

EXCERPT



The Soul of Wine *Savoring the Goodness of God*

December 3, 2019 | \$16, 144 pages, hardcover | 978-0-8308-4584-2

Wine is a wonderful, lavish, and mysterious gift from God. Gisela Kreglinger, the daughter of a vintner and trained as theologian, invites us to discover wine as part of a more full-bodied Christian spirituality. Along with bread, wine is the gift we receive at the table of communion. Through these gifts we experience God's glorious and loving presence among us, feeding and nurturing us in body, soul, and spirit.

Sensing God in Wine

Growing up on a winery, the great abundance of the earth mingled with my experiences at church, where I heard and listened to the marvelous stories of Jesus of Nazareth. I remember vividly the story of the tax collector Zacchaeus, a wealthy man who wanted to get a glimpse of the great prophet who had come into town. So Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a tree to make sure he got to see Jesus when he walked by. Zacchaeus was a wretched man, but he was hungry and thirsty for more. Jesus saw him in the tree, called him by name, and invited himself to dinner at Zacchaeus's house—just like that. How did Jesus know his name?

I had no doubt, listening to this story as a little girl, that Zacchaeus would have provided a banquet for Jesus with only the best food and wine. Just like my dad, he would have gone down to the wine cellar himself to select a wide range of choice wines for this honorable guest, wines he would only pull out for special occasions. They would have talked late into the night and bonded over food and wine. At the end of the evening, Zacchaeus's life was transformed. Jesus' loving and accepting presence had touched him so deeply that this once-greedy man gave half of his wealth away, and he was unburdened and ready to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus performed miracles to pull away the veil that keeps our eyes and ears, our noses and tongues from sensing God's presence among us. In Jesus' life, his words and deeds both great and small, in the way he encountered and touched people, through his suffering, death, and resurrection we see into the very heart of God, our loving Father. His life-giving Spirit continues to revitalize and green even the most barren places of our lives and communities if we allow him to move among us. He is not forceful or overbearing but woos into his presence like a lover does his beloved bride.

First things and last things are important in a person's life and ministry. They announce and mark and signal to us what a person values and wants us to remember and be grounded in. Writers give witness to what they have heard and seen about people who changed the course of history, and we need to pay careful attention to their words, especially as they tell us about those first and last things these people have done. This is no less true for the Gospels, which give witness to Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

In the Gospel of John we learn that Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine at a Jewish peasant wedding where the host had run out of wine. His last miracle was supernaturally providing an abundance of fish for his ragamuffin fishermen followers, including Peter, who had betrayed him three times.

Fruit of the earth and fruit of the sea become places where God reveals his glorious and loving presence among us, feeding and nurturing us in body, soul, and spirit. Jesus even cooks some fish by the beach before his disciples are able to haul that great catch onto the shore.

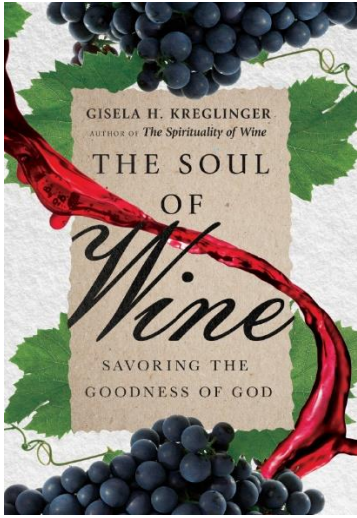


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“Spirituality and wine are two realms that have been too often reserved for an elite class of devotees and drinkers. To me, this is a tragedy as I consider the fruit of the vine to be one of God’s greatest gifts, and artfully made wine to be one of the most profound and pleasurable collaborations between God and humans. I am thankful that in *The Soul of Wine* Gisela Kreglinger is making both soul and wine accessible and inviting to the expert and beginner alike. Cheers!”

Adam McHugh, wine tour guide and sommelier, author of *The Listening Life*

Our harvests, whether in wine or fish, in words and deeds, will only ever add a little to that great abundance that God has provided for us both in the fruits of the earth and the resurrected Christ, who is the first fruit of all of creation.

I have written *The Soul of Wine* to help you rediscover wine as a spiritual and cultural gift. We must reclaim wine as a gift from God and allow it to bring joy and conviviality into our midst. Wine was never meant just for a small and elite group of well-to-do people but is a gift from God to us all. We can and should learn together how wine can help us reconnect with God, one another, and creation. Wine can reenchant the world for us and help us fall in love with it all over again. There is a good reason why Jesus’ first miracle was turning water into wine. Few created things can hint at the glory of the heavenly wedding banquet like a choice wine can.

I would like to introduce you to the world of wine sip by sip, help you shed any sense of intimidation that you might have, and embrace this world with a sense of curiosity and wonder. I want you to come alongside me and let me be your guide. Let’s have some fun while we explore this together and keep those at bay who seek to intimidate us by their sometimes outlandish and elitist wine talk. Let the convivial embrace begin.

This book is about rediscovering the gift of wine for what it was meant to be and do: reveal glimpses of God’s incredible love, generosity, and benevolence toward us. We have let this gift fall by the wayside, and the secular world now defines the meaning of wine for us. It eclipses the superabundant generosity of God, who always desires to give us more than we need, even wine. We are more than survivors in this world, our lives were never meant to be just about water and bread but also about wine and wild-caught fish.

—Adapted from chapter 1, “Sensing God in Wine”



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BIO



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Gisela H. Kreglinger (PhD, St. Andrews) grew up on a winery in Franconia, Germany. Her family has been crafting wine for many generations, and this unique experience inspired her to write *The Spirituality of Wine*. She taught Christian spirituality for four years before turning to writing full-time. She lives in Edinburgh, the United Kingdom. Visit her website at giselakreglinger.com and follow her on Twitter: @DrGKreglinger.

Gisela Kreglinger, *The Soul of Wine*

I believe that this life we live is an incredibly beautiful gift from God. The question of what it means to be alive in this world and flourish wherever we are planted is a lifelong pursuit of mine. Many years ago I left my home in Germany in order to study a theology that would engage all of life, contemporary culture, and the arts in meaningful ways.

I love to travel, and going to museums is one of my favorite Sunday afternoon activities. I have lived, laughed, cried, made friends, studied, and taught in five different countries. This experience has given me a great perspective on life and what it means to be fully alive in a time when the world seems to spin into unknown and sometimes scary territory. When I am not sitting at my desk writing, you might find me paddling on a river, baking bread, or leading seminars on spiritual subjects such as the power of story, the history of soul care, or the baptized imagination. But best of all I like being with family and friends, sitting around a table while enjoying a beautiful meal and sipping a glass of well-crafted wine.

I am also a writer, theologian, and public speaker. As a writer and theologian my primary interest lies in engaging theology with culture and the arts. I believe it is of utmost importance that we re-envision what Christian spirituality might look like in the twenty-first century and how we can engage contemporary culture in thoughtful ways. As a public speaker I have literally travelled around the world to hold events around the spirituality of wine. I teach beginners and wine experts alike how to cultivate savoring wine as a spiritual practice.

My writings include *The Spirituality of Wine* (April 2016), *Storied Revelations: Parables, Imagination and George MacDonald's Christian Fiction* (2013), and now *The Soul of Wine* (2019). I speak internationally at conferences, churches, and universities on subject matters ranging from the Christian imagination, the rebuilding of Christian communities, the role of the arts in spiritual formation, and the spirituality of wine, which is my latest research interest and ongoing passion. I taught Christian spirituality for four years at Samford University and have worked with different churches and organizations to establish the arts as a vital part in nourishing the life of faith in contemporary culture.



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