

Followers of God

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[0 : 00] Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5.

Be not you therefore partakers with them? For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you the light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

Proving what is acceptable, answer the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light. For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

[2 : 03] Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We read there, verse 10, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Acceptable to the Lord, not acceptable to the world.

Note that. Not acceptable to the world, but what is acceptable unto the Lord. There are some things that are acceptable unto the world that we know are not acceptable unto the Lord.

And so, we need to be guided by the Word of God. And verse 16, redeeming the times, because the days are evil. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

We know these are days that are evil, they're desperate days, days of despair, days of darkness, days of dread, and sin, and godlessness.

[3 : 28] Days that are evil, we need to redeem the time. And just to lead in, what we're talking about today is being a follower of God. Verse 1, be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.

We're urged here to walk the walk. Walk the walk. How are we to walk? There's three ways we can walk in these verses we've read. Firstly, verse 2, walk in love.

Verse 2, walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

We walk in love by imitating God, by being followers of God, being like him. How can we walk? In God's love. In God's love. We see God's love demonstrated at the cross.

And God's people are to be marked by love. Sacrificial love. It's a defining mark. It's a hallmark of the people of God. That we have his love.

[4 : 34] And it's evident. It's giving. It's forgiving. And 1 John 3.14 it says that we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. And sometimes you can really see the evidence of a lack of love. Of a lack of love.

A lack of grace. A lack of loveliness. Of loving. Of being loving. Loving kindness.

And friends we all need to know how can I be more loving? How can I be more loving as our Lord would love? Who did he love? Well we were yet sinners.

He loved us. He died for us. Friends love. How do we define it? No. How does God define it? How does God define love?

[5 : 28] Love. Beyond human capacity isn't it? Love. Love that loves the unlovely. Love that loves the unloving.

It is Jesus isn't it? He is God's love. The Lord Jesus. He is love. God's love. Personified. If you like. Love incarnate.

Was Christ wasn't it? And love. How do you define it? We know what the world would try to lump in and define love as.

But it's scarcely the love that God shows to us. It's not a love that's a get, get, get kind of love. It's a give, give, give kind of love.

It's a love that gives and keeps on giving. It's self-sacrificial love. It's unconditional love. That's the love of our Saviour for you. For you. And me. That's love.

[6 : 26] Unspeakable isn't it? Love. Amazing. Love so gracious. It's a contrast to this world and how the world would define love. It's like a writer put it, There is nothing you can do to make God love you more.

There is nothing you can do to make God love you less. His love is unconditional, impartial, everlasting, infinite, perfect. It's love.

It's love beyond our comprehension. Because His love isn't based on how good you are. It's based on how good Jesus is.

It's based on how effective and efficacious the blood of Jesus is to take away your sin. And His love is extended to those undeserving, those unworthy, such as we.

Walk in love, He says, as Christ has loved us and has given Himself for us. Do you love like that? I know I don't often. I know if we're really truly honest, we don't have love like that a lot of the time, do we?

[7 : 42] But we should love with a love that goes beyond. It goes beyond that first mile. It goes that second mile. It goes beyond that human capacity and loves with God's capacity.

Walk in love. Secondly, verse 8, walk as children of light. Verse 8, walk as children of light. That's who we should be. Walk as children of light.

Light instead of darkness. We are of the day, not of the night. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 5 onwards it says, Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day.

We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night.

And they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for in helmet, the hope of salvation.

[8 : 47] It's day and night. Light and darkness. What a contrast. That's how we should be, brothers and sisters. As children of light. It should be such a contrast.

Light and darkness. Day and night. They're so opposite, aren't they? We're meant to be children of light. 1 John 1, 7 it says, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin.

If we walk in the light. God wants us to walk in the light. 1 John 1, 5 it says, This then is the message that we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

We want to be like him. Not with the darkness that this world would excuse and accommodate. Not that which is acceptable to the world, but that which is acceptable to the Lord.

1 John 3, 2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

[9 : 58] You're going to be like him. You are meant to be the light of the world. And what John 8, 12 says, the Lord Jesus speaks, I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

We come to the light. We come to the light. Light. Are you walking as children of light? Light. I know we had a bold go in our place, and I asked Julie, what wattage does she want?

What watts do you want in that light? And she just wanted some. Wanted it to be just a dim light.

What about your wattage today?

Are you 10 volt? Or what is it? No, 10 watts. Are you 10 watts or 100 watts? Are you walking in the light?

How bright are you today? How bright are you for Jesus? You see some Christians, and they're glowing. They're positively glowing, aren't they? They're beaming.

[11 : 10] You can see they're walking in the light. Not that it's some impression that they put on, some kind of show. But you can see Christ in them. You can see the light. They're walking in the light.

There's a purity. There's a transparency. There's an honesty. There's a holiness there. Because we belong to the light, not to the darkness. We belong to the light. One and all, brothers and sisters, we belong to Christ, who is the light of the world.

And he shines through us. And he speaks to us in Matthew 5.14. He says, You are the light of the world. He's talking about how we conduct our lives. He says you don't put that light under a bushel, under some kind of container.

You don't put some kind of bucket on top of that light. You want it to shine. You put it on the candlestick. You want to put it so it brings light to the whole house, to those that are in the house. And Matthew 5.16, he says, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. That's how we should be.

[12:14] Walking as children of light. Darkness, we know in the Word, it speaks of sin, of unbelief. Or it pictures that. We're not to be in the darkness, but we aim to be in the light.

We're meant to be in the light. We know the Word of God is spoken of as being the light to our way, to our path. Interesting that Jesus did not say, you are the light of the church.

He says, you are the light of the world. The light of the world. So let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

God wants you to shine. To shine. Don't hide your light under a bushel. Don't hide your light from sight. Let it shine. Let it be evident.

