Let’s be Blunt and Blaze it up

Online school is hard,
I’m getting a lot of stress.
I failed every single exam;
I can’t pass a test.

My friends gave a drink
A nice cold beer
To calm my nerves
And remove my fear

I say forget that,
And throw it in the river
I rather get straight Fs
And preserve my liver

They told me about a thing called weed
Smoke it or eat it, u must succeed
I said I would,
but I had to make a decision
To spend my days at home
Or a mental institution

I saw too many people make the wrong choice
So, on this topic I will always use my voice
Don’t make drugs and alcohol take you over
Save your money, save your life, and stay sober.

Tonight, we will be real, we won’t beat around the bush, we will be going into the weeds to talk about liquor and Kush. **We are going to be blunt and blaze it up.**

Tonight, we talk about the deadly combination: drugs and alcohol. It was not very common to hear a sermon in church talking about drugs. This was because most drugs were illegal and expensive, and it was seen as something persons in church would not use. How, things and times have changed.

In our modern times, one drug is now on parole, it has left prison where it shared the company of other criminal drugs like opium, cocaine, meth and extasy. It is no longer a criminal drug; it has been decriminalized. By now you should know that I am talking about Trinidad and Tobago’s most popular drug. Marijuana aka Weed, aka Kush, aka Dope, aka Ganja, aka Herb, aka Chronic.

Weed has now joined the ranks of another criminal that has been walking our streets, the notorious alcohol. Even though weed and alcohol are no longer considered criminals, these two have not stopped from terrorizing people, especially young people.

Like paedophiles they prey on the young and vulnerable of our society. Grooming them at a tender age, bending the tree while it’s still young, knowing that if they get the youths now, they will have them for life.

But tonight, we will learn why it is important to resist the mind games of the devil, to say no to drugs and yes to life, not just life, but abundant life, offered by Jesus Christ. So, we can boldly proclaim the truth and Blaze a trail for the Lord, through our life and ministry.

**Let Us pray**

Before we begin, let’s address the elephant in the room. Why am I speaking so negatively about drugs and alcohol when they have so many positive benefits? Isn’t there now medical marijuana? Doesn’t the Bible say to take a little wine for the stomach’s sake? These statements are dangerous, and sound awfully similar to a statement made in Genesis by the Devil. Let’s read it together.

***Genesis 3:2-5***

*“2And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

If the comparison was not clear to you let me translate this into a more modern version, written specifically for this presentation, we will replace the fruit with alcohol.

**2** And the Christian youth said unto the serpent, we may **drink the juice** of any fruit of the trees: **3** But if that **juice is fermented**, God hath said, Ye shall not drink of it, neither shall ye taste it, lest ye be deceived. **4** And the serpent said unto the Christian youth, **if you don’t get drunk**, ye shall not be deceived: **5** For God doth know that you should take some for the stomach’s sake, and add a little flavour to your black cake, and ye shall be as gods, knowing how to handle your liquor in moderation.

The Devil is the father of lies, and he knows the best lies are the lies that sound like truths.

The best lies are the lies that make us feel good and wise and ­proud. Even members in the church have been campaigning on behalf of the devil, telling these lies so that they can deceive themselves and the youth.

Let’s Start with the lie of alcohol. When God told Adam and Eve to stay away from the tree in the midst of the garden, he didn’t say to eat the fruit in moderation, because there is no moderation in Evil. Temperance is **total abstinence** from that which is evil, and **moderation** of that which is **good**.

We do not encourage moderation in evil, even if, from a small taste, you won’t “surely die”.

The flesh is weak, and we live in a sinful world that will break many of us under pressure.

Whether it be peer pressure, or the stresses of life. Under pressure, our moderations can become extremes.

When we become depressed, we over-eat, over-sleep, we spend hours upon hours watching TV and browsing social media. When we face financial pressure, we overwork, and under sleep. When we face peer pressure, we stay out two hours past our curfew. Even pressure from church work cause many to neglect their family. All these examples are good things that we do, that become bad when no moderation is applied. Many of these good things, even though they are wrong to do in extreme, don’t always have dire consequences when done infrequently.

