

Sunday April 26th 2009
To the Church of Ephesus – Part Eleven

1). Eph 5:1 ¶ *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.*

a). Chapter 5 of Ephesians began with the admonition for us to be imitators of God, literally to mimic God, and we are to do this as dear children – again, literally as one who has been produced to be a son or a daughter – and implicit in this would be the purpose for our creation and the purpose for our salvation. Because our calling is to be a firstborn son, so we should follow the example of our Heavenly Father - 1Th 2:11 *as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

b). And our being imitators of God as one that He has produced to be a son or a daughter is set in contrast to walking as the rest of the Gentiles walk, or giving way to our old man, our sin nature – or giving place to the devil.

c). We can then either choose to be a child of God and thereby an imitator of Him or a child of Satan and an imitator of the father of lies – this is a choice determined by our actions rather than by our positional standing in Christ.

d). Let's just remember what the Lord said to the eternally redeemed religious leaders of His day - Joh 8:42 *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

e). And to His own disciple - Mt 16:23 *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

f). It is a sobering thought to realize that as a result of our day to day choices, if we should choose not believe and then put into practice that which God has said, we can have a closer filial relationship with the enemy of our soul than the One who died to set us free from that very bondage.

g). With all this in mind maybe we should ask this question of ourselves today – ‘Who ya daddy is?’

2). But the good news for us is that as children of God, we have a fully redeemed spirit that is apart from our sin nature, the new man who is created in the image of God - Col 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

a). And we have been given a measure of God's grace whereby we can choose to be faithfully obedient in the midst of our weakness - Eph 4:7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

b). 2Co 12:9 *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

c). And so we can realize that to be an imitator of God is an absolute reality. Now this does not minimize the struggle we may have to put faithful obedience to the word into practice, but it does make absolutely plain that if we choose not to be obedient then it is the wicked desires of our own heart that have prevailed – and that is exactly what we wanted to happen - Jas 1:14 *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*

3). And so with the contrast between the old man and the new man as our context and the admonition to be imitators of God as our direction we were then told Eph 5:11 *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."*

a). There are in these verses an infallible principle and a glorious promise.

b). And we can see from comparing scripture with scripture that darkness is used figuratively to denote the province and activity of our enemy – Eph 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

c). We see that 'this age' – the whole period of time from Adam to the establishment of the millennial Kingdom – is characterized as darkness as it is under the sway of the wicked one - Isa 9:2 *The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.*

d). This darkness would encompass spiritual darkness, moral darkness and ethical darkness and would have as its focus self gratification in the present rather than self sacrifice for the future.

e). And it would be well worth noting that the present state of moral depravity we find in our world and the acceptance of situational ethics is a natural outworking of spiritual darkness.

f). Because mankind generally is now blinded to the possibility of being held to account at a predetermined time of judgment for his actions, fear of that time has disappeared leaving anything that feels good as possible.

g). And for ourselves as born again believers, we can, if we are not careful, allow the truth of scripture to become veiled in darkness as our hearts are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin - thus giving place to the devil - 2Co 4:3 *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

h). It is a lie that if we keep our sin hidden, if we keep it in the darkness, then somehow we will be immune from its consequences - Ge 3:7 *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

i). Attempting to hide our sin is clearly a result of having a sin nature. And from the beginning fallen man has sought to hide himself, to go into the darkness as a means of obscuring his sin, probably based on the ridiculous assumption that because we find it difficult to see in the dark then so does God.

j). Ge 3:9 ¶ *Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"*

k). And we would know that God does not ask this question of Adam because He doesn't know the answer. The question is asked for Adam's benefit not God's.

l). Once we realize that the same question is asked of us for the same reason even today, we ought to be free from the clutches of this deception.

m). Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

n). So we see then that exposing the unfruitful works of darkness is not for God's benefit, as all things are naked and open to His eyes, but for ours.

o). The absolute, unequivocal reality of verse 13 of Hebrews 12 should not escape our attention. Either we can bring the works of darkness that we engage in into the light and confess them before the Lord for what they are, or in that Day

even the deepest and darkest secret will be exposed by the One who is The Word of God.

p). And what is the benefit of making the works of darkness manifest now? Heb 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

q). Simply because now we can be forgiven and cleansed from our unrighteousness – in that Day however, there is no more forgiveness and cleansing only the certainty of fiery judgment.

r). Which do you think we ought to choose? - 1Jo 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

4). Here then is our infallible principle – bring that which is in darkness into the light and not only can we receive forgiveness and cleansing, but also by exposing it to the light that which was in darkness no longer has power over us as we no longer have to protect and hide that which we don't want anyone to see. We tear down the idol and destroy the altar of remembrance. Darkness always walks hand in hand with guilt and shame – the light with deliverance and forgiveness.

a). And the glorious promise is that if we will wake up to this truth and by the power of the Spirit move from the dead works of darkness to life then Christ will give us light.

b). Now we would be able to receive light as a result of our choice in the present through the word - Ps 119:105 ¶ NUN. *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

c). And as we would apply this principle and then walk according to the light of the Word, then in that Day we will receive the light of the glory of God as our regal robes of rulership.

d). Receiving with meekness the implanted word is absolutely paramount to having the works of darkness exposed – this is why, if we do so, the end result will be the salvation of our soul.

