blood of Jesus.

Why did God set it up that way?

Why is God seemingly so unsafe?

Why didn’t God prohibit evil talking snakes and all trees of the knowledge of good and evil?

And what is good? And what is evil? And how do we separate the good from the evil?

“Don’t be drunk with wine.” What’s drunk? What’s lust? What’s greed? People want pastors to give them that knowledge, and I’m not sure I can. So let me ask you a few questions:

Is it greed to buy one of these?

[Image of a Volkswagen bug]

Is it greed to buy one of these? (In a world where billions are undernourished?)

[Image of a red Chevrolet]

Is it greed to buy one of these?

[Image of an expensive, flashy sports car]

(I don't know King Solomon possessed more than this.)

Is it sinful lust to look at this?

[Image of women covered from head to toe in burkas]

I told you how I lusted after the eyes of a woman in a Burka so maybe we need something like this:

[Image of a woman in a burka with sunglasses covering her eyes]

Is it lust to look at this?

[Image of a young beautiful woman in a short black dress]

How about this?

[Image of a young beautiful woman in a one-piece swimsuit]

We'll stop there.

How much wine is too much?

Is one glass of wine too much? [Peter picks up a wine bottle, pours himself a glass and drinks it.]

How about two? [Peter picks up the wine bottle, pours himself another glass and drinks it.]

How about three? [Peter picks up the wine bottle, pours himself another glass and drinks it.]

Now I should tell you this is grape juice. I'm not intoxicated but I may have to use the restroom. And Frances dared me to do that! Well hopefully I've got your attention.

You see, it's confusing and God set it up this way: "Have dominion over creation." "But don't be greedy." "Be fruitful and multiply!" "Don't look on a woman to lust after her." Like C.S. Lewis writes: "Unholiness can only grow in the close neighborhood of the holy."

And so, how can we be holy?

It's like the line between good and evil can't truly be discerned with laws in a book or fruit stolen from a tree.

That is, the line between good and evil...does not run between a Chevy Cruze and a Ferrari Enzo.

It does not run between PG movies and R movies.

It does not run between one beer and two beers.

You see, I wish it did because then,

I could buy sports cars right up to the line and justify myself.

I could gawk at women right up to the line and justify myself.

I could drink right up to the line and justify myself.

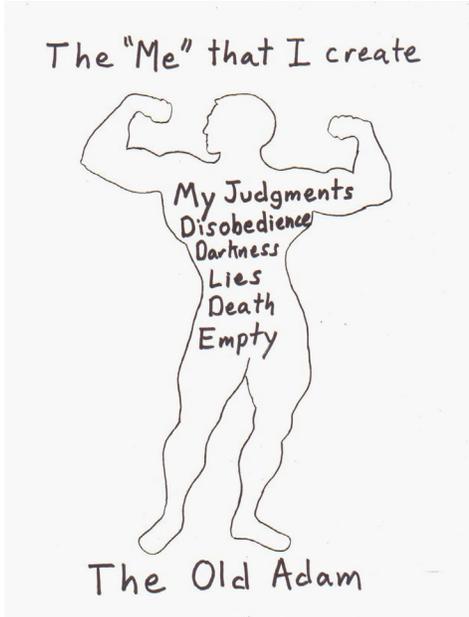
But it doesn't run between one beer and two beers.

It runs through every human heart.

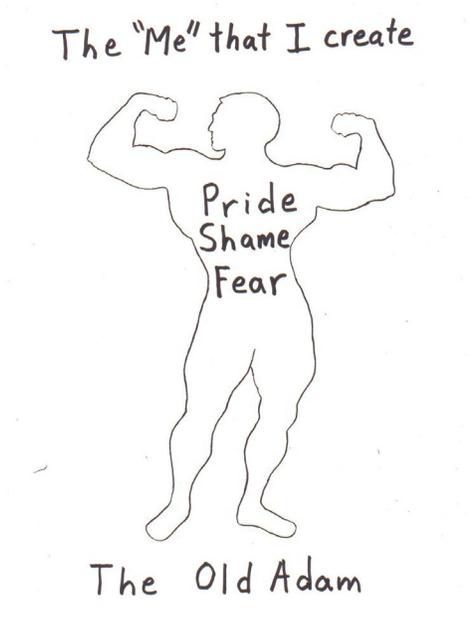
And so, I need something: *"living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword...to pierce to the division of soul and spirit...to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*

In the words of Saint Paul, the line between good and evil runs between the old man and the new man. We've been talking about them for months and in our last Ephesians sermon, I meant to show you this slide and we had some problems with our equipment.