However, on the other hand whenever evil is practiced to the extreme, the consequences can be immediately devastating. When many people become depressed, they over drink, they get drunk, and we all know what people have done under the influence of alcohol. Drunk driving, physical abuse to both themselves and to others. This kind of lifestyle leads to addiction because your brain desires to return to the high you get from being intoxicated. This is a cycle that we don’t have to look too far to find examples. Almost every community has a liming spot where slaves to alcohol are helplessly drawn every day. They sit and recruit others to join their mental incarceration.

Why then would a loving God set us up for potential downfall, by asking us to be moderate in evil by drinking wine for the stomach? In fact, Paul in this verse was counselling young Timothy to be moderate but not in the way you might think.

Let’s look at the verse in question: 1 Timothy 5:23. I will be reading in the New International version for clarity “Stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”

Timothy was experiencing, health issues, he was falling ill frequently, Paul diagnosed the cause of his illness and suggested a remedy.

Earlier in the book of Timothy, in chapter 3, Paul lays out the characteristics of a Bishop, specifically that they are not given to wine. This is not anything new, in fact the Old Testament priests in Leviticus 10:9 were commanded:

**9**Do not drink wine **nor** strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

Being a zealous young Christian, Timothy must have been trying to do everything he could do to live a life that was pleasing in the sight of God. He may have taken his moderation to the extreme where he wanted to stay so far from alcohol that he was only drinking water. He wasn’t even drinking grape juice, just in case it had any little fermentation.

Paul in was protecting him from damaging his health, he was missing out on all the beneficial vitamins and minerals found in grape juice. This could help him with his healing. He said don’t drink only water, but drink some grape juice for the health benefits, to help you with your sickness. This statement was not only spiritually correct, but also scientifically true.

Research studies suggest that red and purple grape juices provide some of the same health benefits of red wine, and that eating grapes is even better. Alcohol is also associated with worse health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease.

Why should we then allow the Devil to deceive us into thinking its ok to do wrong in moderation? Young man, young woman!

Provers 20:1 says “Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

Young man, young woman, be wise, true wisdom can only be found in the word of God. Ignore the noise, ignore the deception, be like Daniel and the Hebrew boys and refuse the wine from Babylon’s table. Listen to the word of God. Be Wise.

**Proverbs 23:29 says**

*“29Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? 30Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. 31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! 32In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.”*

The old serpent, the Devil tries to deceives us, to makes us feel good, then he bites us and poisons us with the consequence of our bad decisions. Let us Choose Christ.

Alcohol has received a lot of attention in the past, it has deceived many but the bible has always been clear about its dangers and calls its by name. But there has arisen another dangerous substance, it is not mention explicitly in the bible, but has the ability to do much worse: This substance is Marijuana. If the Devil were to speak to us about weed like he spoke to Eve, it would go something like this.

**2**And the Christian youth said unto the serpent, We may use all the vegetables in garden: **3**But of the flower of the trees that are classified as drugs, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, or smoke it, lest ye lose control of your mind. **4**And the serpent said unto the Christian youth, Ye shall not surely lose your mind: **5**For God doth know that in the day ye consume thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be on a **higher heights**, having knowledge of good and Babylon’s evil. Curing from anything from asthma to aids, because the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nation.

Weed was generally spoken ill of in society. This was not without good reason; we could observe the mental degradation it had on the people who used it until it used them. Many in the society and sad to say, even in the church have changed their take on the drug, now that governments across the world are beginning to decriminalize its usage.

Trees are popping up all over Tobago. People who have never planted a lettuce, are now suddenly big marijuana horticulturalists. But before we jump on the band wagon, remember that decriminalization is not sanctification. In fact, we have to be careful about what the government chooses to decriminalize. Today it’s chronic weed, tomorrow it will be chronic homosexuality, will we grow that too?

But weed, is natural, you say! God made it, so it must be good for you, right? Right?

Type in the chat if you can tell me how many milligrams of marijuana is safe to consume for each age group. And if you know tell me how do you test it.

Here are a few other naturally occurring things that God made.

The poppy plant. This is what is used to produce opium, a deadly drug, its abuse and addiction nearly destroyed Japan and is one of the reasons the Taliban has taken control of Afghanistan.

