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[0:00] And it is an important thing to remember that He is on the throne, isn't He? And I just, I love the verse, you know, that talks about the fact, oh, the wrong seems off so strong.

We can look around this world, we can find so many things that are wrong, can't we? I mean, that's not hard to do, and we can see so many things that are just going in the wrong direction. And we need to remember as believers that that doesn't change the fact, and nothing will change the fact that God is on the throne, and He is in control, and He always will be. All right, if you have your Bibles this morning, I'd encourage you to take them. And we have been in the book of Ephesians, and we are continuing in the book of Ephesians. We have been focusing primarily, and Ephesians has a lot to do with it, we've been focusing on family. And family is what we're going to continue to focus on this morning. In Ephesians chapter 5 is where we are, and we're going to share the first verses, and then down in verse 17. So I encourage you to follow along. And if you've found that, and if you're able, I'd ask you to stand as we read God's Word this morning together.

Ephesians 5, beginning in the first verse. Be you, therefore, followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as become saints, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather give thanks. And then jump down to verse 17 in this same chapter.

Wherefore, be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein in excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body.

[2:24] Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord, the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Let's pray together this morning. Lord God, we thank You again for this time we have to share together. Lord, we thank You that we can be here among our family, that we can be in Your presence, that we can read Your Word, that the Holy Spirit can work and move in our hearts, our minds, our lives, can teach us. Lord, we just thank You for all these things. But Lord, so many of these involve each one of us making a choice, and that is whether to let the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts, whether to allow Your Word to sink and to soak into our hearts and minds. Those are choices that we make. So Lord, I pray that each person that's here, that we would make the choice to listen to Your Word, to hear Your Word, to live out Your Word, to allow it to impact the way we live and the way we think. So Lord, just speak to us on this day, and it's in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, and all God's family said. You can be seated this morning.

We've been talking about family, right? Because family is important, not just physical family, which we all understand the importance of, but our spiritual family, which includes all of us, all that are here, all that call on the name of Jesus Christ. We are a spiritual family, and there is an importance in that. And one of the things we're going to talk about this morning that this verse, this chapter mentions a couple different times that we need to be as believers and as families is the fact that families need to be thankful. Do you believe that? Yes. And we as individuals need to be thankful, because when we're thankful as individuals, then we're thankful as a family.

And that is a choice to make, isn't it? Because in our lives, we can choose to do a couple things. We can choose to mumble and grumble about things, can't we? Are there things you don't like?

Are there people you don't like? I know, I shouldn't even ask that. Are there situations you don't like? Are there things that get under your skin and make you grumble and mumble?

[5:17] No? None of you have that? Let's be honest with each other. Are there things that get under our skin that just bother us and we get aggravated and we grumble about it? But that's life, isn't it?

And for all of us, those may be different things. What makes you mumble and grumble might not me, but there are things that probably make me mumble and grumble that don't affect you. We can focus on those things if we choose to. Or we can make the decision as God's people, and as He reminds us here in this chapter a couple times, He says to instead be thankful.

And part of being thankful is to realize and understand the blessings that we have. And one of those greatest blessings that we have is the fact that we're loved.

It is a wonderful thing to feel loved, isn't it? And we as believers, that's to be a huge part of our life. Look at what it says in the first couple verses that we read.

Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children. So, a couple things that it outlines here that we need to understand. We are children. Do you get that?

[6:24] That's not an insult, is it? Sometimes you may look at your spouse and say you're acting like a child. That's an insult, right? But here it's calling us children, and it's just stating a fact.

We are children. That is the position we're in because that means we don't know everything.

Children do not know everything, do they? They might think they do, and they might have their idea on what they want to happen, and they might make that very clear, but they do not know everything. That's us. None of us have it all figured out. None of us know everything. We are the children in this story. It says, be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.

You know, one of the things when I think about children, and you think about really young ones, they like to follow, don't they? We've talked about Johnny Camp, and I remember the years we went to Johnny Camp, and they have the groups of little ones that run around, and often they'll have somebody that carries a flag.

And guess what all the little ones have to do? Follow that flag, and they walk along like a little line of ducklings, just following right along. Or I know my granddaughter in preschool, she gets excited when she is selected or gets to be a certain position.

