

Session 4

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Preacher: Brian Tung

- [0 : 00] Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's will is.
- Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
- Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- It's good together again tonight. We've been working through the book of Ephesians and I'm going to suggest that I'm going to try to set the bar really, really high.
- Not in my preaching but in terms of what the Word hopefully will achieve tonight. If you're feeling tired and weak and besieged and spiritually dry, perhaps what you need in your life, in your spiritual life, is to be Spirit-filled.
- [1 : 23] And that's what we're going to be talking about tonight. I'm hoping that we'll walk away tonight having a clear understanding of what it means to be Spirit-filled.
- And as a result, walk away from tonight being Spirit-filled. We have seen in the book of Ephesians the work of the Father who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.
- We have considered the work of the Son. It is in Him that we receive the blessing from the Father.
- And tonight, or this afternoon, we'll consider the work of the Spirit to complete the picture of the work of God for us.
- But firstly, one of the great things in spending the weekend on a book is that we can actually see the coherency, the argument, the flow of the book.
- [2 : 29] But just so that if you can indulge me, I'll repeat a little bit of the flow of the book. Paul often writes from the indicative to the imperative, if you know what I mean.
- Indicative means what happens, what has happened. Imperative is what you must do. It's sort of like command. And often in the way Paul writes, the first half of his writing would be in the indicative, what God has done, He's blessed us, He's reconciled us in Jesus, He's caused us to be born again, and He's made us into a new humanity, the indicative.
- Once He's established the indicative, He moves on to the imperative, the implications of the indicative. Since God has done all this, what does it mean for us?
- This is where the rubber hits the road. And the imperative starts for us in the book of Ephesians, Ephesians 4.1, which we looked at this morning.
- But it might be worthwhile to cast our eyes to there again. If you have your Bibles in front of you, it will be good to open them to Ephesians 4.1.
- [3 : 55] So having seen what God has done, He then turns to, well, what does it mean for us, to those of us who have been born again, reconciled to God?

Chapter 4, verse 1. As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. The indicative is, you have been called, you've been made new, so live like it.

The reality is, you've been changed as people live. So start, chapter 4, verse 1, is almost a heading for the rest of the book.

Chapter 4 to 6. We are to walk in newness of life. We are to walk in holiness. That is, in a way that pleases God, and in a way that is dramatically opposed to the life that we used to live, and to those around us.

4.17. Well, what does that life of holiness look like? Chapter 5 is the beginning of it.

[5 : 03] Chapter 5, verse 1 and 2. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly beloved children. So we are to live like God. We're to imitate God. Well, what does that mean?

Are we to be tall like God? To be strong like God? No. No. In verse 2, he explains. To imitate God, to live a new life in Christ, means to live a life of love.

God is love. So his children are, therefore, to love. Just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice. So this is what... And the rest of the chapter is an exposition, is an explanation of what a life of love look like.

There will not be any sexual immorality. Sexual immorality is profoundly unloving. The children of God are to be like God.

And verse 8, it means that we walk in the light, not in darkness. And verse 15 to 21, which is our passage, continues in that instruction, in the imperative.

[6 : 18] And he used the word living or walking. And let's have a look at that again. In light of what God has done, verse 15 of chapter 5, we are to be careful how we are to live, not as unwise, but as wise.

The children of God live lives of love and in the light, but we are also to live wisely. Why is that?

And he gives us the motivation. If you look a little bit early in the passage that we looked at today, starting in verse 8, this is what he says.

For once you were... Sorry. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. For the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

And find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

[7 : 29] But everything exposed by the light becomes visible. For it is light that makes everything visible. Et cetera, et cetera. There is an exposure of the darkness.

We are to be part of the process of exposing that darkness. A little bit earlier on in chapter 5, particularly in verses 5 and 6, it talks about the judgment of God. In fact, that provides the motivation for the wise living.

If the judgment of God is about to come, if the axe is about to fall, we are to live wisely. Okay? The insanity, sorry, the definition of insanity supposedly, according to Einstein, is to do the same thing over and over again and to expect different results.

You know, that's insane. That is, that is what a fool would do. The wise person learns, adopt, adept.

You see, you make a mistake and you change your behavior so that a different outcome would ensue. Fools, on the other hand, they don't learn.

[8 : 47] That's what, by definition, a foolish person. And the wise understands the future. The wise understands that the judgment of God is about to come on the unrighteousness and the wickedness on our world.

And as a result, they learn. And when they learn, verse 16, they make the most of their time. They make the most of every opportunity because they know that the days are evil.

Literally, they redeem the time. They are careful how they invest the time that they have. I don't know whether you have thought about how much time that you have.

