

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes March 26, 2008

Ephesians 5:18-21

- 18: G1 *And 'do not get drunk with wine',
for that is debauchery;*
- G2 *but [let yourselves] be filled with the Spirit,*
- 19: A: *addressing one another
in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,*
- B: *singing and making melody to the Lord
with all your heart,*
- 20: C: *giving thanks always and for everything
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
to God the Father,*
- 21: D: *[being] subject to one another
out of reverence for Christ.*

Introduction: “He is risen! He is risen indeed!” Last Sunday was Easter Sunday, on which we gathered to celebrate the death & resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But this celebration did not cease on Sunday, but continues, through out this Easter week, but even more so every day for the rest of our lives. One of the key components of Easter, from the earliest days of the Church, is the reception of new members (catechumens) through baptism. And in the same way, baptism is not merely a one time event, but something we must realize and live out for the rest of our lives. This is part of what we’ll be discussing today on ***Deep in Scripture***.

House cleaning items...

- Today’s Special: “Sober Intoxication of the Spirit,” by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa.
- We want your input!!! Phone: On air phone number: **1-800-664-5110**
Off air: **1-740-450-1175**

Email: marcus@deepinscripture.com

Forum: <http://www.chnetwork.org/forums/forum51>

REVIEW:

- **Today we’re continuing our discussion of Ephesians:**
 - **As I said in the opening**, one of the key components of Easter, from the earliest days of the Church, is the reception of new members (catechumens) through baptism. From the beginning of our study of Ephesians, we have suggested that this letter is best understood as an Easter letter written by St. Paul from prison to be read to the newly baptized in the Easter liturgy. This was common amongst many of the early Bishops.
 - The Catholic Church has always taught that sacraments are not magic rites that automatically change us, but rather, as Fr. Cantalamessa writes, “their efficacy is the result of a synergy, or collaboration, between divine omnipotence (that is, the grace of Christ and of the Holy Spirit) and free will. As Saint Augustine said, “He who created you without your consent will not save you without your consent.”
 - There are two aspects to each sacrament: *opus operatum & opus operantis*:
 - *Opus operatum*: that aspect which depends upon divine grace and the will of Christ; in other words, “the work already accomplished, the objective and certain fruit of a sacrament when it is administered validly.” i.e, the remission of sins; the gift of the

- theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity; and divine sonship;
- *Opus operantis*: that aspect which depends on the liberty and disposition of the person receiving the sacrament.
- **Essentially:**
 - **In the first three chapters**, St. Paul describes the *opus operatum* aspect of baptism; i.e, the changes that take place in our lives once we have heard, believed, and then were sealed with the Holy Spirit in baptism. Our relationship with God, with other baptized believers, and with ourselves has been changed by grace. By grace we were saved from our old life / nature and made children of God, full members of His family, members of the Body of Christ, the Church.
 - **In the second half of Ephesians**, St. Paul describes the *opus operantis* aspect; he exhorts the newly baptized that they now must live out this new life, which requires surrender and faithful obedience.
 - Fr. Cantalamessa explains that though a person has been validly baptized, the sacrament can remain “unreleased.”
 - “A sacrament is called “unreleased” if its fruit remains bound, or unused, because of the absence of certain conditions that further its efficacy.
 - In the early days of the Church, “the action of God and the action of man came together simultaneously, with perfect synchronism.
 - “Today this synchronism is not operative. As the Church adopted infant baptism, little by little the sacrament began to lack the act of faith that was free and personal...In today’s situation, rarely, or never, do baptized people reach the point of proclaiming ‘in the Holy Spirit’ that ‘Jesus is Lord!’ And because they have not reached that point, everything in their Christian lives remains unfocused and immature.”
 - In this letter to the newly baptized in Ephesians, St. Paul wanted to make sure they didn’t squander their new life in Christ!
 - So what does this letter have to say to us, 2000 years later, in the week of Easter 2008?
 - Every time we bless ourselves with Holy water, in the sign of the Trinity, we are remembering / reclaiming the blessings of our baptismal re-birth, and if we haven’t experienced the blessings / graces, we can start today, immediately!
 - We begin with Confession: returning to the state of grace!
 - Then, following St. Paul’s advice, we start over: (4:22-24)
 - 22: Put off your old nature*
 - which belongs to your former manner of life*
 - and is corrupt through deceitful lusts,*
 - 23: and be renewed in the spirit of your minds,*
 - 24: and put on the new nature,*
 - created after the likeness of God*
 - in true righteousness and holiness.*
- **In chapter 5, beginning with vs.15, St. Paul continues with his exhortation to the newly baptized / you & me on how we must live by faith in our new life in Christ:**
 - **Last week we examined verses 15-17, in which St. Paul exhorts us to redeem every moment of our lives.**
 - Ended with quote from “Abandonment to Divine Providence,” by Jean-Pierre de Caussade (1675-1751), Image Books, (1975), pg. 50-51:
 - “Our only satisfaction must be to live in the present moment as if there were nothing to expect beyond it.”*

- **18b [G2]: “But [let yourselves] be filled with the Spirit.”**

- **Note: I added “let yourselves” to the translation of both 18a & b because the Greek verbs in both cases are imperative passives:**

- When a person gets drunk, they have actively drunk too much wine, but they became “drunk” passively by the action of the wine; therefore, to keep from getting “drunk,” we must actively limit our drinking; we must practice moderation, or abstinence if necessary.