This is the old man—old adam



He is the "me" that I think I create, with my judgments, based on my "knowledge of good and evil," stolen from the tree—the tree of Law." He is an illusion; he is a lie; he is my false self. My judgments are also called my "choices." They are based on this lie that I create myself, and because I think I must create myself, my choices are motivated by pride, shame, and fear. And that's sin.



So you see, the old man is a trap. I can't choose good motives with bad motives. I can't have faith, hope, and love, motivated by pride, shame, and fear. How can I choose to make good choices, if my chooser is bad?

My old man is stuck on himself.

He is his own deepest prison.

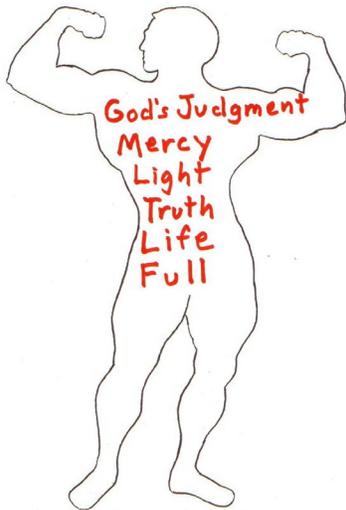
He is the reason I hide in shame and lie awake worrying.

He is the reason I don't enjoy people at parties.

He's terrified; he's stiff; he's dead. He can't dance...my old man.

My new man is the "me" that God creates with His judgment,—His Word—Jesus.

The "Me" that GOD creates



The New Adam

I took His life on the tree, and He died, but He gave His life on the tree, and He rose..."living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit." It is His Spirit that cries "Abba Father" in me. *He* is God's judgment. *He* is God's choice; God's choice manifest in me is faith...hope...and love in me. Faith, Hope, and Love in me is the Spirit of Christ coming alive in me!

The old man is arrogance and the new man is gratitude.

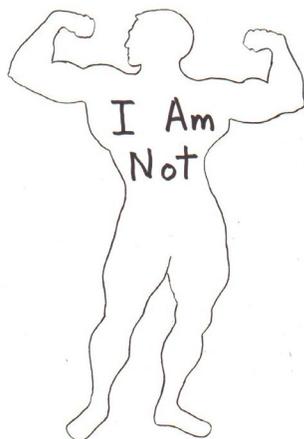
The old man worships himself, the new man worships God.

The old man is the work of the flesh.

The new man is the fruit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, planted like seed in the broken soil of my heart.

The old man is "I am not"

The "Me" that I create

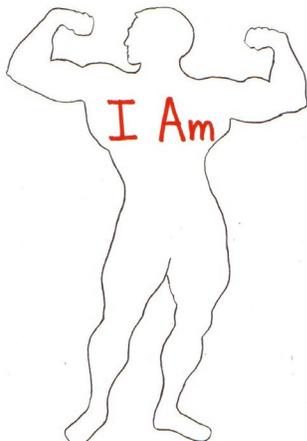


The Old Adam

He is the absence of love, and God is love.
He is the absence of truth, and Jesus is the truth.
He is the absence of the Spirit, and the Spirit is life.

Two weeks ago Andrew gave a great message on how we are to confess "I am not." Confess the dirt, like a field of broken dirty soil. And when we confess, "I am not," it reveals "I am."

The "Me" that GOD creates



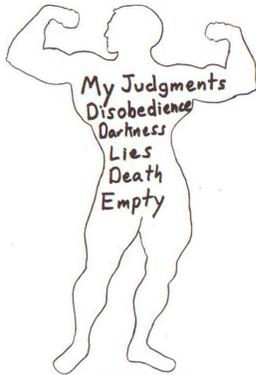
The New Adam

"I AM" in me and even as me.