This could be your last night on earth. Could be. What would you want to be investing your time in? And I'm glad that you're here investing your time here rather than at home watching TV, playing computer game, or being selfish, shopping, gorging yourself with food.

We are here making the most of our time. That's what it means to be wise in light of the judgment of God.

[10 : 02] Verse 17, therefore, don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. It's a different way of saying the same thing.

Don't be an idiot. Don't be a fool. Live wisely, and living wisely, redeeming the time means to find out what the will of the Lord is. Verses 18 to 21.

Don't get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father before everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. The reason why I went on about living wisely and not being a fool in light of God's judgment is that it kind of ties in with the bit I really want to focus on, being Spirit-filled.

For 18 to 21, I believe, is not a new command. In fact, it's an explanation of what it means to be wise. To be wise, to find out the will of God, is to be filled with the Spirit.

[11 : 17] The different ways of saying the same thing. Of course, it begs the question, what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? I don't know what you think it means.

If you were to take the English literally, it's, you know, you are a vessel and the Spirit fills you up. And when you're drained of the Spirit, you need another fresh filling of the Spirit.

If you take the metaphor literally, is that what it means? Firstly, if we were to understand the phrase being filled with the Spirit, you see immediately the context is a contrast.

If you look at 18 again, it says, don't get drunk on wine. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Spirit is intended to be a contrast.

There's the drinking, being drunk, and being filled with the Spirit. If you can imagine, it's literally, instead of being filled with wine, Spirit, be filled with the Spirit.

[12 : 29] So that's actually the contrast. Don't be filled by Spirit, but be filled with the Spirit. It's not that I believe the Ephesian church had a problem with drunkenness, not like the typical Aussie sort of situation.

We don't know, but I don't think that's the case. But rather, drunkenness and all that entails kind of epitomizes the ways of darkness.

If you want to picture a world without God not knowing what the future will hold in response to the evil of the day where there is no hope and no future, what would that world look like?

It would look like the city of Sydney on a Saturday night. It would look like service paradise after the HSC. Where there is no future and you want to forget the past, you get drunk.

You fill yourself with spirit. When you experience the evil of the day, a boring marriage, unruly kids, you seek to escape.

[13 : 50] They escape the evil of the day and so you gorge yourself with spirit. That leads to debauchery. And Paul says, in light of the coming judgment of God, we are to live wisely.

To find the will of God, instead of being filled with spirit, we are to fill with the spirit. Actually, again, when we ask the question, what does it mean to be filled with the spirit?

There is a little bit of a tricky thing and it is a matter of translation. If you look at verse 18, the command, and it is a command, it is an imperative, it says, be filled with the spirit.

You see the little word, and they're always the important words, the little word, the preposition. Does anyone know what a preposition is?

Of course, Leslie is going to explain it to me, isn't she? Libby, what's the preposition? You should leave a sentence with. Thank you.

[15 : 03] Yes. The little linking words that you get in sentences, like by, off, with, and in this case, we are told to be filled with the spirit.

There is another way of translating that preposition, and that is not be filled with the spirit, the same word that in English is translated with, could be translated by, which gives us a very different picture.

So the command is not so much to be filled with the spirit, that is the content of the filling, it's the spirit, but rather being filled by the spirit.

In other words, the subject, the one who does the filling, is the spirit. Very different, isn't it? If we are to translate that sentence by, the proposition is by, what this is saying is, ask the spirit to fill you.

The spirit does the filling, we are the ones being filled. Of course, if the spirit does the filling, rather than we're being filled with the spirit, that is the content of the filling, what are we being filled with?

[16 : 21] the book of Ephesians, if you look through it, uses language of filling, or fullness, quite a bit.

If you go back to chapter 1, verse 23, if you cast your eyes, sorry, I'm flicking my iPad, 1, 23, or 22, 23, the purposes of God for the universe in history, and he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

So I'm reading from the ESV. In other words, talking about the church, the church has the fullness of Christ. So the church, as it were, us are filled with Christ.

1, 19. No, not 1, 19, sorry. 2, 9.

Let's try 2, 9. That's not right as well, 2, 2, 19, is it? 2, 19, is it?

[17 : 39] 2, 19, is it? 2, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 20, this is a problem when you write down references and, yes.

Well, the reference I was looking for is Jesus having the fullness of God. But as Mario was saying, Paul prays that the Ephesians might be fulfilled to the fullness of God.

So two slightly different pictures. On the one hand, the church is fulfilled with the fullness of Christ, 1, 23. On the other hand, Paul is asking that they might be filled to the fullness of God as well too.

So we're filled, but we're being filled. 4, 13, the goal of, so let me just double check to make sure that that's actually right. 4, 13, starting from 11, and he that is the risen Christ gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The direction of the growth of the church is to the fullness of Christ. We are filled with the fullness of Christ and we're being filled.

