

Ephesians - Lesson 8

Ephesians 5:1-33

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of You holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Review of Ephesians 4:17-32

Verses 17-19

- Paul begins with the rejection of idolatry and the sexual sins that accompanied it. Paul goes into a detailed description of the Gentiles in their pagan walk:
 - *Darkened in the understanding* - Not knowing the things of God
 - *Alienated from the life of God* - Estranged
 - *Hardness of heart* - Unable to function properly as the Law's instrument to convict sin.
 - *Callous* - Dead flesh feels nothing
 - *Sensuality* - Violating all bounds of what is socially acceptable.
 - *Impurity/unclean* - Pursuit of what is unclean and unholy

Verse 20-24

- Paul moves to contrast between the Ephesians former pagan lives and their lives they have in Christ.
- Focus revolves around the understanding of the old man/new man.

Verses 4:25-5:2

- Paul draws out the implication of this change for how they walk. Put another way, this is the third use of the law.
- This section provides examples of the transformation with a pattern of prohibition, encouragement, and reason.
- Prohibitions are behaviors or characteristics of the old Adam and Gentile.
- Encouragements can be considered Christlike qualities that are bestowed in Baptism and word for the upbuilding of the body of Christ.
- Reason roots the new action in God's work in Christ.
- We see a series of references to the Decalogue (1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th, 8th Commandments)

Chapter 5:1-14

Overview

- Similar to the "then-now" themes we've seen throughout Ephesians, we see another similar one in this section with darkness and light.
- Each aspect of the old life or darkness (i.e. - foolish, fruitless, secret) is paired with aspect of the new life or light (i.e. - wise, fruit of light, revealed).
- There is no middle ground. You are one or the other.
- You are children of light, child of God, or a son of disobedience, opposed to God and a child of the devil.

****READ VERSES 1-14****

Verse 3

- *...let not [these things] be name among you...*

- Paul has in mind more than talk. Paul, hyperbolically is saying, “don’t do them.”
- Often, to name a god was to invoke it and call on its power.
- Here, Paul may have in mind a two-step progression:
 - 1st - naming filthy deeds leads to doing them.
 - 2nd - doing them places one under their power
- ...sexual immorality...
 - This refers to any sexual practice that is illicit, that falls outside God’s order of celibacy outside marriage and fidelity within marriage.
 - Sexual immorality is powerful, and Paul says this can’t merely be named without falling under its spell.
 - Sexual immorality involves one’s own body, which is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:18-19).
 - Also, sexual immorality, as discussed last time, was intimately connected with the ritual practices of ancient paganism.
 - Paul’s concern is the very words can drag people back into their old pagan lives.
- ...*uncleanness*...
 - This describes a state that renders one unable to stand in the presence of God
 - This stands in contrast to the holiness that is given in Baptism.
- Sexual immorality, uncleanness, lust:
 - They work together to describe a desire to misuse one’s body in ways that are contrary to God’s holy will and that are bound up with idolatry.
 - As these sexual tendencies ultimately become an idol, worship of a false god and falling back into the pagan lifestyle, the consequences are devastating.
 - Verse 5-6 reveals the sexual immoral person has excluded himself from God’s kingdom by becoming a son of disobedience.
 - Inheritance again is baptismal language. To turn to sexual immorality is to reject those gifts from God that you receive as a child of God.
- This Issue Today:
 - One doesn’t have to look to far to see how rampant sexual immorality in our society.
 - Use of pornography, and other sexually immoral sins are extremely powerful.
 - Sexual sins such as pornography are addictive like drugs since they mess with chemicals in the brain.
 - Ephesians 5 is a wonderful text in addressing sexual sins since it says these things are wrong, the consequences (not inheriting the kingdom described verse 5), but you expose these sins to the light by confession and absolution.

Verse 8

- Verse 8 explains what Paul has been getting at in the preceding verses.
 - Immorality was an integral part of the pagan life.
 - However, this is now behind the Christian through baptism.
- Various metaphors have been used to explain this:
 - death to life (2:1-5)
 - alien to citizens, far to near (2:11-13)
 - ignorance to knowledge (4:17)
 - darkened in understanding (4:18) to enlightened (1:18)
- Now Paul transitions new a new metaphor:
 - Darkness and light is a standard biblical image
 - Darkness and light can’t coexist. It isn’t a slow and gradual process from darkness to light.
 - Once you were darkness, but now you are light (5:8)

- Notice it doesn't say "in darkness, but were darkness"
 - It doesn't say "in the light but are light"
- Light appears 5 times throughout this pericope.
- Through Christ you have taken on the image of God, who is light.
- In fact, as light you are in Christ, and shows the oneness you have with Him.
- To be light is to be Christlike, because you are in Christ.

Verse 14

- Awake, O sleeper...
 - The end of this pericope is the "poem," which is seen as baptismal.
 - This exact phrase can't be found in the OT, unless it is understood as a paraphrase of Isaiah 60:1, which says:
 - Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
 - The "poem" develops a series of vivid images tied this section of light - Get up, arise, shine.
 - Those who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins now are given life, since the dead have no ability to respond to the call on their own strength.
 - You are given life through the Word of God, and have been raised and are light in Christ.

