

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 12TH - 13TH, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

## IMITATORS OF GOD (EPHESIANS 5:1-5)

In chapter 4, Paul's letter to the Ephesians takes a shift from Christian doctrine to practical application.

- Chapters 1-3 were all about our wealth and identity as Christians, and now Paul shifts the focus to our "walk" as followers of Jesus.
- Because of the fact that God has loved and forgiven us much in Christ, we're to imitate Him as children who are dearly loved (vs. 1).

Forgiven people know how to forgive, and loved people know how to love.

- We're called to "walk in love"—Christlike love is to characterize our lifestyle, demeanor, attitude, and speech as Christians.
- Because we're to be imitators of God, Jesus is our example of how we are to love each other.
- Jesus is the perfect example of sacrificial and selfless love (vs. 2).

Jesus didn't have to go to the cross—He willingly laid down His life for us out of love (John 10:18).

- Christ's perfect sacrifice was pleasing to the Father, like a fragrant aroma of sacrificial incense.
- Loving someone is more than just feeling a particular emotion about them or using certain words to say that you love them.
- True love is a choice, and true love gives selflessly and sacrificially.

The opposite of walking in love is walking in behavior that's not fitting for a Christian (vs. 3).

- "Sexual immorality": any form of sexual sin. "Impurity": any form of immoral behavior, speech, or mindset. "Greed": an intense, inappropriate, and selfish desire for something.
- What do these three things have in common?
- Each of them prioritizes self-fulfillment and self-gratification over anything and everything else.

These kinds of self-centered mindsets and behaviors are not "proper for saints": we're called to be different and set apart.

- It's not just our behavior and mindsets, our speech is also called to be holy (vs. 4).
- "Obscene language," "foolish talking," and "crude joking" aren't suitable uses for our tongue, but rather our mouths are to be used for giving thanks to God and speaking goodness.

## IS PAUL SAYING WE CAN NEVER CUT UP OR TELL JOKES?

Why do humans like to laugh and love humor? Because we're made in the image of God!

- "Crude joking" and "foolish talking" speaks of someone who is trying to get a laugh by crossing the line into that which is improper and sinful.
- Humor that relies on foul language, sexual material, and rude, racist, or cruel jokes doesn't reflect the new life we have in Christ.

Paul's reasoning for us is not "avoid these things so you can be a saint," but rather, "you are a saint; now live in a manner fitting for a saint."

- We are to know and recognize a very important truth: any person whose life pattern is one of habitual sexual immorality, impurity, greed, and idolatry will not be in Christ's Kingdom because a person like that is NOT truly saved (vs. 5).

## WALK IN LIGHT (EPHESIANS 5:6-14)

There is a very dangerous and empty deception that many Christians fall into (vs. 6).

- It is the false assurance of salvation to professing Christians whose lives are characterized by persistent sin, disobedience, a lack of conviction over sin, and no hunger for the things of God.
- Make no mistake: persistently disobedient and habitually sinful "Christians" aren't really Christians at all. They're still under God's wrath.

We're not to partner with or become influenced by people like that (vs. 7).

- It's right for us to associate with unbelievers so we can share the gospel with them, but there's great spiritual danger in doing life with anyone who claims to be a Christian but doesn't actually live it out (1 Cor. 5:11).
- We were formerly characterized by darkness, but that's not who we are now (vs. 8).

Instead of darkness, we are now characterized by "the light of God." So we are to walk as "children of light."

- What's the fruit ("proof") that we are in the light?
- A lifestyle of goodness, righteousness, and truth (vs. 9).
- In all our choices, we seek to discern what is pleasing to the Lord (vs. 10).
- We abstain from evil, and we also expose it (vs. 11).

In first-century Ephesus, the practice of magic and astrology was still very commonplace (Acts 19).

- While the sick sought natural remedies, they also believed they could manipulate supernatural powers with sacrifices, incantations, and magical formulas.
- Magic scrolls, rings, amulets, bracelets, and necklaces thought to have powers were all common in ancient Ephesus.

When the message of the gospel showed up, some in Ephesus tried to blend mysticism, paganism, and magic with Christian thought.

- One of these men was a Jew named Sceva, who called himself a high priest (Acts 19:13-17).
- He had 7 "sons" (or some sort of apprentices) who practiced magic and dabbled in the occult.
- When Sceva's magic didn't work against the demonic, clear battle lines were drawn.
- Acts 19:17-20

Paul's call to not participate in "works of darkness" that are done in secret (vs. 11-13) would've resonated with the Ephesian believers who might have been tempted to continue to take part in Ephesian occultic practices.

- Those things belong to the darkness—but we are now children of light! These two don't mix.
- Vs. 14 is a paraphrase of Isa. 60:1, which might have been an early Easter hymn.

This hymn was an invitation to unbelievers to step into all that God has offered us through Jesus.

- The invitation of Jesus is not fire insurance for eternity while we stay the exact same way.
- It is the invitation to step out of death, darkness, and spiritual sleep and into the glorious light of Christ (vs. 14). Are you choosing to stay in darkness? Are you trying to blend darkness and light?

## FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (EPHESIANS 5:15-21)

### STEWARDSHIP YOUR TIME WISELY (VS. 15-16)

There is a spiritual battle going on against darkness and light (Eph. 6:12).

- We've got one life to live in this present age that is dominated by the presence and influence of evil.
- We must steward our time wisely by paying careful attention to how we're walking.
- The testimony of our lives can either point people to light or to darkness: How we live is so important.

## REJECT FOOLISH LIVING (VS. 17)

Being a fool has nothing to do with intellectual limitations—it has everything to do with unbelief and a lifestyle that doesn't consider eternity.

- God's will for our lives is to live holy as we pursue Him and His purposes.
- When we misunderstand that and think it's about making money, being entertained/comfortable, or getting famous, that's foolish.

## DON'T GET DRUNK (VS. 18A)

In the city of Ephesus, many believed that the path to divine communication and spiritual experience came through intoxication.

- Drinking parties ("Bacchanalia") were thrown to worship the gods of wine/sex/pleasure, and drunkenness was considered to be an ecstatic state that enabled people to access the spiritual.
- Getting intoxicated isn't how we access the divine.

Getting intoxicated is sinful for several reasons.

- It leads to "reckless living": we lose control over our minds and make foolish, dangerous, and sinful choices. Drunkards won't inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10).
- When we choose to ingest mind-altering substances, we are effectively choosing to give ourselves over to the control of something other than the Holy Spirit.

## "BE BEING" FILLED BY THE SPIRIT (VS. 18B)

Why contrast alcohol and the Holy Spirit?

- Each has the power to take control of a person's mind and behavior—with vastly different results.
- Getting drunk leads to a loss of self-control; being filled with the Spirit leads to more self-control.
- Intoxication is a false transcendence: it doesn't lead to lasting joy, peace, or love. But the Holy Spirit gives us those things eternally.

## A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP (VS. 19-20)

The Spirit's presence and fullness in our lives is demonstrated by spiritual understanding, praise, and thanksgiving that is both constant and comprehensive.

- When we are filled with the Spirit, we will have the desire to worship God and to encourage others in their worship of God. Singing is a part of this!

## HUSBANDS AND WIVES (EPHESIANS 5:21-33)

The Spirit-filled life is marked by mutual submission (vs. 21).

- When we are filled with the Spirit, it will show by our mutual submission to each other; and the submission will be done in the fear of God, not the fear of man.
- Paul will then move to three relationships where this submission is important: in marriage, with our parents, and in employment.

## WIVES (VS. 22-24)

A Christian wife is to serve the Lord by following her husband's lead in the marriage (as long as it doesn't require her to disobey God).

- This is a voluntary, joyful willingness to follow out of reverence for the Lord; not an external coercion to be subserviently demanded by a husband.
- By no means does this suggest a woman is inferior to a man in any way: she just plays a different role.

A wife is to be under her husband's authority as the Church is under Christ's, and she is to follow her husband as Christians follow the Lord.

- This requires a tremendous amount of trust and love to know her husband is trustworthy and that he truly loves her and is looking after her best interests.
- A Christian wife's respect and honor for her husband has a powerful testimony.

The instruction given to husbands is NOT a command of "RULE OR REIGN!!" but a command to "love" like Jesus (vs. 25-30).

- This suggests that mutual submission can never exist without sacrificial, sanctifying love.
- This kind of love Christ shows us is the kind husbands are called to show our wives and families.

Christ's love toward us is...

1. Selfless. "Gave himself up for her." Men are called to give ourselves up. Our pursuits, friends, hobbies, interests, desires, what we want—those all come after our spouse and after our families. "What if I don't feel like it?" Christ died for us. Boys take. Men give.
2. Actively pursuing. Christ pursues His Church, so we are to pursue our wives. We are to be the ones who apologize first, turn off the TV and initiate the conversations about how our spouse's soul is doing, and make the dates to spend quality time. That's our job.
3. It has a cleansing and purifying effect. Selfless love and care have a sanctifying influence on our wives. They will experience personal benefits and progress as a result, just like our bodies would when we take care of them.

Paul then quotes Gen. 2:24, which is God's initial statement regarding marriage (vs. 31).

- The marriage commitment takes precedence over every other human relationship.
- There is to be supernatural unity in a Christian marriage, because our marriages point to the union of Christ and the Church (vs. 32).
- So, husbands, love your wives like yourself, and wives, respect your husbands (vs. 33).

## ATTEMPTING TO BLEND DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

- Selfish Impurity & Purity and Love (vs. 3-5).
- Works of Darkness & Light of Christ (vs. 8-12).
- Foolish, Worldly Living & Wise, Eternal Living (vs. 15-17).
- Getting Drunk & Being Filled with the Spirit (vs. 18-20).
- A Self-Centered Marriage & a Godly Marriage (vs. 22-33).
- Once we saw the impotence and futility of trying to blend the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit with the things of this world, clear battle lines must be drawn (Acts 19:17-20).
- We "confess and divulge" our practices.
- Then we radically forsake them.
- When we do that, the "Word of the Lord increases and prevails mightily..." in our lives.