[7:42] Do you know what that position is? You knew! Line leader. That excites her when she gets to be the line leader. What is a line leader's job?

To lead. To lead what? This isn't hard. The line. A line leader's job is to lead the line. What is the line's job? To follow.

To follow. That's us. We are to follow like children do. Like, who is our line leader? God. It says, be followers of God as dear children, and then it tells us what our line is to look like.

And walk in love. Everybody say it together. Walk in love. Love. As we follow God in our lives, as we follow this line, as we follow our leader who is God.

And by calling Him line leader, I'm not trying to diminish at all. I'm trying to get us to understand. God is to be our leader. And we are to follow in His way. And the Bible says God is love, right?

[8:50] And that means as we follow God, it is part of our responsibility. If we are truly following Him, we are walking in love. And what does that mean? What does it mean to walk in love?

Nobody knows? What does it mean to walk in love? To show love to others? What? Not get angry at others?

Love is just to be part of who we are. Part of what exudes or comes out of us. That's how we live in love. That's what it means to walk in love. If we are not doing that, you know that there's always at least one or two children in that line that instead of walking like little ducklings in a row, there's always one or two.

And what are they doing? They're going, the line's going this way, they're going that way, they're going that way, they're going the wrong way. There's always one or two of those, right? Is that ever you?

Are you ever that little duckling in life that gets out of line? When we choose not to walk in love, not to show love to others, we are that child that is getting out of line, making a choice, and going the wrong direction.

[10:03] What happens when that child chooses to go his own way? They can get lost. Absolutely. What else? They can cause harm.

Do they need corrected? Yes. Do we ever need corrected? Yeah. And one of the things we should constantly ask ourselves, if we are following God, evidence of that should be we are walking in love, that we are loving people, that we are loving others, that we are loving our family, and not just saying we're loving them, but showing that love.

That should show in who we are. And just think and ask yourself that question, am I walking in love as a believer? As part of God's family, am I truly walking in love towards people around me?

And then get in your mind that if you're not, you're that child going the wrong direction. God wants and expects us to be followers of Him, and He expects us to be walking in love.

And then in verse 3, He says, in order to do that, there's some things we need to make sure are not in our lives. It says, But fornication, all uncleanness, covetousness, let it not be once named among you, neither filthiness, foolish talking, or jesting, which are not convenient.

[11:26] All these things are not to be a part of our lives. If we are walking in love, these things are not going to be there. Because you cannot love and do these things at the same time.

Do we realize that's not possible? You can't fornicate or be involved in uncleanness or covet what somebody else has. You can't do that in love at the same time.

It doesn't work. It's one or the other. Are we choosing love? And these are things in our lives that says that we need to put away, that we need to get rid of. It's kind of the same thing, if you remember from last week, at the end of the chapter, it said there are some things that we were to put off.

It says, Let all bitterness, in verse 31 of chapter 4, Let all bitterness, wrath, or anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

These are things that we are to get out of our lives. Because if our family is to be what God wants it to be, these things can't be present. We just can't. And these are the things that Satan looks for in our lives.

[12:30] He looks for these things to say, that's the person I'm going to use to cause disunity in the church. That's the person I'm going to use to stir up trouble. So think about that thought for a minute.

Satan is looking over our family constantly saying, Alright, who has some anger in their heart that they're not letting go of? I'm going to use them to stir things up. Who doesn't have a forgiving heart in this family?

I'm going to use that to cause a situation that will stir things up in the church. Do you think Satan works like that? Yes. We talked last week. It says he's a hungry lion walking about seeking whom he may devour.

And his job, his goal is for the church not to be what God wants it to be. So all these things that the Bible says we need to put out of our lives, it's because that can't be present in God's family.

Instead, we are to do what at the end of verse 4? Instead of all these things, it says, but rather giving of thanks.

[13:36] Why do you think that's the important thing he mentioned? That all these other things we need to get rid of, but we are to instead give thanks. Why that? Why don't instead give whatever?

Why thanks? What happens when we give thanks? What's that? What did you say, Trey? Good things come.

Is it encouraging when you hear somebody giving thanks? When people are being thankful to God, is that encouraging? What do you think God thinks of it when we're giving Him the thanks? What does it do to our attitude, to our hearts and minds when we're giving thanks to God? It changes us, doesn't it? Folks, the actions that we do make up who we are.