The me that God creates with a Seed of faith named Jesus.
The me that God creates with His very body and blood.
The me animated by faith, hope, and love—God's will, God's Word, God's Decision.

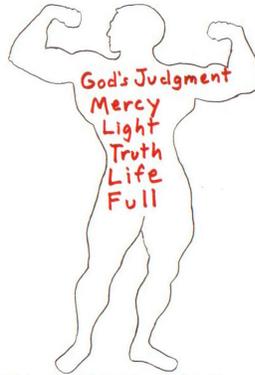
Well, how do I separate my old man from my new man?

The "Me" that I create



The Old Adam

The "Me" that GOD creates



The New Adam

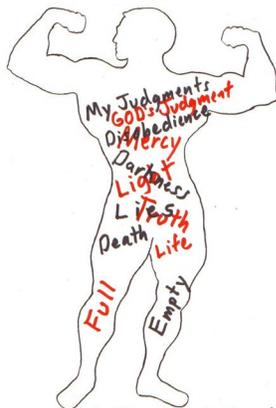
Can I judge myself?

Jesus told a parable about a farmer who sowed good seed in his field. We are God's field. God is the farmer. Jesus is called the Seed. Well, one enemy came and sowed tares in the same field. Tares look like wheat but aren't wheat, they're false wheat. The enemy is Satan, and Satan is the father of lies. And Satan is the father of your false self. Well, servants ask the Master: "Should we root out the tares?" And the Master says, "No, for in rooting out the tares you'll root out the wheat." "Wait until the harvest," which we know is judgment.

Now, I can confess sins I suspect to be sins, but how can I confess every bad choice, when they're entangled with every good choice?

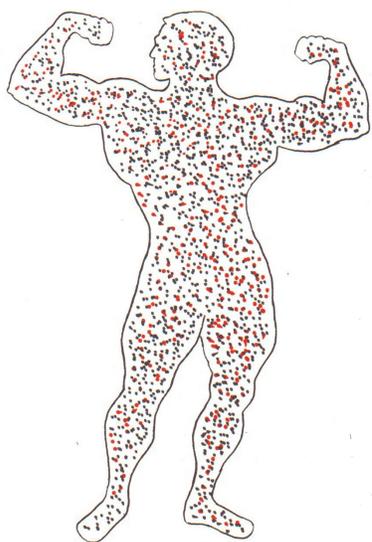
I must look like this in space and time.

Me being created
in Space and Time



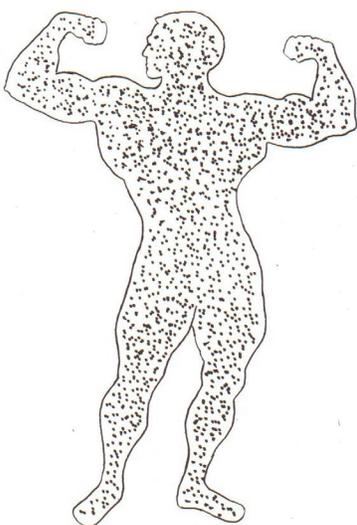
"Putting Off The Old Man"
and "Putting On The New Man"

If every arrogant bad choice is black and every gracious good choice is red, like blood, I might look something like this:



It's like I'm constructed of choices made in space and time, bad and good.

Well, if I judge myself, I probably look something like this:



Because to "old me," wheat looks like tares and tares look like wheat. Any choices that were good, I might not see, because I didn't really make them. I'd say, "When did I see you hungry and feed you?" "When did I see you sick and visit you?" And any choices I judged as good might therefore be bad, because I made myself the judge, saying, "Did I not cast out demons in your name? And He'd say, "Depart from me, I never knew you." And what does God *not* know? He does not know what is not: the false, the false self, who thinks he's the judge.