Chapter 5:15-21

Overview

- This section is tied to the previous section which describes darkness versus light, the then and now.
- The understanding of walk ties these verse together.
- It ties together the language of wisdom and worship
 - unwise - wise (v15)
 - days are evil - redeeming the time (5:16)
 - unthinking - understand the will of the Lord (5:17)
 - don't get drunk with wine - filled up in the Spirit (5:18)

****READ VERSES 15-21****

Verse 16

- ...making the best use of our time...
 - The implication would be that in these dark and latter days, while we await the coming of the Lord, we should take advantage of any opportunity to walk in God's ways.
 - To avoid world distractions
 - There's difficulties with this interpretation:
 - First the previous verses mandate Christians always to walk in the way of God, not only when the opportunity presents itself.
 - The Greek here indicates to buy up something
 - ie - the redemptive work of Christ, who bought us out of the curse of the Law.
 - What Paul is getting at is just as Christians have been purchased and won out of the clutches of the devil by Christ, so the Christian takes up and uses it as a gift redeemed for him by Christ.
 - It doesn't necessarily mean that the Christian is immediately snatched from the grasp of this evil age.
 - It means that the age is snatched by Christ and redeemed for the Christian's use.

- It's why Paul can proclaim in 2 Cor. 6:2 - Behold now is the favorable time; behold new is the day of salvation.

Verse 17

- *...understand what the will of the Lord is...*
 - This sentence forms a parallel to 5:15, reiterating that one's walk is to be directed by the wisdom given in God's Word, which reveals his will.
 - To understand what is the will of the Lord stand in parallel to walk...as wise people (5:15).
 - The baptized have been transformed in such a way that they, unlike the people of the world, truly can understand the will of the Lord.
 - Will of God - the Father who works out his plan of salvation through Christ.

Verse 19

- *...psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...*
 - psalms and hymns and songs inspired by the Holy Spirit
 - Holy Spirit who fills Christians and enables them to sing:
 - Psalms - hymns of the earthly church
 - Biblical canticles
 - Newly written Christian hymns
- *...in your heart...*
 - This doesn't refer to internal, silent worship
 - The heart is the instrument of true worship.
 - The heart is the dwelling place of the spirit, and directs the heart to the Lord.

Chapter 5:22-33

Overview

- As much as we've talked about sexual immorality and its tie to idolatry, we finally see what God intends for man and woman.
- With this Paul begins a section on vocations in the home, which flows nicely into chapter six.
 - Husbands and Wives
 - Parents and children
 - Servants and Master (Employee and Employer)
- Additionally, we see in marriage the picture of Christ and His bride the church.

****READ VERSES 22-33****

Thoughts on Marriage

- God specifically gives an ordering to husband and wives, to the family.
- Satan's goal is to bring about disorder.
- The world views this understanding of marriage as outdated.
- We see this in society today the break down these roles of husbands and wives, whether it is divorce or homosexual marriage.
- These things destroy the order which God intended.
- It's interesting to consider how much of the issues we see in society today, stems from the break down of the family - ie. increase in crimes, etc.

Husband and Wife

- As mentioned before, Paul’s focus on sexual immorality now gives way to what God intends for man and woman - specifically in marriage.
- Here we see that God specifically orders the family.
 - That which was intended at creation.
 - We say there’s an order to husband and wife, while at the same time holding true to the scripture understand that they are one flesh.
- Subordination inherently means that one party is above the other in a hierarchy of office, vocation, or authority.
 - Contrary to the westerner view, subordination is not humiliating or demeaning.
 - Not in regards to intelligence or value.
 - Not in regards to identity, who we are in Christ. For there is neither male or female (Galatians 3:28).
 - God is a God of order.
- Subordination
 - Does not give the one who is “the head” license to assert his superiority, but to care and love.
 - It’s important to stress that in each ordered relationship the subordinate person is the valuable one, in the sense that superordinate person’s office is instituted for the sake of those for whom they care.
 - In this case the Husband most concerned with protecting his wife. She is the precious bearer of children and one who normally is more physically vulnerable.
 - Ephesians 5 lays the greater burden on the husband who is to love his wife as Christ love the church, that is even at the expense of his own life.

Christ and the Church

We get our understanding of order for husband and wives from that of Christ and the Church

- We get a repeat of Ephesians 1 where Christ is the head and the church the body.
 - The oneness is described in terms of a human body - head and torso/rest of the body are intricate and work as one.
- While we have oneness/unity there is also subordination.
 - Church submits to Christ.
 - Christ loved the church and gave his life for her on the cross.
- Language of baptism
 - The death of Christ and Baptism are linked together.
 - The Christ who lays His life down for the church sanctifies her through baptism.
 - The church is presented is sinless, pure, spotless.
- Love of Christ to His Bride the Church
 - Doesn’t hate, loves, nourishes.

Questions?

Thoughts/Questions

Any other items you would like to discuss?

Closing Prayers

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