[19 : 09] That's where we're traveling. That is the goal of the church. And 5, 18, what are we to be filled with? And I take it, if Paul's being consistent at that point, what we're asking the Spirit to do is to fill us with the fullness of God and of Christ.

In other words, the Spirit of God is at work to transform us into the likeness of the Father and the Son.

We are to be filled by the Spirit. We are to walk in step with the Spirit, to be subject to the control of the Spirit so that we'll continue to be, to keep growing into the likeness of Christ, be imitators of God, Paul says.

In other words, we are to, and this is a parallel passage from Colossians, we are to let Christ's Word rule in our lives. And I want to demonstrate that once again with the contrast that Paul sets up.

Don't be filled by Spirit, but be filled by the Spirit. What happens when people are filled by grog? Again, cast your mind to Schoolies Week, which is last week, right?

[20 : 44] I don't know. It's still on. When, you know, imagine all the teenagers up in Queensland, and they're filled by Spirit, what happens?

They get blurry-eyed, they stagger, they lose control. They lose control of themselves, and they do all sorts of things.

Instead of controlling themselves, what controls them? It's the alcohol, isn't it? When you're filled by Spirit, the Spirit takes control.

The contrast is don't be filled, don't be controlled by alcohol, but rather be controlled by the Spirit of God. walk in step with the Spirit, obey the Word of God, as the Spirit makes you more and more like Christ.

Our days are evil. The judgment of God is about to fall. The axe is at the foot of the tree. You do not escape the evil of our day, but we, as the people of God, are to confront the evil of our day.

[21 : 57] We do not confront the evil by losing control, by running away from it, but we confront the evil of our day by walking in step with the Spirit.

And look at the consequence. Being drunk, being controlled by Spirit, leads to debauchery. But being filled by the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit, leads to what?

verse 19. Sorry, flicking through. If you're filled by the Spirit, it affects your...

Okay? it changes the way you speak.

We are to... If you are filled by the Spirit, you will then speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. You will sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.

[23 : 09] You will always be giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus. And if you're filled by the Spirit, you will be submissive.

Submit to one another out of reference for Christ. Singing. If you're a Spirit-filled Christian, filled by the Spirit, you will sing.

By the way, in verse 19, it's not talking about two different activities. There are two sentences there, two clauses. It's not talking about... But the same activity from two perspectives.

One perspective is a horizontal dimension. When you come to church to sing, you are singing to one another.

one another. That's what happens. You edify, you instruct, you exhort, you admonish one another with your singing. Did you realise that?

[24 : 16] When you were singing those songs, one of the objects of your singing is actually me and you and each other. You are to sing to one another.

You are to speak to one another in those songs, to encourage them. And I wonder whether this is what you have in mind when you sing.

When you sing to one another, whether you have in mind what you are encouraging them with. But it's not just singing to one another.

The second half of the verse talks about us singing to the Lord Jesus Christ. There isn't just a horizontal dimension to our singing. There is a vertical dimension.

we are to praise the Lord with our whole being, with joyfulness, with not like, if I dare say, and this is dangerous ground at which I tread, not like the half-hearted Anglo-Saxon stuff, you know, hands by the side, you know.

[25 : 21] Perhaps this is something that we can learn from our charismatic brothers and sisters. When we sing, we join our hearts to the Lord, you know, it's with our whole being. When we are filled by the Spirit, we are to sing wholeheartedly.

We are to sing lovingly, lovingly. We are to think of the other person. We are to edify them, to instruct them, and in this way we sing praise to the Lord.

The second thing that happens is we will be filled with thanksgiving. Christians will not only sing, but we will give thanks to the Lord for the, you know, that ought to, that really ought to, and it wouldn't be hard for us to be marked out to be different to the rest of the world.

There's someone I, well, we are among friends. I don't know, is this going to go public? Anyway, okay. Well, there is a guy that I know, and every time I see him on a Friday morning, nothing but complain.

Every single bit, you know, the surf is bad, the coffee is bad, this is bad, you know, this is the typical Aussie and Chinese in Australia.

[26 : 48] Unthankfulness. Nothing is good enough. Just grumbling all the time. And if you look at Romans 1.18, one of the mark of the depraved, the wicked, is their unthankfulness.

And yet one of the, do you remember Jesus healing the ten lepers? Only one came back to do what? The others were unthankful.

Thankfulness marks the Christian out to be different to everybody else. Thankfulness permeates our being and are obvious to others. But something rather disturbing here when you look at thankfulness.

Verse 20, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything. Very inclusive sort of language, always, we get that.

