

Untitled (23)

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[0:00] Good morning. We're continuing in our series through Ephesians.

! We are in chapter 5, and we'll be in verses 3-14 this morning.! And that text is, if you have a pew Bible, it's in page 1162 of your pew Bible.

Page 1162 of the pew Bible. So, Paul had just encouraged us in the passages we studied last week.

And he ended by telling us to not let somethings, to put off somethings and to put on others. And he ended there by saying, be, exhibit the family trait.

Right? He said, be imitators of God. As beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us. A fragrant offering and sacrifice.

[1:09] Be imitators. Act like your father. And then look to the Lord Jesus Christ as an example of what it means to act in that way, in a godly manner.

That was the last admonition he gave us. And he continues now in verse 3-14. There's a book written in the early 1800s called The Expulsive Power of a New Affection.

And the author, he's a Scottish churchman by the name of Thomas Chalmers. He argued that it is not enough to show, as Christians, it's not enough to show that the world, the world as it is, marked by its fertility, its sensuality, its sinfulness, it is not enough to put off those things that are worldly. It is not enough to just say, don't do these things because they are sinful. He says that kind of morality, he argues, is sort of soul killing.

He says it leaves a man with a need for something to love. And he argues that as we put off those things which are worldly, as Christians, what we ought to do is now put on, this is what he means by the power of a new affection, put on what it means to be godly.

[2:42] To fill ourselves with the spiritual virtues. We are not to love sin. In fact, in our new nature, we are unable to love sin.

Because we are now created anew with a new humanity. The Holy Spirit convicting us of our sins. We sorrow over our sins. That is who we are now. And as we are encouraged to hate the sin of our past, we can only successfully do that by replacing those affections of old, that are disordered affections, by replacing them with a new affection, the explosive power of a new affection.

The new affection itself is God. Right? He's the object of that new affection. And God is infinitely more worthy. He's an infinitely more worthy object of our affection and love than those things that we've left behind.

This is the argument that Chalmers make. I like to think that Apostle Paul preceded Dr. Chalmers in coming to this conclusion about the human heart.

This is what Paul has been saying in these verses. Put off these things that are marked by the old man. And put on these new things that are who you are now.

[4:03] This new affection. And grow in these new affections. Walk closer in godliness. This is the power of a new affection that Paul is admonishing us to take on.

And as he continues in a series of things to put off and what to put on, he tells us in verse 3, Sexual immorality, all impurity or covetousness must not be named among you as is proper among sins.

Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. Now, the word sexual immorality, we're familiar with that word actually.

It's the word from which we get the word pornography. It's pornea in the Greek. And it covers all sexual activities outside the bonds of marriage.

And repeat that. It covers all sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage. And this is what Paul means. None of these things should mock you as believers in Jesus Christ. So sexual immorality, impurity, literally, this means any substance that is filthy or dirty.

[5:19] And in the context that Paul uses it, he's talking, it's probably referring, it's likely, most likely referring to sexual deviances. And then the third thing he says shouldn't mock them as covetousness or greed.

Greed that leads to insatiable desire for wealth at all costs. Another word for that is avarice. It's the demand for never being satisfied.

The kind of greed that makes one a miser. Hoarding wealth, unwilling to be generous with the blessing that God has given us. He says these things should not mock who you are.

Let them not be even named among you. Paul admonishes us. And then he goes on. No filthiness. He actually expands on those first three things.

There are many ways in which even as sexual immorality, impurity, and coyness are not mocked among us. There are many ways in which there's a longing in the human heart for these things that are gold.

[6:24] So he's saying even filthiness is a foolish talk and crude joking. The kind of talk that demeans and objectifies people. The kind of talk that reveals a heart devoted to impurity.

Do not let that be named among you. Clever wit. Clever wit is a good thing. I'm not, I love to be among friends. I have a few friends who are, I'm not as witty, but I have friends who are witty. They're good company. Clever wit is a good thing. But there's a kind of clever wit that is, that is masterful at tearing people down.

Making them objects of ridicule. Don't let that be named among you, Paul says. Mean-spirited humor. Crude joking. Humor is also a good thing.

These are all blessings from God. But marked by the whole self. There's a way in which they turn and to dehumanize and don't point to a godliness, a Christ-likeness.