If we choose to mumble and grumble all the time, that's the kind of person we're going to be. Do you know anybody that... Don't name names. Don't. Don't point anybody out. Do you know anybody that mumbles and grumbles in life?

[14:36] You can point yourself out. That will allow. I want you to think in your mind, and again, don't point, don't name. If you know of anybody that just is full of bitterness or full of anger or just always has something to complain about in life, what kind of person are they?

How would you describe them? Miserable? They need a lot of prayer? Lost? Lost? Here's the thing. Do you think they set out to be that way?

Do you think as life went by they said, I want to turn into somebody who is just bitter. That's what I want to be. Do you think they ever said, I want to be a grumpy old man.

That is my goal in life. Or a grumpy young man. Age is kind of irrelevant to be honest with you. Or a grumpy old lady or young lady or whatever. Do you think they set out for that to happen?

Folks, we don't. Nobody sets out for those things to happen. So how does that situation come about? Choices. What they focus on.

[15:48] What they do in their life. All of us have situations that happen that can make us bitter. All of us have people that disappoint us at times, that hurt us at times, that let us down at times.

All of us have that. All of us are going to have situations in life that are hard, that are difficult. We're going to lose people that we love. They're going to pass away.

Do we realize that? If we don't pass away first. Do we understand that? Those things, none of us are immune from. We're going to have sicknesses.

We're going to have hurts. We're going to have diseases. Do we understand that? Okay. We're all going to have that. None of us are immune. So the question isn't, are we going to experience these things?

And I know that's not a cheery thought to have. The question isn't, though, are we going to experience it? It is, how are we going to handle those things?

[16:43] In the midst of those, are we going to focus on those things? Because if we do, what kind of person are we going to end up? Grumpy, bitter, hard, angry.

That's why it says, but rather give thanks. Because if we are constantly giving thanks, in order to give thanks, do you know what you need to do? You need to first think what you're thankful for, don't you?

And if that's what's on our mind, if we're thinking about all those good things that God has given us that we do have to thank Him for, you know what? We don't become that bitter, angry person. We become, as you look on down, look in verse 17 that we read.

Be not unwise. You know what? I think you're unwise if you focus on all those difficulties. If you let anger and bitterness take over, that is not wise. But understanding what the will of the Lord is.

What is the will of God? For our lives to be easy? Is that God's will? No. Is God's will for our lives to keep us from any difficulty we may have? Is that God's will?

[17:45] No. No. To help us through it. It's to help us through it. Think of our own children. Is your desire to keep them from having or experiencing any discomfort or difficulty in their life?

Is that your goal as a parent? I do. Should it be your goal? Think about that. No. If you keep your child from experiencing any difficulty or discomfort, what is the end result of that going to be?

A spoiled rotten brat? Pampered? Pampered? Does God allow us to go through difficulty?

Absolutely.

Folks, it is hard to read through the New Testament if we don't understand God allows people to go through difficulties or the Old Testament for that matter. The Bible is full of stories where people went through hardships and difficulties.

That is the story of the Bible. God's desire is not to say I want to give you as easy a life as possible. That is not what God says. Difficulties will come and we need to understand the will of the Lord isn't just to make our lives easy.

[18:55] It is to strengthen us and be there for us. Then jump down to verse 19 because it says this is what we should be like or what we should be doing.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Does that describe you?

Here's again the two things. Does this sound like an angry bitter person? Someone who is singing and making melody in their heart to God? But this is what God wants us to do.

Speaking to yourself. Why? Why do you think that's important? Speaking to yourself. It's what it says, isn't it? Speaking to yourself to stay focused.

I know sometimes we think that oh they're talking to themselves that person's nuts. Is that what it's talking about? It's that conversation we have within ourselves.

[19:58] We can have a negative conversation within ourselves can't we? Oh this situation is just stupid. This is dumb. That person's out of line. We can grumble and groan. That's a conversation we have within ourselves.

And generally if we have that conversation within ourselves long enough that goes like that what's going to be coming out of us? Same thing. It'll eventually work its way out. But that internal conversation that we have it says speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody where?

In your heart. This is something that's internal that's happening on the inside that's happening in our hearts happening in our minds that we are not focused on all those negative things that we're still singing songs of praise to God.