See? Ultimately, judging me with me is very bad judgment. It's just more "old me," because "old me," is the me that thinks that he's the judge, and then even my confession of sin is sin. Sometimes, I'm proud of how well I've confessed my sin. That's sin! And that's why in Romans 7 Paul cries out: "Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" Paul was literally imprisoned in his old man!!

Well, I'm sorry I got all theological and philosophical; we were asking a very practical question: "What is it to be drunk?" This video was taken from the dashboard of a Police Cruiser. I think this person is drunk.

Cowboy: *Oh Hell!*

Sheriff: *How are you doing?*

Cowboy: *Well I'm great...how 'bout you?*

Sheriff: *Well I'm not so good 'cause you were weavin' all over the road there.*

Cowboy: *Can we get one thing straight, I have not been drinkin'.*

Sheriff: *Ok...right hand on the nose...now the left and back out. I need you to recite the alphabet from Z to A backwards.*

Cowboy: *Z.....Y.....XWVUTSRQPONMLKJIHGF...[The cowboy starts singing to the "Alphabet Song"]....EDCBA*

Sheriff: *Ok....Remarkable I've never actually seen anyone do that.*

Cowboy: *Oh my pleasure.*

Sheriff: *Now...heal to toe, turn*

Cowboy: *Alright... well you got pretty good balance.*

[The following is said while the sheriff is dancing.]

Sheriff: *I want you to step...bump...step....bump...bump, kick ball change..... [She continues with several fairly difficult dance steps then prompts the cowboy to dance: 5,6,7,8...]*

[The cowboy follows the steps with amazing accuracy making suggestions of how the sheriff might improve the dance. He improvises a bit and ends up out dancing the sheriff!]

Sheriff: *That was good, that was really good.
Are you a dancer?*

Cowboy: *No no, no, a...I'm just DRUNK! Oh...oh....!!*

Sheriff: *Ooooh Uhhuh....up against the vehicle right now sir; you are going to jail!*

Well,

that's funny *but* drunk cowboys driving pick-up trucks is how people get slaughtered walking home from fireworks on the Fourth of July.

It's evil, isn't it?

AND YET...

It's so close to good.

I mean that drunken cowboy looks like a barrel of fun. He's lost his inhibitions; he has no shame, and he's made friends with that Lady Sheriff. They're dancing and he's the better dancer, and on top of everything else, he makes a great confession: "Awe, I'm no dancer; I'm just drunk."
"I am *Not*, and the alcohol is calling the shots."

Now listen again to Ephesians 5:18

Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

"Don't get drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit."

Do you remember what happened in Acts chapter 2 on Pentecost, the feast of the harvest? (Remember that's when the wheat is harvested, and the tares are consumed by fire.) On Pentecost, they were all gathered together praying and waiting, as Jesus had told them, and a mighty wind came and tongues of fire, and then they all started "singing and making melody to the Lord, giving thanks always and for everything," and doing it in foreign tongues. They lost their inhibitions and formed the new community called Church. They submitted one to another and shared all in common. They confessed themselves and joined the great dance, which is the Kingdom of God.

Great crowds gathered to watch this and some said, "They're drunk." Then Peter stood up and said, "They're not drunk; it's only nine o'clock in the morning. "This is what was prophesied: I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." They are *not* drunk, but they were drunk on Holy Fire; they had fire in their veins. They were intoxicated with the Spirit of God.

Do you remember the criticism leveled against Jesus in the gospels "A friend of tax collectors and sinners a glutton and a drunkard." Now, I don't think that Jesus was a drunkard, and yet, like Peter Griffin said in that *Family Guy* episode: "That guy must've been wasted twenty-four hours a day."

Well maybe he was intoxicated, not with alcoholic spirits, but with the Holy Spirit. He had no inhibitions, for He had no pride, no wonder people wanted to party with Him twenty-four hours a day, He was wasted on Fire Water, Holy Spirit and Holy Fire.

So, it's not like holiness is the opposite of drunkenness, more like holiness is true drunkenness, and drunkenness is counterfeit holiness. So, if you're an alcoholic, it could be that you desire holiness more than anyone you know, and you just haven't known how to get it. But now, AA is starting to work because it does what alcohol did, it's helping people confess themselves.