Let it be manifest. You have been designed. Brother, sister today, each one of you, you have been designed. Margaret, you've been designed to shed light. To be a sunbeam for Jesus.

[13:15] Amen. You're meant to be a shining light. A radiant, glowing light. Modest. You're a shining light. A shining, bright light. Beam it forth.

Shed it forth. Shine the light. We see in 1 Peter 2 verse 9. It says that you're a chosen generation. He says you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

So we see we are to walk. We are to walk in Christ. Walk in love. We are to walk as children of light. And thirdly in this text, verse 15, we are to walk circumspectly.

Circumspectly. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Now this word has the sense of circum means around. And it means having wits about you.

It means being careful and wise. It means being alert. It's the opposite of walking carelessly. It's to walk carelessly. You know, walking carelessly.

[14:22] Look. Trip over something, don't you? You know, daydreaming, like I do a lot of the time. You can trip over things if you're not walking circumspectly. You can trip.

You can stumble. You can slip. You can fail. Don't walk carelessly. Walk circumspectly. The opposite of that. It's a contrast. It means to walk wisely, to have wisdom.

And wisdom, someone has said, a wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Nobody lives long enough to make them all himself. It's true, isn't it?

Learn about, as you see, others might make mistakes. You don't have to make the same mistake to learn as they have. And someone described wisdom.

They defined wisdom as this. They said, wisdom is simply the ability to make right decisions in harmony with right laws at the right time to produce righteous living.

[15:17] Wisdom. God wants us to be wise, not foolish. And Proverbs 4.7, it says, wisdom is the principal thing. It's the main thing. Therefore, get wisdom, and with all I get in, get understanding.

Wisdom. We're to walk circumspectly. We're to walk carefully, wisely. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Proverbs 9.10.

Now, our text here, it says, verse 14. Awake thou that sleepest. There's some sleepy ones here this morning. I'll notice that.

I don't know what I have to do to get you to wake up. You know, brothers and sisters, don't go to sleep. Please, awake thou that sleepest. Amen. Let God give you life.

Life. And zeal and energy. And further. Maybe you've been working too hard this week. Brother, sister today, don't sleep. There's no time for sleeping. This is what the text is saying to us.

[16:16] And it says wisdom. Wisdom is evident in the person of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1.30 it says, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.

Righteousness, sanctification, redemption. The Lord Jesus is made unto you wisdom. Colossians 2.3 it says, In him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.

Redeem the time, the days of evil. There's no time to play games. It's mindful of us to think about time.

The text we've read talks about redeem the time because the days are evil. Tick, tick, tick. Those seconds are passing by, never to be seen again.

Those segments of time called seconds, they're the measurement of life. By the time you reach the age of 75, the clocks and watches of this world have ticked away a total of nearly 2.5 billion seconds.

[17:22] Now some of you are already there. 2.5 billion seconds. You're billionaires today. That was seconds of time. That you've spent, that hopefully you've not wasted.

You've invested. Those valuable times. There was an old man. He was 94 and he was close to his last days. And he had a zest for life.

And he said this. He said, shortly before he died at the age of 94, he said to a friend, I would willingly stand on the street corners, hat in hand, asking the passers-by to drop their unused minutes into it.

Time. Value it. It's precious. Redeem it. Appreciate the value of time. Every day is a gift. That's why it's called the present. Use your time. Use each day.

As Moses prayed, to apply our hearts to wisdom. Psalm 90 verse 12. Ask the Lord to use those times, those seconds, those minutes, those hours, those days, realising that beyond time lies eternity.

[18:27] Eternity. Someone said this. We do not know how long we have till time for us is past. So let us live as if this day is going to be our last.

What if it were? Have you got right with that one you've offended? With that brother, that sister, that one that you've caused an offence to? Is there time for you to get right with whatever it is that you need to get right?

Get right with God. Most of all, what if today were the last for you? Are you right? Are you ready to meet him? Are you prepared? Thomas Brooks said, we have much work to do in so short a time. And he wrote this. How to use your time wisely. He said, use your time, your souls to save, a God to honour, a Christ to exalt, a hell to escape, a race to run, a crown to win, temptations to withstand, corruptions to conquer, afflictions to bear, mercies to improve, and your generation to serve. Use your time. Make the most of every opportunity. The world says that certain things are just lifestyle choices. Lifestyle choices.

[19:47] God's word doesn't say those things that are acceptable to the world. It's what's acceptable to the Lord. He doesn't say, have a little bit of fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and just accept them.

He says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather, reprove them, speak against them. Something is wrong. Then don't be afraid to say it's wrong.

And most of all, what's wrong with you? With me? What matters is not the world's opinion, what's acceptable to the world, but what's acceptable to God.

In God's opinion, is it right? Is it wrong? And friends, we're urged, each one, be followers of God. In other words, imitate, mimic Him, follow Him, walk after Him, be followers after God, walk in love, walk as children of light, walk circumspectly with wisdom, not carelessly.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we praise Your name and thank You for each one. Lord, that we might walk the walk and not just claim it, but live it, not just profess it, but be that light, not just pretend or hide that light, but display it to shine it, that others might glorify God because of our life.

[21:18] Help each one to realise the preciousness of their life, that we are valuable in Your sight because of the blood that has purchased us, that has made us Your possession. Help us, Lord, to manifest that life to those about us, to help those in darkness to come out into the kingdom of life.

Lord, we ask You to help us, dear Lord God, that we might walk wisely and have our wits around about us so that we don't fall into any traps and snares and trip and slip.

Help us, Lord, to be led by Your Spirit to know You, to live for You. In Jesus' name, Amen.