5). This same thought poignantly demonstrated through the contrast between light and darkness is continued in the Ephesians 5 verses which follow – Eph 5:15 *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

a). The admonition then is that we are to ‘walk circumspectly’ – something that we cannot do as fools but only as wise. And we are to walk circumspectly so as to redeem the time, and the time must be redeemed, ‘because the days are evil’.

b). Walk = Greek – ‘peripateo’ = from 4012 and 3961; to tread all around, i.e. walk at large (especially as proof of ability); figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion or votary):--go, be occupied with, walk (about).

c). Circumspectly = Greek – ‘akribos’, from ‘akribestatos’ = superlative of akribes (a derivative of the same as 206); most exact:--most straitest.

d). So then if we apply this to our scripture - ‘See then that you live, that you deport yourself as a companion of the most exact, most staitest [way].

e). Fools cannot walk this way.

f). Fools = Greek – ‘asophos’ = from 1 (as a negative particle) and 4680; unwise:--fool. [the complete opposite of being wise]

g). Only the wise can walk like this.

Pr 16:16 ¶ *How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.*

Pr 11:30 ¶ *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.*

h). Wise = Greek – ‘sophos’ = akin to saphes (clear); wise (in a most general application):--wise. Compare 5429.

i). 5429 = Greek – ‘phronimos’ = from 5424; thoughtful, i.e. sagacious or discreet (implying a cautious character; while 4680 denotes practical skill or acumen; and 4908 indicates rather intelligence or mental acquirement); in a bad sense conceited (also in the comparative):--wise(-r).

j). Those who are wise then from God’s perspective are those who are looking to the winning of their soul, who will conduct themselves with a single minded purpose having the hope ever before them as an anchor to the soul. They will not be diverted or distracted from their course - Jas 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

k). As a result of their actions the wise will redeem the time.

l). Redeeming = Greek – ‘exagorazo’ = from 1537 and 59; to buy up, i.e. ransom; figuratively, to rescue from loss (improve opportunity):--redeem.

m). The time = Greek – ‘kairos’ = of uncertain affinity; an occasion, i.e. set or proper time:--X always, opportunity, (convenient, due) season, (due, short, while) time, a while.

n). So then to return to our scripture – ‘See then that you live, that you deport yourself as a companion of the most exact, most staitest [way], and don’t

be someone completely devoid of wisdom but be someone who is thoughtful and cautious of character, rescuing from loss every opportunity within the set time we have’.

o). And we need to conduct ourselves in this way ‘because the days are evil’.

p). The days = Greek – ‘hemera’ = feminine (with 5610 implied) of a derivative of hemai (to sit; akin to the base of 1476) meaning tame, i.e. gentle; day, i.e. (literally) the time space between dawn and dark, or the whole 24 hours (but several days were usually reckoned by the Jews as inclusive of the parts of both extremes); figuratively, a period (always defined more or less clearly by the context):--age, + alway, (mid-)day (by day, (-ly)), + for ever, judgment, (day) time, while, years. [context would give us this present age]

q). Evil = Greek – ‘poneros’ = from a derivative of 4192; hurtful, i.e. evil (properly, in effect or influence, and thus differing from 2556, which refers rather to essential character, as well as from 4550, which indicates degeneracy from original virtue); figuratively, calamitous; also (passively) ill, i.e. diseased; but especially (morally) culpable, i.e. derelict, vicious, facinorous; neuter (singular) mischief, malice, or (plural) guilt; masculine (singular) the devil, or (plural) sinners:--bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked(-ness). [everything connected with the god of this age]

r). The thought here would be that we have to be wise as to the purpose of God so as to keep our focus in the right place during our pilgrim journey as the timeframe for everyday is within the remit of the enemy of our soul and he will use every moment of that time to divert us from our course, to take us from the straitest way and lead us into the broad way that leads to destruction. It is during this time that we have, while it is still called today, that we can hear His voice or be overcome by the world, the flesh and the devil - Mt 7:13 *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*

s). So then putting it all together in our scripture - ‘See then that you live, that you deport yourself as a companion of the most exact, most staitest [way], and don’t be someone completely devoid of wisdom but be someone who is thoughtful and cautious of character, rescuing from loss every opportunity within the set time we have, because the whole course of this present age is in the sway of the wicked one.’