[7:29] So he says, don't let any of these things be named among you. These things, Paul says, are out of place. What he says is, they're not, they're not, they don't fit you anymore.

Because you are now children of God. Now you're wearing clothes that are, that do not fit you. It's, it's, put them off then, Paul says.

You know, the likely context for all of these things, as Paul writes to an Ephesian church, that is a Gentile, largely Gentile church, is that they would have been in their worship, in their Gentile worship, all of these things would probably be things that are just part of their lives.

Even in a Gentile, pagan worship of a Ephesian Gentile, there would have been temple prostitutes. There would have been all of these sexual immoralities that is part and parcel of even their, their worship.

And he says, do not let these be named among you. You are now new, you are set apart. Do not let them be named among you. There's a setting for these. There will be this, these things that mark their walk, their regular life.

[8:43] Filthiness, foolish talk, crude joking. Put them off, he says. He tells them. And he tells us. And he said, what is the, what is the remedy that Paul offers to all of these?

He says, instead, we are to engage in thanksgiving. That seems a curious remedy for all the things that he just said.

Thanksgiving, you sure that's it? That's all? There needs to be more than that. But I think Paul offers this in a practical way.

And it's actually a practical spiritual discipline that guards our hearts from sexual immorality, from imperial and conventionness, from filthiness, from foolish talk, from crude joking.

A heart of thanksgiving, Paul admonishes us, if we put that on, allows us to see people in light of God's word. Because we see ourselves in light of God's word.

[9:45] And we are thankful for God's marvelous grace that's been extended to us. And then we are grateful to God as the giver of all good things. A heart of thanksgiving that stems from that.

Even the gifts given to other brothers and sisters among us. You see your brother and sister and you say, I am so thankful that God has gifted that person with that gift to equip the church, to make the body stronger.

So there is no room for envy. There's no room for covetousness. There's no room for tearing down. A heart that grows in the discipline of thanksgiving, of gratitude towards God, allows us to focus on God rather than ourself.

Do you know that the heart, the root of all of these things that Paul asked us to put off, is the root of it is the worship of the self. And you see that in our culture, don't you?

In the world around us. It is the worship, the man, the personal man, and their feelings and identities become God and the truth by which all other things are measured.

[10 : 54] Paul says, not so with you who are in Christ. Put them off. Focus. Have a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving that is focused on God rather than on the self.

A thankful heart that is positioned to love and serve God and obedience rather than seeking self-gratification in sexual sin or greed.

These are the things, this is the remedy that Paul offers us. In order to counter the sins that he listed here in the first two verses.

And he continues, he tells us, For you may be sure, Here's a warning, but it's actually indicative fact that Paul is saying.

For you may be sure that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure or who is convectuous, that is, an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

[11 : 54] Paul is saying, People will exhibit these traits as unrepentant sinners in an unrepentant manner, revealed by their actions that they are not in Christ, and therefore they are not heirs of his kingdom.

And people who live in such unrepentant disobedience are destined, Paul says, for the wrath of God. Now I need to make a distinction here. Remember we said that because we now are a new nature, we're convicted of sin.

We sorrow over our sins. But we are all men and women with clay feet. We all sin. We constantly fall short of the glory of God. So I don't want you to say, Oh man, these are still things that I fall into. These are sins that are still periodically marked my life. But the distinction between those who are in Christ and those who are unrepentant sinners, hear me please, is that there is a conviction of sin. There is sorrow, godly sorrow over your sin. So I don't want you to go away here and think, Well, I still fall into these sins. I struggle with some of these sins.

[13 : 13] I struggle with pornography. I struggle with lustful thinking. I struggle with greed. What Paul is telling us is to monitor, to continue to, Remember we said that putting off and putting on marks the whole life of the Christian.

We don't once put something off and then put something on and that's it. We are constantly putting off the whole self. Because we live in this flesh. We are constantly warring against it.

And our life in Christ is continually marked by a putting off and a constant putting on of Christ's virtues. Putting on Christ himself.

Right? And so if your life is marked by sorrow over sin, if you're convicted of your sin and you turn to Christ and ask for forgiveness, and you fall on his mercy, which is abundantly yours, and you receive grace from him and forgiveness, you are in Christ.

