

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** July 25, 2010

**Title:** “Filled to the Overflow - Diligence”

**Text:** Ephesians 5:15-21

**Theme:** The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of His people causes them to put off sin’s stronghold and put on the very Life of Christ.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

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#### Introduction:

If we were to read Ephesians 5:1-14, we would see how verse 15 is a call to attentiveness. It seeks to awaken us to the ever present danger of living in a world under the influence of the prince of the power of the air with responding flesh (Eph. 2:1-3).

The ground work has already been done in Ephesians 5:1-14. The dangers before us are real. We speak of the world, the flesh and the devil in the abstract, but their reality is very tangible. Sexual sins have faces and names. They are not done in the intangible as if there was no immediate or physical impact. Filthy, silly and coarse jesting are not done in the abstract. When we slander and gossip and use malicious speech, there is a name and face in all of it. You do not slander people and destroy reputations in the abstract. You destroy flesh and blood. You destroy people and families when you walk in darkness. Such people who are the perpetuators of such things deceive themselves and will not inherit the kingdom of Christ and God.

Such people as these are to be exposed and removed from the children of light. The call and hope is always repentance and restoration, but such things have distinct acts and expressions. Repentance and restoration are not done in the abstract, they have faces and names. Because the threat is so imminent and invasive it is "for this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you'" (v. 14).

It is inside of this context we read verses 14 through 21.

#### Outline:

I. The exhortation - Since the days are evil, be careful as to how you live (vv. 15-18)

Verse 15 begins a conclusion or summary based on the previous paragraph.

"Ephesians 5:1-20 bristles with imperatives. If they have a weight of their own alongside the radiant indicatives, then they include an appeal to man's will and do not exclude or condemn human decisions and acts." (Marcus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 603). Because all these qualities are intrinsic to the Trinity, they by default equally exist within those indwelt by God. This does not however, bypass our intellect, our volition or our emotion. God works powerfully and completely in and through His people. He

works with (and at times contrary to) our wills so that we want what He desires. You and I are to intentionally order our lives so that we live God-like lives.

When the text speaks of evil days, it is not simply referencing some abstract, non-real entity. Evil days are such because of evil people. There is nothing evil about a day. There are those within any fellowship who will seek to undermine the body. These people are not living in a manner that is reflective of the Lord's Body. They are to be guarded against. As strong as Paul's words are in Ephesians 5:1-14, there is always a face and name attached to such things. **Theology in the abstract is easy. But when it takes on flesh and blood, bones and sinew, then it becomes personal and problematic because it changes and impacts long-standing relationships.** The reality of our Christianity is often a partial or complete ignoring of the biblical text. It has little if any impact on how we live our lives at home, at work or at church. When the text encroaches on my life or makes me uncomfortable, then I am prone to dismiss its weight or silence its voice.

There is a way of living one's life that is distinctly Christian or non-Christian. This lifestyle is distinguishable and observable.

There are three phrases separated by the Greek word **alla**. Each enables us to understand what characterizes a careful walk. It is a careful walk that guards against the darkness and empowers light to be openly manifested as noted in the previous paragraph. The three statements help us understand what is meant by "be careful how you walk" (v. 15).

Unwise **alla** wise (v. 15)

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Do not be unwise **alla** understand God's will (v. 17)

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Do not be drunk **alla** be Spirit filled (v. 18)

- The comparison and contrast of verse 18 is not to teach abstinence, but to speak of coming under the influence of something or someone outside oneself. Paul says, "For example, just as one can come under the power of alcohol in a negative way, you should come under the power of the Holy Spirit in a positive way." It is this positive influence that enables and empowers us to avoid the works of the flesh and darkness and to continue walking in the light.
- The means for living diligently is the Spirit's indwelling. It is His indwelling that produces a careful/diligent lifestyle. When you live carefully, you are "making the most of your time."

The word Paul uses in verse 16 is “redeem”. It has a “redemptive” overtone.

- How do you buy back time? Since Paul speaks of “walk” in verse 15, I believe we are safe in saying the “time” in verse 16 is equally referencing one’s lifestyle. It is not time one redeems, but one’s habits and activities. I redeem the time when I live my life with God and the Story He wrote in mind. There is no area of life that falls outside of His Story. When you live with this mindset, then you are living redemptively.

The indwelt Spirit-life looks like the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit “edifies, sings, gives thanks and submits”.

II. The description - Here is what the Holy Spirit looks like in and through His people (vv. 18-21)

Because you and I as His Church are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we take on His qualities. We are invited to speak edifying words to one another in psalms, worship God through song, always give thanks and submit to one another because the Holy Spirit exists in this same manner within the God-head. The Trinity is expressly stated throughout this short paragraph: Lord (vv. 17, 19, 20, 21), Spirit (v. 18), and Father (v. 20).

The actions we are called upon to live are Trinitarian in nature. This is how the Trinity functions within itself. Consider with me the following four actions. All four of these qualities are worship filled. They are present participles, supporting the command or descriptive to be filled. As you think of these four things, place them within the Trinity and then within the community of faith. As a geographically defined assembly with a biblical structure and mission these are the qualities God the Holy Spirit is working in us and through us. Let us consider the following four actions.

A. A positive use of words for edification (v. 19a)

It is assumed that the content of the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are for mutual edification. Many suggest verse 14 is an early church hymn. This is the kind of communication that exists within the body of Christ. Here is the horizontal aspect of our community of faith.

B. A celebrative worship seen through song (v.19b)

Here is the vertical aspect of our community of faith. As we share with one another we reach upward toward the One who continues to knit our hearts together.

C. A comprehensive expression of gratitude (v.20)

"Under all circumstances God is to be praised." (Marcus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 585). There is never a time or occasion when we are not to return thanks to God. When the shadow is valued for what it is, God is seen in all action.

D. A submissive response toward others (v.21)

"Submitting" = To arrange under, to subordinate; to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice. A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions]; in a military fashion under the command of a leader." In non-military use, it was a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden (1:22; 5:21, 22, 24).

Again, these are the qualities existing within the Godhead proper. Within the Godhead there is mutual edification, celebration, thanksgiving and submission. Each interacts with the other in unhindered fellowship. This same idea is to be present within His Church.

All submission finds its motive in a fear / reverence for Christ. It is because of who God is, what He has done and who His people are that they hold Him in reverential awe. **In Christ** I do not fear His punishment, but I am overwhelmed by His presence and power.

What is of interest is how these four notable qualities are what color the church of Christ at large. What is of significant interest to me is how these four notable qualities impact the wife, husband, child, parent, and employer/employee relationships. Within hierarchy there is to be mutual edification, celebration, gratitude and submission. O how wonderful such a life and community would be.

When we contrast the light with darkness or hate with love, it becomes evident how Spirit-indwelt people are significantly different. In summarizing this paragraph Marcus Barth notes how, "The Christian's life is described as a demonstration of exuberant joy. Inspiration (or enthusiasm) caused by something better than alcohol makes the congregation resemble a group of singing children who are assembled by Christ and whose gratitude to God the Father overflows." (Marcus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 586).

**Shepherding the Sheep:** (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. The indwelling Holy Spirit sets us in contrast to the unbelieving. Is this contrast notable in your life?
2. Although it is the Holy Spirit who produces such fruit in and through His people, this passage calls us to commit ourselves to . . .
  - a. Use our words for the purpose of positive edification.
  - b. Sing songs of celebrative worship to the Trinity.
  - c. Give ourselves toward perpetual gratitude.
  - d. Mutual submission in every circumstance and relationship.
3. May we with diligence live our lives with our eyes opened wide to see God in all we do, say and think.