

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 13TH, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

IMITATORS (EPHESIANS 5:1-14) "BE IMITATORS OF GOD"

When Paul starts ch. 5 with "therefore," we are to take what was previously said into consideration with what is about to be said.

- Considering our adoption into the family of God "as **dearly loved children**," we are to imitate God. God is love, light, and wise, so to "act like" God means **we are to walk in love, walk as children of light, and walk in wisdom.**

GOD IS LOVE, BUT HE IS ALSO JUST

Paul does not shy away from speaking about sin or the consequences of sin, but before he does, he wants to establish how truly loved we are.

- **We are "dearly loved children" of the Father! We are loved so deeply by Christ that He "gave Himself for us"** (John 15:13)!

WALK LIKE A SAINT

Paul gives a comprehensive list of practices that were completely approved by the Ephesian culture around them but were not fitting "for saints."

- Paul appeals to the morality of professing Christians not by saying, "avoid these things so that you will be a saint." Instead, he claims, "**You are a saint, now live in a way fitting for a saint!**"

A MATTER OF IDENTIFICATION

We no longer do these things because we are no longer part of those who are disobedient. **We have chosen to identify ourselves with the one who has adopted us and not the world we were birthed from.**

- **To be disobedient is to forfeit the inheritance offered to us through Jesus.**

DO NOT BE DECEIVED

Paul is careful to warn us that there will be those who wish to deceive us with "empty arguments." This may come through the **justification and acceptance of what God calls sin, the denial of God's willingness to address sin, or the denial of God entirely.**

- Regardless of what the world says, the wrath of God is coming for the disobedient.

"FRUITLESS WORKS OF DARKNESS"

Paul says we are not to "participate in the **fruitless works** of darkness, but **instead expose them.**"

- These deeds that produce no fruit, that do more harm than good, are to be exposed. We are to bring them to light through confession because **the light will overcome the darkness and transform it into light.**

CONSISTENCY (EPHESIANS 5:15-21)

WATCHING OUR STEPS

We live in a fallen world filled with traps and snares set by the enemy at every step.

- Though this a reality, Paul does not say we are to be fearful (2 Timothy 1:7). Instead, we are "**pay careful attention**" to how we walk, **grounded in the wisdom of God, and using the time we have wisely, seizing every opportunity.**

ROOTED IN THE TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE

Paul sets the contrast of those in Ephesus who are ignorant of the truth and operate in foolishness and tattle the church, we are not to operate in ignorance. Instead, **we are to know what the Lord's will is.**

- **We are not only familiar with Word, but our lives should line up with the teachings of the Word.**

GOD OF HEAVEN VS. GOD OF EPHESUS

Paul wanted to show the contrast between how the Ephesians came to their deity, Bacchus, the god of wine and pleasure, in order to know how to best serve and obey him and how we as Christians approach God.

- Paul shows how the Ephesians would be full of wine, but **we are to be full of the Holy Spirit.**

UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT VS. WINE

Drunkenness, which is condemned without reservation in Scripture, removes a person's **self-control** and impairs our **reaction and judgment.**

- In contrast, to be full of the Spirit means to be directed, influenced, and ultimately governed by the Spirit, which has the opposite effect.

WHAT THEY EACH PRODUCE

A recent study showed 14.5 million Americans admitted to abusing alcohol. Drinking is the third leading preventable cause of death with 95,000 per year (261 a day). Every 5 minutes, a person in the U.S. dies from a drunk driving accident.

- These statistics do not account for broken homes, abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

In contrast, being under the influence of the Spirit leads to the fulfillment of the Great Commandment to love God and love others.

- **We speak lovingly to one another, we worship God in spirit and in truth, we are full of thankfulness to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we submit to one another.**

WIVES AND HUSBANDS (EPHESIANS 5:22-33)

SUBMISSION IN THE FEAR OF CHRIST

Our relationship with our spouse is supposed to be a reflection of Christ's relationship with His bride, the Church.

- This is a mutual submission we enter into in a Christian marriage because of our reverence of Jesus. It is a wife submitting to her husband as the head, and the husband submitting to the needs of his wife.

"SUBMIT TO YOUR HUSBANDS AS TO THE LORD"

This is not meant to create inferiority or to say a wife is to submit to her husband without question as if he was the Lord.

- To submit to your husband as to the Lord means that **honoring the mission God has called you to in your marriage is more important than your individual desires.**

ARE WIVES TO SUBMIT IN EVERYTHING?

Verse 24 says, "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to **submit to their husbands in everything.**"

- This has to be understood in the same context of submission in other spheres, like government and authority. "In everything" does not mean when the wife is asked to sin, or if the bond is broken by abuse, abandonment, or adultery.

"HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES..."

Paul gives the example of how Christ loves the Church for the extent a husband is to love his wife.

- Though wives are supposed to submit to their husbands, it never gives the husband the excuse to be a tyrannical lord over their wife. We are to sacrificially love our wives with a love that is more than emotion; it a self-denial for the sake of another.

LOVING OUR WIVES AS OURSELVES

In the same way that Jesus cared for and gave Himself to cleanse the Church, husbands are to devote themselves to taking an active, caring interest in their wife's spiritual health.

- We are to love our wives as our own bodies. We take care of our imperfect bodies, keeping them from harm. We should do the same for our wives, even though they are imperfect.

TEMPTATION

- **Are we overcoming temptation or being overcome by temptation?**

- Being tempted is not a sin but giving in to temptation and acting on it is.
- I may not know the extent of the temptation you face, but Jesus does! He understands our weakness because He was tempted but did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).

BECAUSE HE OVERCAME, SO CAN WE!

- Jesus overcame temptation (lies) with the Word of God (truth).
- Satan tempted Jesus to give into the desires of the flesh.
- Satan perverted Scripture (truth) to try and get Jesus to abuse His own powers.
- Satan tempted Jesus with an "easier" way to the Kingdom without sacrifice.

IMITATING CHRIST

- Jesus is our example of how we are to live, but He is more than just an example.
- When we present Jesus as only the example to follow, we create a checklist of "dos and don'ts" to salvation.
- We do not become children of God by imitation, but because we are children of God, we should imitate the Father.

"SO THAT YOU WILL NOT FALL"

- In the Garden of Gethsemane, before He was arrested, Jesus asked His disciples to "**keep watch and pray** so that you will not fall into temptation. **The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak**" (Matthew 26:41).
- We may be willing to do what is right, but because our flesh is weak, **we must watch and pray.**

KEEP WATCH

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation, **he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it.**"
- **We must look for the way out!**

PRAY

- In John 14:13, Jesus tells us, "Whatever you ask in my name [according to His will], I will do."
- Jesus will answer the prayer for spiritual strength to overcome the flesh.
- **When we feel like the weakness of the flesh may overtake us, we can always pray!**