You are not under wrath. You are under grace. But if your life is marked by an unrepentant manner, no conviction of sin, no sorrow over a life of obstinate disobedience, Paul is warning you and I, that's actually telling.

[14 : 33] That's a telling thing. That you are not in Christ. You do not have the Spirit of God. Turn to Christ. Fall on his mercy. Receive Jesus Christ today. And ask for forgiveness.

That is the warning for us. And he continues in verse 6, Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, because of these things that he has listed for us to put up, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Notice, he's making a distinction. Sons of disobedience who have been devoted to wrath of God and judgment. Because of these things, the wrath of God comes.

Do not be deceived by empty words. People might say, Well, you're now in Christ. Jesus Christ is a loving, forgiving, gracious Father. He forgives all things. You can do whatever you want.

He forgives. This is actually some of the lies that were propping up in the early church. And we see it in our days as well. There are no demands on you.

[15 : 34] Christ is a loving God. Love wins. We say, that's the term we use in our culture now. Love wins. But it's the kind of love that doesn't make any demands. That's the love of our culture.

God's love makes demands on you and I, as Chris's. As people of the family of God. God's love makes demands that you and I ought to be reflecting our Father.

Be Christ's life. So, do not be deceived by those who say, God does not make demands on your life. God does not demand holiness and faithfulness and obedience.

Do not be partners with them. Paul continues. Do not become partners with them. This is really interesting. The word that Paul uses about do not become partners with them is the same word he had used earlier in chapter 3, verse 6.

When he says that Gentiles and Jews are now partners together. In Christ. Both having full and equal participation in the life of God.

[16:46] We are now Gentiles and Jews in Christ. Full partners in the life of God. Paul then says, you who are in Christ. Full partners in the life of God. Do not go back and be partners with the world.

Do not be partners with those who are doing the work of disobedience. The work of wickedness. And he reminds them. I know it can be tempting. You were once like that.

You were once. In verse 8 he says, at one time you were darkness. But now you are light in the Lord. So walk as children of light. Paul turns now to the metaphor of light and darkness.

In the remainder of these verses. There is nothing more drastic than light and darkness. And there is no more drastic way to describe our life in Christ.

And our former state outside of Christ. And look the way he says it. He says, you were darkness. Remember that Paul has said before.

[17:53] When he talks about the futility of the mind. Darkened in our minds and our thoughts. Alienated from God. Inside our heart is darkened. Now in Christ. Our heart has been illuminated.

By Christ Jesus himself. Who is the light of the world. So that we bear Christ in our hearts. We ourselves are now children of light. We ourselves are lights in the world.

And he says, the fruit of light. The manner in which you know your children of light. Is that the fruit of light is found in all that is good.

And right. And true. Goodness. Righteousness. Truth. These are things that exemplify God himself. These are traits of our father.

And so, if you are in Christ. Children of the living God. Goodness. Righteousness. And truth. Should also mark your life. There should be traits.

[18:52] Family traits. That should be seen in you. And I. And he says, these are. This is who you are. So walk in these things. Walk as children of light. Exhibit the traits of people who are in the light.

Goodness. The goodness of God. Righteousness. Pursuit of righteousness. Truth. And try to discern. In fact. IESV says try to.

It really. The Greek says discerning. It's just a continuous thing. Right. Discerning. Your life should be marked. By discerning.

What is pleasing to the Lord. Discerning. Discerning requires critical judgment. Doesn't it? That's the. Discerning means to sit.

And weigh things. And make a judgment about it. Critical judgment in determining the proper ethical behavior as Christians. you know not all situations that we face as believers in the world are spelled out in scripture no the bible is our guide for life but not every scenario of your life will be spelled out how do you do when that co-worker comes to you and says let's cut let's cut corners this way well let me look in hebrews no no that's not there in the bible the guidelines are there so what what paul is admonishing us to do is people of god having the word of god as our guideline having the spirit of god in us that is that should empower us and give us the tools to discern what is right what is pleasing to the lord we have the tools to make discernment if you're in christ you have the tools you have god's word which is your guideline you have the spirit of god which convicts you of sin which leads you in righteousness to make the proper discernment to know what is pleasing to the lord do you see how organic and natural what paul is saying here he's already saying you are in the family and so you have the family you have the tools as members of the family to know what is pleasing to your father and he continues to warn them take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them here is here is an important aspect of what paul is saying there the distinction between light and darkness don't take part in the unfruitful works of darkness remember that he has said light is it's exemplified by goodness righteousness and truth and then he uses what take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness darkness is death in every arena and even in the natural world look at plants what do plants need good soil good water and light to grow when they're in darkness and don't have access to light they are unfruitful yes here's the same it's true also in a spiritual in a spiritual realm and paul is admonishing us we are to take no part in the works in the works of darkness instead we are to expose them how do we do that how do we expose the works