We're thanking Him for things. You know the ones that I think of more than anyone else in this situation are Paul and Silas. When they were thrown in prison for preaching about Jesus Christ in jail in stocks in chains what would be your response to that?

Well this is a great situation you've let me be in God. This is not where I wanted to end up. How did this happen to me? Would we be having those thoughts?

[21:10] At midnight it says what did Paul and Silas do instead when they were in prison? It says they praise and sang songs to God. They were making melody in their hearts to God.

And then look what it says after this again in verse 20 giving thanks always for all things.

Again this giving thanks is a choice we make and it's a choice that God wants us to be doing that in the midst of hardships and in the midst of difficulties we are still to give thanks aren't we?

It says how often? Always. In how many things? All things? Easy or hard? Is it a challenge?

And God has more to say in this chapter and I want to go through this I know our time is getting away but I want to go through this too because what does He say right after this? Look in verse 21 submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God wives so now we have a wife section I've been waiting to get to this part wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as to the Lord for as the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church and He is the Savior of the body therefore as the church is subject to Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything husbands how do you feel about that?

[22:43] You're too scared to say aren't you? Wives how do you feel about that? You're like I don't like it so often there's some verses in this chapter that I think that become a real touch point a real hot topic a real I don't know about that one I don't like that in this day and age wives be subject to your husbands you know what I say to this?

Wives be subject to your husbands I think we make too big a deal out of that I really do do you know why I think that? Because God here you know what He's asking wives to do?

The exact same things He's asking all of us to do look at the verse right before that verse 21 that we read submitting yourselves what? One to another so wives He's not asking you to do anything He's not asking all of us to do when it says submitting yourselves to one another who is that written for?

All of us a wife is to submit to her husband but if we're submitting ourselves one to another what else does that mean? Husbands are also to submit to their wives and we're to submit to our

neighbor and our sister and brother in Christ it says all of us are to be submitting ourselves to each other it goes right along with the verse that says esteem others more highly than yourself it's talking about putting others first and again as we follow Jesus Christ as He is the line that we are to follow the example we are to follow Christ did that didn't He?

He put others first He put us first over His own life didn't He? When He went to the cross when He was crucified for you and I He was putting us first over His own desires when He was in the garden what did He say?

[24:33] Father if it's possible let this cup pass from Me I don't really want to go through that pain but I'll do it for each and every one of us so wives you are to submit to your husbands but you know what we're all to submit to each other that's what God says now it gets to husbands because we're talking about physical family here as part of the spiritual family husband and wives is it a challenge to submit to your husband?

Yes or no? How many of you vote yes? It's a challenge to submit to your husband raise your hand I want to make you raise your hand now it's said for all of us in verse 21 submit yourselves to one another how easy is it for all the rest of you to submit to other people?

Is it a challenge? Yes all these things are a challenge people being a Christian is a challenge and husbands we're not without challenge husbands love your wives oh yeah I love my wife it doesn't end there it's not the end of the verse the challenge really comes in the second part of the verse doesn't it?

Husband love your wives and here's how we're to love them even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it again we just talked about the fact when Christ gave himself for us there was a submission there putting somebody else's needs over his own that's the kind of love we're to have for our wives putting their needs in front of our own just like Christ did with us husbands is that a challenge?

Yes but all these things we have to understand when we do them the family is what God wants it and desires it to be look in verse 30 it says for we are members of his body of his flesh and of his bone we are all part of God's family this family is to be characterized by love the love we show to each other we are to walk in love that love means putting the other person first that's what submitting is really all about when I do premarital counseling with couples I hit on that really hard esteem others more highly than yourselves put your spouse first and that means both of them because if the husband is putting the wife first and the wife is putting the husband first what kind of relationship do you think that's going to be?

[27:07] It's going to be good isn't it? But think of all of us as God's family if each one of us is really striving to put the other person first what kind of a family do you think that's going to be?

Think of the problems that that solves you know in churches and again we're talking about unity and the family being all that it needs to be and wants to be and God desires it is do you know how many things churches have been torn apart with that would be solved by people really putting others first? You know one of the things that you used to hear more about and I think still it comes up is simple things like the type of music in a church can that be a thing? Yes it can because guess what we don't all have the same taste in music do we?