Think about it, why do people get drunk?

Isn't it because they realize they're not the King; instead, they're perishing and bitter in soul?

Isn't it because they want to forget themselves, because they're sick of themselves?

Isn't it because they want to lose themselves? In Paul's words, they want to "put off the old man..."

Why do people get drunk?

Philosopher Jack Handy wrote:

Is there anything more beautiful than a beautiful flamingo, flying across in from of a beautiful sunset? And he's carrying a beautiful rose in his beak, and also, he's carrying a very beautiful painting with his feet. And also, you're drunk.

Well maybe alcohol doesn't make flamingos beautiful. Maybe they just are that beautiful all the time, but you can't see them through all your pride, shame and fear. Maybe people are that beautiful, but

you can't see them because you're pre-occupied with yourself, at least until yourself gets wasted, and then maybe you see them for a moment.

People drink to lose their inhibitions and join the dance. As long as a dancer is thinking about their dance steps, they can't surrender to the music and really dance. To really dance, you must suspend all your judgments and be judged, animated and controlled by the Master of the dance—Logic of the dance. To really dance, you have to lose your old man. You must lose yourself to find yourself, dancing.

People get drunk to lose themselves and find themselves in a communion—community. God is a community: three persons, one substance. God is love. People drink to lose themselves and love others. You must lose yourself to love another. You know this: After church, hopefully, you'll hang out and talk to people. But as you're trying to talk to people you'll battle thoughts in your head:

"I must sound like an idiot."

"Gosh, I hope they think I'm smart."

"I bet they hated the sermon."

"I think there's a booger in my nose."

"What if they find out who I really am?"

"But I want them to find out who I really am."

"I'm not sure who I really am."

"Oh my gosh! I haven't heard a word this person has said!"

I think people get drunk at parties to surrender their judgments.

They get drunk in order to say:

"Here I am. I am exhausted with myself."

"I want to confess myself and lose myself."

"I want this prison of self to get wasted."

"I want to lose myself, so I can be free. Free to love and be loved!"

The only problem is it doesn't work. Wine is a sign and not the substance; to confuse sign with substance is to make an idol. And so, the best signs make the most dangerous idols. Wine is a gift, but scripture says it's also a mocker. It mocks your deepest desires.

So you lose yourself for a few hours and then yourself comes back with a vengeance. Jesus didn't *just* say, "You must lose yourself to find yourself." He said, "You must lose yourself for my sake and the Kingdom." You can only lose yourself in something greater than self, and alcohol is just a chemical.

Paul writes, "Don't be drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit."

Well, I can go buy a bottle of wine. I can pick a bottle of wine, like fruit from a tree. Thus, I control the wine that I want to control me. But I can't control the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit blows where He wills. I can only invite the Spirit, and wait for the Spirit. And how do I do that? Paul writes: "Sing songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for all things."

You know, if I choose to praise the Lord, it's a very strange and unusual choice, because I can't take credit for the choice. IF I take credit for praising the Lord, I'm not praising the Lord. So if I praise Jesus, it's to His credit and He created the choice. It's like I'm already a wee bit intoxicated with His Spirit.

Psalms 22:3, Jesus sang it on His cross: "You are holy, you inhabit the praises of your people."

Our praises are a sanctuary that God fills with Holy Fire.

He builds that Sanctuary with His love poured out on His cross, the tree.

And He fills the Sanctuary, us. His Spirit rises in our hearts crying: "Abba Father!"

And that's just the beginning. The new man longs to be continually filled with the Spirit, like a river, like blood flowing in a Body, like Love moving between the members of the Trinity to be filled and keep on being filled.

It may happen at a thought in a sermon, or during a song that we sing, or a prayer that we pray.

It may be subtle.

It may be as dramatic as tongues of Fire.

But it's always praise, it happens *if* only for a moment you lose yourself and "live to the praise of His glory."

When it happens, don't panic and seize control; surrender control. It's the Holy Spirit and it's the creation of your new man.