6). And with the thought of walking circumspectly and redeeming the time in view Ephesians 5 then continues - Eph 5:17 *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

a). If we are not to be ‘unwise’ then we will take heed of what we have just read and we will understand that this is the will of the Lord for us. And the Lord’s will here cannot be separated from His will with respect to our being found worthy at the Judgment Seat.

b). It is the will of the Lord that we should not be ‘drunk with wine, in which is dissipation’ [literally – ‘unsavedness’] – a lifestyle of drunkenness whereby we allow the effects of alcohol to control our thoughts and actions thereby denying the work of the Spirit that will result in exclusion at the Judgment Seat.

c). However, rather than filling ourselves up with wine and becoming drunk, we are instead to be continually filled with the Spirit.

d). As a lifestyle of drunkenness would lead to death so being continually filled with the Spirit will lead to life.

7). And just to make sure we are clear let’s compare scripture with scripture so as to understand what being continually filled with the Spirit looks like –
Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

a). Here in Colossians the command is to ‘let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,’ – and if we do this we see that there is the same outcome as being continually filled with the Spirit.

b). Being continually filled with the Spirit and letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom are then synonymous.

c). *Joh 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

d). The phrase ‘the word of Christ’ would draw our attention to the whole counsel of God – all that has to do with the Christ and His coming Kingdom – a revelation that only comes from above as the indwelling Spirit takes the word of God and guides us into all truth.

e). Being continually filled with the Spirit then is never a charismatic experience, nor can it ever take place apart from engagement with the Word. It is rather continually receiving the word of His grace, receiving with meekness the implanted word, through reading, through study, through preaching.

f). And if we will be filled with the Spirit after this fashion so our faith will become more certain - *Ro 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

g). And so our faith will grow - *Ro 1:16 ¶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,*

for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

h). And as the Holy Spirit, through the word, works the metamorphosis in us and as a result of that work we more readily believe and put into practice that which God has said, so it will impact what comes out of our mouth - *19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

i). So it will impact our attitude towards God in the midst of our circumstances - *20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*

j). And so it will affect our relationships - *21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

8). Placing side by side being wise and being filled with the Spirit will inevitably bring to mind the parable of the 10 virgins.

a). Mt 25:1 ¶ *"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'*

b). The word wise here is the Greek word 'phronimos' which we saw earlier in Ephesians 5:15.

c). The word foolish here is not the word 'asophos' that we saw earlier but the Greek word 'moros' from which we get our English word 'moron' – and literally means to be heedless. Someone who does not take heed.

d). Now both the wise and the foolish slumbered and slept while waiting for the Bridegroom and both were roused from their slumber by the midnight cry – the cry portending Judgment.

e). But only the wise had the extra supply of oil – only the wise had walked circumspectly and redeemed the time – only the wise were continually filled with the Spirit allowing the word of Christ to dwell in them richly in all wisdom.

f). Both the wise and the foolish hear the cry concerning midnight, but only the wise take heed.

g). Ro 13:11 ¶ *And do this[love your neighbor as yourself], knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

h). Our slumbering and our sleeping then can be seen in our being wrapped up in the activities and routines of everyday life. However, there is a defining moment in the midst of all this when the nature of our appearance at Christ's Judgment Seat becomes so real to us that it is as if we have woken up from sleep. When this realization hits us we will have the choice to take heed, or to go back to sleep.

i). We will embrace the light or go back into darkness.

j). If we are of those who take heed there is of necessity a paradigm shift in our focus. The activities and the affairs of this life melt into the background. Our plans, our possessions, our material world view are superseded by what we could describe as the primal spiritual drive - Mt 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness .*

k). Whether we are at work or at home or gathered together with the saints, our speech, our actions and our thoughts will all be subject to faithful obedience to the Word because we see with fear and trembling the Day approaching.

l). And in the subjecting of ourselves to faithful obedience will come our struggle with the old man, will come our suffering as we crucify the flesh, will come our patient endurance, will come the testing of our faith, all of which will ultimately bring us to be recipients of the crown of life - Jas 1:12 *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

m). However, if we do not take heed then the activities and routine of our life will become all consuming and our plans for the next few months more important than our plans for the age to come. We will go to 'church' instead of being the church and we will find a plethora of things to do that are more important than gathering with the saints. Rather than exposing the unfruitful works of darkness we will believe that God understands that our circumstances make it all different. Just like the 'moros' virgins we will have had opportunity to take heed, but will have chosen not to do so.

9). The alarm clock has been ringing loudly for the past four years – please don't hit the snooze button again.

10). Let us close again this week with words of encouragement from the scriptures - 1Th 5:4 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 ¶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 ¶ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*