Do we? And your tastes are right right? Here's the thing maybe you like the old hymns I love old hymns they're great is there anything wrong with loving old hymns?

No Maybe you love some of the contemporary Christian songs there's some wonderful contemporary Christian songs if you love those is that wrong? No So why does it become an issue?

[28:26] Because they want to be right and we sometimes want our own way We talked about at the beginning there's a reason we're called the children of God Do little kids want their own way?

Just last night the family was over at our house for Father's Day I have grandkids you know that right? You've noticed Ridge down here is two he has a cousin Logan she's also two they were running around playing last night one of them had a little popcorn pusher thing that's really really loud right?

The other one had a little plastic shopping cart and they were just roaming around having a big time at one point in the evening they both decided they wanted the shopping cart how do you think that went?

You don't care if I use your child as an example here do you? Alright Caleb you should be used to it I've used you for years I can move on to the next generation but it was interesting and they got into it they both wanted it because why?

They wanted their own way and at one point Logan's screaming mine mine mine and Caleb was laughing well not laughing but he was holding Ridge and he said Ridge was whispering to him the whole time I want the cart I want the cart I want the cart I want the cart he heard his name and we can say oh children they need to learn to share folks that's us that's God's family that's what we also need to learn to put the other person first to be more concerned about how they are and how they're doing and how their spiritual life is and even simple things like music if I'm more concerned about you being blessed and God speaking to you and you have that concern for me is that music going to be an issue?

[30:16] No because if you like hymns and they're singing a contemporary song and you see they're being blessed by it you're going to be happy about that. If you like the new contemporary hymns and we're singing an old one and you see somebody being blessed by that what's that going to make you feel?

It's going to make you feel good because you see somebody else being blessed and you're concerned about that. That is how the family is supposed to work folks. But Satan gets in and he says you need to get your way.

You need to get what you want. It needs to be how you think is right. And folks Satan has a heyday with that in our lives and in the life of the church. Folks God's family we are to walk in love following the example that Christ set for us.

That means putting others first. I don't care if you're a husband wife or child I don't care who you are. It says submitting yourselves one to another. That is what love is all about putting the other person first.

I pray that we do that and follow the example that Christ gave us. These things are what make our physical family stronger and what makes our spiritual family stronger and it's the example that Jesus Christ set for us.

[31:24] Are you ready for that challenge? That challenge to give thanks instead of mumbling and grumbling? Give thanks and love. Let's pray.

Lord God thank you for this day. I thank you for your word. I thank you for the challenge that it gives us. And Lord we are so prone to mumbling and grumbling. Things we see that we don't think are right that we think should change that aren't the way we would do it.

Instead Lord help us to have a heart that's thankful to remember all those things we need to be thankful for. Help us to walk in love as Christ did and does. Help us to follow that example for love just to be a part of who we are.

A love that puts others first. Lord I pray that as a church we do that. I pray that as individuals we do that. And that we are the children, the obedient children that you want us to be.

Bless your family Lord. Help us to be your people. Help us to act the way you want us to act. And it's in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray. Amen. This morning as we close the altar is open.

[32:28] If you have a need come and pray about it. The Lord is ready to meet with you here. I pray with you if you want me to. If you just want to come and pray that's fine too. But the altar is open as we come. Love needs to be who we are and what we show to the world around us.

And I just encourage you to think about your life and make sure that love is just the thing that describes your life more than any other. Because that's what life in Christ is all about. Share the truth and share it in love.

Let's bow our heads as we close this morning. Lord God thank you again for this day that you've given us. Lord I just thank you that you are the Father, that you are on the throne, that you have the answers when we don't because that's most of the time.

Lord I just pray that you'd work in our hearts, continue to just remind us that we are to be people that give thanks in the midst of all situations. Give strength Lord where it's needed, watch over us and help us to follow the example that Jesus Christ sets for us.

Bless fathers on this day Lord we thank you for the example of a father that you give us that is that perfect example and Lord I know as fathers we fall short of that but give us strength Lord to continue to look to you for guidance and for wisdom.

[33:33] Bless each father that's here and we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. I want to wish you a happy Father's Day. Remember fathers please go out the back way so you can get what we have for you and just enjoy this day.