of darkness well our lord himself says it in matthew 5 he says to us you are light you are the light of the world right and he says let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven do you know that as believers in jesus christ as you live faithfully standing on god's promises discerning what is right using god's word as your guideline and the spirit of god enabling you you will stand out in the midst of darkness you're light you're in the midst of darkness you will stand out and because you stand out your faithfulness your goodness your righteousness your truth you live in a life that exhibits the character traits of what it means to be in the family of god will expose

[23:42] just by the very fact of you being faithful will expose the darkness around you why do you think the world hated christ why do you think the world hates christians when they're faithful why do you think persecution comes it's because they are light and the world hates the light and so if you are faithful you will by the very fact of your faithfulness expose light this is why paul's admonition is important to not to partake in the works of unproofness not to partner with those who are children of darkness because when we do that what we actually do is what paul our lord himself says in in matthew 5 it's like having the light you know a city on the hill and a lamp and covering it up it is of no use then right but rather let our light shine before others so that they may see your good works now does that mean that it's something that's you know it is it's something that should mark our life but would that be easy to do in a world full of darkness no to let your light shine in the midst of darkness means you will face opposition you will face danger perhaps even you will face hatred people will despise you but you are not alone in that people of god people who have the traits of the family of god have always been despised by the world

Paul continues and he says he ends it and says it is shameful he brought in all these things out right it's shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible for anything that becomes visible is light therefore it says awake or sleep and rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you it is shameful even to speak of what they do in secret now there's a warning here for the aspect of god's trait of truth right the truth exposes truth is a as a as part of the light it's a it's a character of light it exposes that which is in hidden places it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret it means also that in our whole life we ought to watch ourselves mock ourselves by exposing the things the secret things of of our own ways of affinity to the darkness or to the past the warning there is first for us

I think to look into to look inward when sin is allowed to remain in secret and in darkness it continues to decay and causes rottenness in the body when it is brought to light when it is brought to light and confessed because Christ forgives and we have forgiveness when it's brought to light and it's confessed and we have we receive Christ's forgiveness and we walk in in the light of the day those things would those things are not allowed to fester the light is a disinfectant and so we ought not to be people that work in secret also we ought to be people who are willing to speak the truth of God's word at all times and stand on the truth of God's word at all times it is shameful to join and to partner with the world in their darkness it tells a lie about who we are as Christians and this is the this is this is where we are as Christians in in the world that more and more our walking in light our exhibit exhibiting the family trait will make us even more noticeable in the world meaning we have a target on our back

I don't say that to scare us I say that to say this is what the Bible actually tells us but remember what Christ has said he has overcome the world right we are on the victorious side and Paul continues and he says in verse 13 but when anything is exposed by light it becomes visible right light is a disinfectant anything that for anything that becomes visible is light therefore it says awake oh sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you so as as the light of God sanctifies us as believers in Christ Jesus renews us helps us to be more and more like Christ and take on the family trait in the same way we bear that light to the world and we can say to the world the gospel message is that the dead should arise to awake arise from the dead

Christ will shine on you Christ is the light that the world needs Christ is the one that illuminates all the darkness in the world around us as the people of God that is the light we bear our light is derivative from Christ who is the true light the light of the world when we try to carry another light when we think our own self-righteousness is what will turn the world to us when we think that the righteousness is inherent in us the warning here is we might be in for a pitfall but when we carry Christ's light to the world there's no opposition we have the victory of Christ we bear Christ himself in our hearts and this is an encouragement to us and it's a warning these passages this is the

warning is to take on

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