

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings reflects 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.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, 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@waukeshabible.org.

Date: July 14, 2024

Sermon Title: “The Gospel Fruits of Love (5:1-6), Light (vv. 7-14), and Diligence (vv. 15-21)”

Sermon Series: Ephesians

Text: Ephesians 5:1-21

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Date: July 14, 2024
Title: The Gospel Fruits of Love (5:1-6), Light (vv. 7-14), and Diligence (vv. 15-21)
Text: Ephesians 5:1-21 [Three readers – One section each]
Theme: The Jesus Seed always and inevitably produces the gospel fruit of love, light, and diligence.

ILLUSTRATION – Where does one end and another begin? “In Marvel Comics, Spider-Man (Peter Parker) first becomes Venom when an alien symbiote bonds with him during the Secret Wars miniseries.” “Venom is a twisted version of Spider-Man that can also bond with other hosts, such as Eddie Brock, and give them superpowers in exchange for life force. The combined entity's personality is based on both the symbiote and the host, and Venom has many powers, including super strength, agility, shape-shifting, durability, energy, fighting skills, intelligence, speed, and a warning sense.”

“Symbiosis is a term describing any relationship or interaction between two dissimilar organisms. The specific kind of symbiosis depends on whether either or both organisms benefit from the relationship.”¹

Although a rough example, this speaks of how the Spirit of God indwells us and transforms us into something different. Although a limited example of this relationship, it is like the Spider-Man / Venom relationship. Unlike Venom, the believer cannot separate himself from the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit. AND unlike Venom, our union with Christ is all positive and non-destructive.

ILLUSTRATION – We do an injustice to the biblical text when we pull it apart and fail to see how all of it is singular and works together. It is very much like the human body. Each of our internal organs are unique but must work together for a healthy whole. You cannot separate organs or discard an organ without a consequence. Although each organ has a unique function, they are stronger together than apart. The fruit of the gospel is also like this. We can examine each one, but they must be viewed together rather than apart.

The Fruits of the Gospel are singular. We speak of a singular fruit, but you cannot have one without the other. In chapter 4, we noted the fruit of unity (vv. 1-16) and holiness (vv. 17-23). Now in chapter 5, we will note love, light, and diligence. All of this happens as part of God unifying all things under the headship of Jesus. The unity created by the cross is displayed in the local church.

Ephesians 5:1-21 is a continuation of the exhortation to put off and put on. God’s gospel tree produces an orchard of gospel fruit. Today’s study identifies three of those fruits.

Outline:

I. The Gospel Fruit of Love (vv. 1-6)

A. The Exhortation – Be Imitators / Walk in love (v. 1)

- ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

We are to imitate God because He is our Father. Remember, He adopted us as sons and daughters and He is the Father of us all. Because of this adoption, we are now to imitate Him.

ILLUSTRATION –When I go to New Zealand to visit our grandchildren, my grandchildren begin to mimic me. They start wearing ballcaps and t-shirts. Why? Because they desire to be like me.

As children of love, we are to love. The Holy Spirit causes us to mimic the Father.

B. The Illustration (v. 2)

- ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

ILLUSTRATION – the illustration is the cross. When you and I think of the cross and the magnitude of the cross, this is the type of love we are talking about. All of us fall short of such love and yet we are called to love as He loved.

Love’s depiction unfolds by the negative or opposite.

C. The Prohibition (vv. 3-6)

³ But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴ and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

“The term “But” translates the δέ (de) in a contrastive way in light of the [substitutionary and sacrificial death] of Jesus in vv. 1-2 and the vices mentioned in v. 3.”²

1. The Contrast (vv. 3, 4)

The contrast in verses 3 through 6 is the exact opposite of love. Remember, Paul writes to real people. The contrast is between darkness and light, sacrificial love and those who are greedy to practice every kind of impurity (4:19).

