**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 54**

**Ephesians 5:18-20**

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Do I struggle with drunkenness or any other kind of addiction? Why?
2. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? What am I doing in order to be filled with the Spirit every day?
3. Am I trying to fill-up my life with anything other than God? If so, with what?
4. How has what I talk about and how I speak changed since I became a Christian?
5. Do I love singing songs to God? Do I sing with all my heart during online church or devotionals?

***Insight:***

Why do people get drunk? People drink alcoholic beverages because of how it affects them. While people may drink wine for socializing purposes, but people drink to get drunk because of how it makes them feel. Often, people drink alcohol as a way of coping with their problems, it reduces their stress (at least temporarily) and makes them “happy”. For some, alcohol makes them less inhibited and therefore exhibit more “courage” as they do things they normally would be too shy to do. So we can say alcoholic drinks changes our moods and influences are actions. The more we fill ourselves up with alcohol the more it affects us. But we all know the dangers of drinking alcohol. People have been killed or hurt seriously because of drunkenness and often the victims are innocents who just happened to be near the drunk person. The injury cause by people getting drunk is not just physical but emotional as seen in the trauma caused to families with alcoholic members. Even if being drunk doesn’t hurt anyone else, the damage it causes to our bodies is clear. So why get drunk?

Paul says that instead of getting drunk we should be filled with the Spirit. Aren’t we filled with the Spirit at baptism? How can we be filled up again? Douglas Jacoby in *The Spirit* explains it this way:

However, the phrase “filled with the Spirit” in Scripture refers not to con- version but to (a) spirituality—see Ephesians 5, above—or (b) increased holiness in response to prayer or an urgent situation. In Ephesians the verb Paul used helps us: (1) It is an imperative. That means it is a command. Being filled with the Spirit is not an option. (2) It is in the “present/progressive” tense, which in Greek carries the idea of continuous action. Thus, we are to keep on being filled with the Spirit again and again. It is not a one-time thing.

Being filled with the Spirit therefore is being led by the Spirit. This is what being spiritual means.

One sign of being filled with the Spirit is speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. One of the things we notice when we became Christians is how our vocabulary changes. As we read more and more of the Bible it forms part of our everyday speech. So “we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words” (1 Co 2:13). By speaking in this way we help each other be more Spirit-filled. Apart from worshipping God, helping each other be Spirit-filled should be the main reason for all meetings of the body. Our goal is not to simply entertain but to help each other be more spiritual. So when we plan our online meetings, this should be our focus. Do people become spiritual because of our activities? If not, why do it at all?

We are filled with the Spirit when we are moved to sing to God. Because we are having online services, we may find it awkward to sing in front of a screen instead of in person. But we have to remember that we are singing to God, so we should always sing with all our hearts. Even if our church service or devotional is virtual, our worship must always be actual. We are participants in the worship and not the audience. God is the audience.

Drunkenness is an addiction. We all have things we were addicted to before we became Christians. We can’t go back to them. But even as Christians we can develop new addictions. With our reliance on the internet for information, education, work and entertainment we are spending more and more time using our devices. Digital addiction is real and, in many ways, more dangerous the other forms of addiction as it directly impacts our brains and therefore our behavior. During this time how addicted have we been to playing games, watching videos, checking our social media accounts, responding to chat messages and other online activities?

We need to be particularly careful not to return to our former addictions or develop new addictions during these times of great stress. The best way to do that is to focus on the one addiction we are supposed to have – our addiction to God. We should always crave for God. Prayers should be to us what drugs are to an addict – we can’t wait until our next fix. Reading the Bible should be to us what drinking is to an alcoholic. We should desire to pray and read the Bible any time of the day, and even more so when we are stressed.

Let us be filled with the Spirit and be addicted to God during this lockdown and beyond.