The Coca plant, from its leaves are extracted the chemical that makes cocaine. The drug that ravaged Columbia where it is grown widely, the US and the Caribbean, and it destroyed millions of lives.

How about Marijuana? You may ask, it isn’t as bad as the rest! Weed can’t kill you!

I once heard a joke that said the only way weed can kill you is if they drop 1000 pounds of weed from 100ft on top of your head.

There is some truth to this, but this is the biggest problem with weed.

Everyone repeats the words of the great deceiver “You shall not surely die”.

Adam lived for 930 years after the serpent said you will not surely die. But in reality, his life ended the moment he ate the fruit. His life expectancy decreased from infinity to a measly 930 years. He now had to watch as sin destroyed his family, nature and the whole earth right before his eyes. He had to live almost 900 years of regret and sorrow.

Right now, at a block or a corner near you, there are young men and women who are surely dead. Marijuana has dulled their ability to reason, interfered with their ability to choose wrong and right. They lack motivation to better themselves.

Weed is clinically defined as a depressant. Depressants affect your nervous system and slow brain function. Life already can be so depressing, it baffles me why there are people out there smoking and eating depressants.

Studies have shown that the use of marijuana is associated with reduced brain function in teens.One study found that teens who regularly use marijuana lose an average of 5.8 IQ points by the time they reach adulthood. A recent study found that marijuana has a more negative impact on a teenager’s brain development than alcohol. But these studies are overseas, what about the local weed! Take a visit to the St, Anne’s mental hospital in Trinidad, it is estimated that 80-90% of all the patients are there because of marijuana induced psychosis. Weed is known to trigger the onset of schizophrenia, bipolar disease, depression, among others. But don’t worry, you will not surely die.

Marijuana contains dangerous chemicals that scientists still can’t yet accurately measure their effects.

You are blessed to be exposed to a church that believes in the health message as a part of the last day gospel message. If you need a cure for your disease, follow the NEWSTART plan, Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust in God. Pray for healing and when necessary, get a certified physician to prescribe measured doses of life saving drugs. Otherwise say no to drugs and yes to abundant life in Christ.

Parents, many children became alcoholics by first stealing a drink from the bottles you hid in the back of the cupboard to pour on the black cake. Many children’s first experience with weed was stealing a piece from the tree you are growing to make tea. Do you want to be responsible for your children’s downfall?

In the end, the primary reason we try to encourage abstinence from drugs and alcohol is to ensure that we all can maintain control over our choices. God made us with the freedom of choice, it sets us apart from plants and animals.

When we give up our ability to choose, we become slaves to anything that is taking away that control. Illicit substances have a powerful effect over our brains. They can take full control of our decisions without us being aware of what we are doing. God does not want zombies, he wants persons who are able to live an upright life because they made a conscious and certain decision.

**1 Peter 5:8 says** “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”*

Lions seek the weakest prey, when we are not sober, we become a prime target of the devil.

The only thing that the children of God should be Blazing, is the trail for God. We should be blazing the trail like Jeremiah, when he said the word of God was like fire shut up in his bones.

The only spirit that we need is the holy spirit, who will be the one to set us on fire for the Lord. We should be hitting the streets, the highways and the byways, showing young men and women of a better way.

Let us teach them how to find peace without drugs, how to get joy without alcohol. The only smoke we should give off is from the sweet smelling incense of our prayers. Interceding on the behalf of the lives that drugs and alcohol have broken, that can only be fixed by God.

Let’s Be Blunt: Drugs will destroy you, but Jesus can save you, even from the terrible addictions of drugs and alcohol. True peace can only come when you find Christ. Chemical peace fades away, but the peace that Christs offers is everlasting. It’s a peace that passes understanding. It’s a peace that the world cannot give, and the world cannot take away.

Are you or somebody you love under the shackles of addiction tonight. Are you ready to pray for a breakthrough tonight? Are you ready to break the habit with the power of the Holy Spirit? Are you ready to surrender your life for a recreation and restoration? Do you believe that only Jesus is able to free you from this terrible sin? For those of us who are playing with fire, trying to be moderate with evil, are you ready ask God to give you the strength to throw out that Cherry brandy, to cut down that weed tree? To put nothing between our soul and salvation?

If you agree, please say this prayer with me.