

EPHESIANS

WEEK 6: EPHESIANS 5:1-21

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The apostle Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus whom he calls faithful in Christ
- After Paul hears of their faith in Christ, his prayer is that they may receive a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God.
- Paul's desire is for them to know God and what He has done for them – how He has blessed them with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places from eternity past.
- All these blessings are in Christ, made possible through His resurrection and are secured by Him seeing that He is now enthroned in heaven far above all rule and authority and power and dominion
- As believers, we are to grow in the knowledge of God and the blessing with which He has blessed us.
- We are to know the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance in the saints, and the greatness of His power toward us who believe.
- As believers, we are called to grow into Christ who is our head and thus know our role and proper function in the body.
- We are to know that salvation is not of ourselves, but it is the grace of God who chose us before the foundation of the world, called us to imitate Him in holiness, and to depend on His strength for victory in the spiritual warfare.
- **Class Schedule:**
 - July 12: Ephesians 1:1-14 Redemption in Christ
 - July 19: Ephesians 1:15-2:10 Position in Christ
 - July 26: Ephesians 2:11-3:21 Oneness of Jew and Gentile
 - August 2: Ephesians 4:1-16 Preservation of Unity
 - August 9: Ephesians 4:17-32 Walk in Righteousness
 - **August 16: Ephesians 5:1-21 Walk in Love, Light, Wisdom**
 - August 23: Ephesians 5:22-6:9 Walk and Relationships
 - August 30: Ephesians 6:10-24 Armor and Epilogue

BE IMITATORS OF GOD

“Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” (5:1)

The Magnificence of This Call - Be Imitators of God

- What a grand call this is! Be imitators of God! This is the greatest of God's commandments and is the royal robe with which the Lord dresses His children. He who imitates God is a child of God.
- This is the highest call for every believer! Oh, to imitate God! What great means to intimate fellowship with God this is for God calls family those who are engaged in the doing of His will.
“For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” (Matt. 12:50).
- This command calls us to put a premium on God's character. To be like God is not the burden of the believer but it is the greatest delight and the natural response of his new nature.
- The Scripture equates the delight of salvation with the knowledge of God.
“Now this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” (Jn. 17:3). Not simply knowing about God but knowing God and finding great delight in who He is and what He has done *“Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

The Sweetness of This Call – As Dearly Beloved Children

- It is the lack of conviction regarding God's faithful and abiding love to us that makes us apathetic in service to God and imitation of Him. God gives us the impetus for imitating Him and that is in the identity that He has given us as beloved children. This ought to astound our minds that God calls us beloved as He has called His only begotten Son (Eph. 1:6; Jn. 15:9)
- The fact that God is calling you to imitate Him is because you are His beloved children. He does not extend this call to all people but only to those who are His children.

The Manner of Imitation

- To walk in love
"... and walk in love"
- Love is what characterizes God's children – love for God and love for His people. It will be hypocritical of us to say, "I love God but not His church"
"If anyone says, 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar..." (1 Jn. 14:20)

The Object of Imitation

- Whom We are to Imitate - Christ
"just as Christ also loved you"
- How We are to Imitate Christ -
"Just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."
 - The Manner – Sacrificially *"and gave Himself up for us"*
 - The Purpose – to please the Lord *"an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."*

BE PURE LIKE GOD

- **The Command # 1 (vv. 3-4)**

"But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be not filthiness and silly talk or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

- Total Estrangement From – "...must not even be named among you"
 - The meaning of "must not be named among you" – *"There is, of course, nothing wrong in mentioning the evils as Paul himself is here doing by way of denunciation...What the apostle is warning against is the tendency to discuss evils that one is not at present committing, but in such a way that the door of possibility may be pushed ajar... It is seen as something incongruous for those who are called to be saints... to take any pleasure in talking about such things, by their conversation to approve or condone, or by gossip to make light of the sins of others, or to excite sexual passion in the unwary."*¹¹

¹¹ Leon Moris *Expository reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians.*