- In the same way, we can’t actively fill ourselves with the Spirit!

- Too often enthusiastic people have tried to do this!
- Rather, being filled with the Spirit is the work of the Holy Spirit; our part is making ourselves receptive, and this St. Paul exhorts us to do, in this case, in the gathering of the Body of Christ.
- All biblical references to being filled with Holy Spirit are passive:

Ex 35: 31, Moses describes Bezalel, that the Lord “has filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship.

Lk 1:15, the Angel describing to Zechariah what his son John will be like, he quotes OT prophesy, and say, “for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.”

Acts 2:4, Description of the Pentecost event: “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 4: 8, When Peter preaches first sermon, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders...”

4:31, The apostles, disciples, & new converts, “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Rom 15:13, St. Paul prays for them, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

- Note: through baptism we have already been “filled with the Spirit”:

*Eph 2:13-14, “In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”*

- **What can we do, in obedience to St. Paul’s exhortation, to be filled with the Holy Spirit?**

- In general: By grace, follow ALL of Ephesians; this is why St. Paul wrote!
 - *More precisely, follow the teaching of Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture as taught to us by the Church. (We can easily get off track following Scripture alone!)*

- **Specifically here, four things came to St. Paul's mind (possibly as he considered weaning them from certain aspects of their old gatherings):**

1. The language during the gathering, vs. 19a:

*“addressing one another
in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,”*

- Rather than implying how they are to talk to one another, it may mean more accurately how they are to speak together or as members of one accord, emphasizing the one voice of their unity;
- (This seems to be the sense in the parallel passage in Colossians 3:16)
- **Psalms:** *the traditional OT psalms;*
- **Hymns:** *newer, Christ centered hymns;*
- **Spiritual songs:** *possibly more spontaneous expressions of praise & worship.*

2. The sincerity of their worship together, vs 19b:

*“singing and making melody to the Lord
with all your heart,”*

- *“making melody”* = “pluck or play” = implies accompanied music!
- *“with all your heart to the Lord”* (the order in the Greek)
 - Not merely mindless repetition but with sincere gusto!

3. The attitude of their gathering / worship, vs. 20:

*“giving thanks always and for everything
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
to God the Father,”*

- Here St. Paul is exhorting us to detach ourselves from everything that pulls our attention away from God: from the world, from our successes, from our plans, from ourselves;
- *“giving thanks”* = *eucharistountes*; modern Catholics hear the word “eucharist” and recognize it to be the Body & Blood of Christ, but behind this must be this attitude of thanksgiving!
- *“always & for everything”* = always be careful of distractions!

4. Their relationships within the gathering / worship, vs. 21:

*“[being] subject to one another
out of reverence for Christ.*

- In many translations, this verse is combined with what follows, but we've included it in this context because of the parallel tenses of the verbs:
 - *“addressing ... singing ... giving thanks”* are all participles, and so is the verb that begins verse 21, so it seems to be a continuation of St. Paul's thinking. What follows beginning in verse 22 about submission within marriage is a more specific application of his more general thought in verse 21.
- *“[being] subject to one another out of reverence for Christ”* = essentially means that we are to follow Jesus' instructions “to love another as he has loved us,” and to not lord it over one another but serve one another.

- **In many ways we can see how these instructions have been carried out in the liturgies that have been passed down to us from the earliest days of the Church;**
 - **Yet, think of all the ways we fall short when we gather for worship?**
 - How often do we digress into common fellowship, gossip, and chatter when we're gathering in the presence of Jesus in the Sacrament? The Creator of the Universe, our Savior who gave himself for us on the cross, is truly present in the Eucharist, yet we act as if there is nothing different about where we are gathered than the local grocery store or even a pub.
 - How often do we merely recite the words and hymns of the liturgy without even thinking about what we are saying? Where is our heart?
 - How thankful are we when we receive the Eucharist (which means be thankful)?! To what extent do we take for granted all that He has done for us?
 - How submissive are we to others in the Church, not just to the leadership, but to one another? How often has bitterness, anger, and the other negative attitudes St. Paul's warns about colored our relationships within the Body?
 - The answer to these problem is not renewing the Mass, but ourselves.
 - Out of reverence for Christ, and in obedience to the words of St. Paul, let us put off the old, let us set aside the distractions and attachments of life;
 - let us be renewed in the spirit of our minds,
 - and put on the new, intent on living out these instructions whenever we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, "in true righteousness and holiness."