2. The Consequences (vv. 5, 6)

- ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

This verse has always plagued us. The Church leverages the language to push us to obedience lest we fall short of heaven. Who are those barred from entrance into the kingdom of Christ and God? Those who are still *in Adam*.

Those who have been Blessed (1:3), Chosen (1:4), Adopted (1:5, 6), Redeemed (1:7, 8), Sealed (1:13b), and given both an inheritance and a guarantee are not the ones being referred to.

Those who are *in Christ* can never be barred from the kingdom of Christ and God.

Remember this: Your behavior is a fruit; it is not the root. Those depicted in our passage are not barred because of their actions. They are barred because of their non-belief in Jesus. They are barred because they are dark and their hearts are hardened against God.

My understanding of this is by faith, not by sight. We judge people by their actions, but God judges people by their hearts. The divine issue is always about Jesus.

3. The Counsel (v. 7)

- ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them;

Verse 7 is transitional in nature. It can go either way. I will use it with both sections. Verse 7 functions as a conclusion.

What is the first word that greets you and why? “Therefore” It forces you to look back. Thus, based upon what Paul has just said, here is his conclusion. **Do not fellowship with those who are not walking in love. Do not associate with those who are selfish and self-centered. They are destroying the unity achieved by the cross.** We are to mark those who are in error and seek their salvation and/or restoration.

- **Titus 3:10, 11** – “In this passage, the word translated as "divisive" or "factious" in some versions is derived from the Greek word "αἰρετικός" (hairetikos), which is related to "heretic." The idea here is of someone who causes division or dissent within the community.”³
- **2 Peter 2:1** – “In this verse, the term "heresies" is translated from the Greek word "αἵρεσεις" (haireisis), which is related to "heretic." It refers to teachings or beliefs that deviate from orthodox Christian doctrine. These passages highlight the concept of heresy or a heretic within the context of early Christian communities, emphasizing the danger of false teachings and divisions that could arise from them.”⁴

ILLUSTRATION - If we were to separate ourselves from every unbeliever, we could not live in our world or with our unbelieving family members. Jesus tells us we are in the world, but not of the world. If we isolated ourselves from every unbeliever, we would become religious hermits or ascetics. This passage speaks of those within the church who are divisive. The contrast continues in our next paragraph.

II. The Gospel Fruit of Light (5:7-14)

Those who are darkness are the same as those who will not inherit the kingdom of Christ and God, who are the sons of disobedience and who are the recipients of God’s wrath. This is not the believer.

There is a sharp and notable distinction between those who are of light and those who are of dark. All Paul says in chapters one through three form an unshakable foundation for what he now says. Based on this diagnosis, here is the prognosis. So far, the believer has been shown how positional truth results in a life marked by **unity (4:1-16), holiness (4:17-32), love (5:1-6) and now light (5:7-14)**. These expressions of the new man are by no means exhaustive. They are, however, representative or reflective of what our Lord Jesus looks like.

Ephesians 5:7-14 exhibit a chiasm structure. A chiasm structure is a literary device where themes or ideas are presented and then repeated in reverse order. Here's how Ephesians 5:7-14 can be outlined in a chiasm structure:

- A. Command to avoid partnership with darkness (Ephesians 5:7)
- B. Explanation of past and present states (Ephesians 5:8)
- C. **Command to walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8-9)**
- D. **Description of the fruit of light (Ephesians 5:9)**
- C'. **Command to discern what is pleasing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10)**
- B'. Explanation of exposing the works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11-12)
- A'. Command to wake up and arise (Ephesians 5:14)

“In Ephesians 5:7-14, the central idea appears to be in verses 8-10, which focus on the contrast between darkness and light, the command to walk as children of light, and the directive to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”⁵

The three qualities of light noted in verse 9 [goodness, righteousness, and truthfulness] are not something we do, but something we are. The goodness and righteousness and truthfulness of the Good, and Righteous and Truth-filled Spirit given to us is working in us to those around us goodness, righteousness and truthfulness. **Paul isn’t telling bad people to be good people. He is telling good people to be good.**

v. 13 The parallelism of our passage reiterates our rejection of those who would divide the fellowship.