- Immorality – sexual immorality, fornication (premarital sex or adultery)
- Impurity - every conceivable filthy practice
- Greed – maybe regarding sexual sins as in (Eph. 4:19b)
“However, the disjunctive (the word that separates) “or” is used here, suggesting that Paul is naming a different vice. Greed, with its substitution of material values for spiritual ones. Plagued the early church and pagan society, just as it does ours.”²
- Filthiness – *“whatever is vile or disgusting in speech or conduct”³*
- Silly talk - }
- Coarse jesting - } *Not a denial of Christian humor but that which is not appropriate to Christians – “the off-color joke, the spicy story and the jesting about the sins of others”⁴*

○ Total Acceptance of – by implication *“must be named among you”*

▪ Giving of thanks

Thanksgiving is a response to what God has saved us from and that may be in reference to all these things which God has commanded us not to do, and also because the practice of such things exclude people from the kingdom of Christ and God.

▪ Thanksgiving, as opposed to silly talk and coarse jesting, will stir us on to love and good deeds.

• **The Reason For the Command**

1- Disqualification from the Kingdom of Christ and God (v.5)

“For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” (v.5)

2- Invitation of the wrath of God upon ones ‘self (v.6)

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (v.6)

²² Homer A. Kent, Jr. *Ephesians, The Glory of the Church*

³ Charles Hodge *The Epistle to the Ephesians*

⁴ Homer A. Kent, Jr. *Ephesians, The Glory of the Church*

- **Command # 2 (v.7-8)**

"...do no be partakers with them... walk as children of light

- **The Reason for the Command (vv. 5-6; 8)**

"...for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord"

- **The Means to Walk as Children of Light (v.10)**

"trying (examining, testing) to learn what is pleasing to the Lord"

- **Command # 3 (v.11)**

"Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness but instead even expose (reprove, convict) them"

- **The Reason for the Command (v.12-13a)**

Because the Deeds of Darkness are Disgraceful

"for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret."

To Reveal the Disgraceful Nature of the Deeds of Darkness

"But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light"

The Purpose of Revealing or Rebuking the Deeds of Darkness (v.13b)

"...for everything that becomes visible is light."

"Certainly Paul does not mean that shameful deeds will be made respectable...It is best to understand that when Paul speaks of evil deeds being reprovved by the light, he means not merely that such are revealed in their wickedness but that the light also serves to correct the problem. In this context (5:8) it has already been mentioned that the readers had experienced this very thing. They had once been darkness, but had been made light by application of the gospel of Christ to them."

Or perhaps that "everything that becomes visible is light" or "is evidencing the work of light" which is God's work and which we are to imitate.

V. 14. *"For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you"'"*

If we test derive Paul's reason in v.14, which interpretation fits better?

DILIGENCE IN CHRISTIAN WALKING

- **Be Careful How You Walk (v.15)**

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise..."

- **The Manner of Careful Walking (v.16a)**

"... (by) making the most of your time..."

Taking advantage of the time given to you. We only have so much time and then we shall appear as naked before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:13). Now is the time to either imitate God and be welcomed in His kingdom or walk in darkness and be excluded from it and receive as due penalty for our sins the wrath of God

- **The Reason for the Manner (v.16b)**

"...because the days are evil"

- The days are such as are not conducive to godly walking. The evil days in which we live will make it hard to imitate God and obey Him.

- Because the days are evil, many will fall prey to evil practices. We are to avoid falling prey to the deeds of darkness by taking advantage of the time we have.

What means are there by which we can make the most of our time and how do we appropriate them?

- **The Appropriation of the Means (vv.17-21)**

How can we make the most of the time since the days are evil?

1. Knowing God's Will – knowing God's will is the opposite of foolishness. Since we are called to walk carefully, and since this careful walk depends on understanding the will of God, it would be foolish of us to be ignorant of it.
2. Be Filled with the Spirit – Being filled with the Spirit results in careful walking whereas being influenced by anything else which is not in accord with the Spirit, results in dissipation; a focus on physical pleasures and not the spiritual fruit of light, which *consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth* (v.9).

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

*"Men are said to be filled with wine when completely under its influence; so they are said to be filled with the Spirit when he controls all their thoughts, feelings, words, and actions."*⁵

⁵ Charles Hodge *The Epistle to the Ephesians*

- **The Expression of Being Filled with the Spirit (vv.19-21)**
 - *“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”*
 - *“Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”*
 - *“and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”*