You know, you really can't judge yourself **with your old self**. Paul wrote: "It's a small thing that I'm judged by any of you. I don't even judge myself, but I'm not thereby acquitted. God will judge."

You can't judge yourself, but you can confess yourself. You can surrender yourself and Christ's Spirit will judge you. So when you're stuck on yourself, worried about yourself, confused about yourself, confess yourself. Say, "Here I am, whatever I am and whatever I'm not. Confess to God and to each other: "I drank this much beer and I don't know if it was wrong." "I yelled at my son and I don't know if it was wrong or right." Walk into the Light and worship the Light, and the Spirit of the Light will judge you.

Filled with the Spirit, intoxicated with the Spirit, I lose the old man.

And me intoxicated with the Spirit is the New Man.

The Spirit at Pentecost separates the wheat from the tares. The Spirit burns the tares and is the wheat. The wheat *is* fruit of the Spirit. The blood cleanses the body of impurities and brings Spirit, breath, which is Life. "Don't be drunk with wine but filled with the Spirit." In the Old Testament, in numerous places, God's wrath is described as a cup of wine given to men, to make them drunk. And men long to get drunk. See? The Spirit of God destroys our old man and we all long to have him destroyed.

The Spirit of God destroys the old man and the Spirit of God fills my New Man.

Causing him to dance.

Causing him to love and be loved.

One of my favorite verses is Song of Solomon 5:1.

It's advice spoken to the groom and his bride, who represent Christ and the Church.

"Eat friends, drink and be drunk with love." Or perhaps: "...drink till drunk by love."

Sing until sung by love. Praise the Lord until you become a praise *of* the Lord

Ephesians 1 Paul told us that we were predestined and appointed to be to the "praise of His glory."

"Don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." Song of Solomon 5:1 "Drink and be drunk with love." or "Drink and be drunk by love." Love is your Bridegroom. When we come to the cross, we drink His love poured out. We drink and we are drunk by Him. On the tree Jesus cried, "I thirst" and they gave him sour wine. Israel was God's vineyard but she worshiped herself and gave the Bridegroom sour wine while He was on the tree. But on the tree Jesus cried, "It is finished" and gave up His Spirit. And His Spirit fell at Pentecost, and His Bride began to worship. And the Bridegroom drank the fruit of His vineyard.

At communion, we drink wine from an earthen vessel.

And Christ drinks wine from an earthen vessel that is us.

That wine is Love...

And it's intoxicating!

Just think: Your love, which is His love in you, is the intoxicating Spirit that our Lord longs to drink!
[Peter starts singing]:

*You go to His head
Like a sip of sparkling burgundy brew
And He finds the very mention of you
Like the kicker in a julep or two...*

Communion

And SO He took bread, he blessed it and broke it saying, "Take. Eat. This my body." And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink again, of this fruit of the vine, until the day I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

For three years He had been preaching, "The Kingdom is at hand."
And so hear the Word of the Lord: "Eat oh friends, drink and be drunk with Love."
The dark cup is wine, the light cup is juice, and I believe you can get drunk with either.
Get drunk with Love, and then give your Lord His drink: Worship.
In Jesus' name believe the gospel and worship.

Prayer

And so Lord God we thank you that what you have wanted from the foundation of the world is communion with us. Because your love is so great, and so powerful, and so good, we've run from you in terror and fear. But Lord God we thank you that you met us in the path, hanging on a tree, and you gave us your body broken and blood shed and that you poured out your Spirit to rise in our hearts so that we would cry, "Abba Father," so that we would enter into a communion with you, a wedding feast with you, a banquet that is eternal. So Lord God you are good and we thank you and praise you that you have revealed it to us in Jesus.

In His name we pray, Amen.

Benediction

May you continue to worship. That's what Paul is saying in Ephesians; it's not just when you sing in church, rather, it's everything you do. That's the motive for all that you do and all that you are; it's gratitude and praise. God gives everything to you and you give everything to Him and then you lose yourself in that communion of love, which is the interior of the Trinity itself. You see? That's what God has destined you for. So eat, drink, and be drunk with Love.

In Jesus' name, Amen.