In verse 14, “Paul introduces the quotation as if everybody knew it, but no one now knows where it came from.”⁶ Many suggest it to be a Christian hymn that was perhaps sung at the baptismal service. It all falls back on the idea of learning Christ.

III. The Gospel Fruit of Diligence [Caution / Thoughtfulness / Attentiveness] (vv. 15-21)

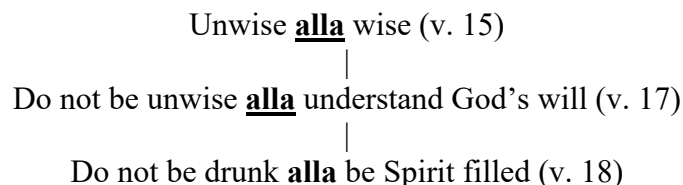
Paul continues the contrast between the believer and the unbeliever.

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

The careful walk marks those who cause division within the fellowship. **The days are evil because the church is always under assault.**

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

There are three phrases separated by the Greek word **alla**. Each enables us to understand what characterizes a careful walk. The three statements help us understand what is meant by “be careful how you walk” (v. 15). **There is a contrasting synonymous parallelism throughout.**



Paul speaks to the historical setting of his day. Drunkenness and religious observance would often go hand-in-hand.

“Understand what the will of the Lord is” – “This does not mean that a person tries to discern God’s secret counsel but that he applies God’s general guidelines for life as found in the Bible.”⁷

The following four participles are consequences of Spirit filling, not the cause or condition.

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

Participles often have the “ing” ending speaking to their present on-going action.

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

“The participle "λαλοῦντες" (lalountes) means "speaking" or "addressing." It describes an ongoing action of believers speaking to one another in the form of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. This indicates a continuous practice among believers to encourage and edify one another through music and words of praise.”⁸

How exciting is this? Our musical choices and our corporate singing are a way we communicate with one another. Our singing is confessional. We speak to one another through our singing.

2. 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. This is more than listening to Christian radio. This is the gathered church singing songs of praise and worship to God.

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

“Under all circumstances God is to be praised.”⁹ 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.

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

“Grammatically, ‘submitting’ is a participle in Greek and is dependent on the verb in v. 15. It explains further how-to walk-in wisdom (vv. 15-21 are one long sentence in Gk.). It also states a general principle of submission, which is illustrated in 5:22-6:9.”¹⁰

ILLUSTRATION – My brother and I have been going up North on a regular basis. While transporting the Bobcat, a fire began on the engine with my brother in the cab. It was traumatic. It ended up being a bird’s nest with 5 eggs catching on fire. But God, in His good providence, allowed a short 6” piece of tubing carrying anti-freeze versus a flammable substance to burst and put the fire out. In addition, he gave us a neighbor who could solve the problem and calm our worst fears. I was scared to death as was my brother, but I gave God thanks for watching over us. This action is a fruit of the gospel. I must reflect on my moments and give God the glory.

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace looks like this. The Spirit-filled church looks like this. We are an edifying, singing, grateful, and submissive church.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Know who you are. You are a child of the light. You are light in Christ and by the indwelling Spirit.
2. Guard the unity of the Church. You guard unity by standing against division.
3. In our corporate gathering, see this as God's ordinary means of grace and celebrate the four participles.

¹ <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/symbiosis-art-living-together/>

² <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+5>

³ <https://chatgpt.com/>

⁴ <https://chatgpt.com/>

⁵ <https://chatgpt.com/>

⁶ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 165.

⁷ ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 5:17*, S.M. Baugh.

⁸ <https://chatgpt.com/>

⁹ Marcus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 585.

¹⁰ ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 5:21*, S.M. Baugh.