So, but for everything? Does Paul really mean that? We are to give thanks for everything? Sure, we can give thanks for the good stuff, healthy children, good marriage, sunshine.

[28 : 07] But are we, is Paul saying that we are to give thanks when we break our leg? You know, somebody trips over and we say, thank God for that, for unemployment, for unanswered prayers, periods of doubt and depression, genocide, for evil?

Are we to give thanks for those things? Yes, in all things, we are told by Paul in Romans 8, God worked for the good of those who love him and we are to thank him for that.

But just to make sure that we are reading this right, the point here is not so much giving thanks to God for the circumstances for which praise is to be offered, rather we are to thank God for the rich blessings he has lavished us with in every and each circumstance.

This harks back to Ephesians 1 where we are told that we are given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. Paul isn't saying that evil is good and God is to be praised, but rather we are to direct our thanks and praise to the source of all things, God the Father who has blessed us in Christ with all things.

So if you're thinking, okay, what I really need in terms of fine and belly to keep going as a Christian, then what I would say is you need to be spirit filled, not be filled with the spirit, but by the spirit.

[29 : 40] If you feel by the spirit, it will change the way you sing. It will change the way you your thankfulness or lack of thankfulness.

But lastly, it will change the way you relate to other people. For verse 21 tells us that the spirit-filled life is a life of submission. And this is where I'm going to get you to do the work.

Because we haven't really programmed in, or that's not my preaching passage, and we're not going to have a chance to look at this tomorrow. So I'm going to get you guys to look at verses 22 to chapter 6, 1 to 9.

Okay? With the people around you, and kind of discuss, well, what does spirit-filled Christian relationship look like for you?

How would that change Christian marriage? How would it change parent and child relationship? You might want to discuss that with your dad or not. And how would that change your relationship with your master, for those of you who are slaves?

[31 : 06] That is parents and kids again. Yeah. Okay, so I'll give you, how long do I have, Sam? Whenever. What about five, seven minutes?

They're fairly familiar. Turn to the people around you. Have we read through it? Oh, look, I'll give you ten minutes. Five minutes to read through it, and another five minutes just to talk to people around you. It certainly is.

It certainly is. It changes the direction. In fact, somebody said that, and I'll throw it up there, marriage is a creation ordinance, so it testifies something about how God has created the universe.

But Christian marriages is actually a redemption ordinance. So it actually points to something even better. It testifies, it signals, it shows, it directs to redemption rather than just creation.

Just to share another story about marriage as well, too, I told this at one of the weddings. A lady, there was a couple getting married and they were being counselled and one of the sessions that came back to the minister and said, we're calling this off.

[32 : 31] And the minister said, why are you doing that? And the lady said, look, we were talking about what to do with our finances and we had two accounts and my fiancé wants us to have one account after we get married and I just can't do that.

I need to have my own account and my own money. And I don't know what you would say in that instance. business. And so he said to her, look, think of it this way, if you can't trust this man with your money, then maybe you shouldn't be marrying him.

Submission has, I think, a lot to do with trust. You're entrusting your future, your well-being to someone into their hand and you can't trust him with your money, then what are you doing entrusting him with your life?

And of course to the husband he said, look, she's entrusting her whole being to you, what are you going to do with it? Are you going to abuse her trust? It's a fairly high standard when someone hands their future and their being into your hands.

It's a very high standard of care, as it were. Any other? Steve? So in that respect, the outer reverence for Christ is a really important condition, isn't it?

[34 : 05] Ultimately, we're saying, who are we trusting? Are we just trusting the man or the woman? Ultimately, we're actually trusting God or the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we trust him enough to protect us when we are being in a vulnerable position?

Or do we keep thinking that we need to protect ourselves? Do we trust the Lord enough as husbands to love our wives in the same way? Or do we think that we need to protect ourselves as well too?

So ultimately, it's actually, who do we really trust? Do we trust the Lord? And that's a high level of trust as well too. Anything on parents and kids? Kids?

We're all kids. We're all children. Parents? No?

Spirit-filled parenting? Spirit-filled children? Same issues of trust, I think, and submission.

[35 : 20] Kids are very vulnerable. We're entrusting our well-being to our parents. And I suppose it begs the question, do we really trust the Lord Jesus enough to do that?

Okay, being filled by the Spirit of God. We might finish up. It's not, I think we tend to think of Spirit-filledness as something spooky.

You know, when the Spirit fills us, you know, it changes. Well, it does change us, but the type of things that Paul is concerned about is really practical. Spirit-filled Christians are loving husbands, trusting wives, good employees, people who paid a mortgage on time, and things like that.

If you want to assess people's spirituality, humanity, don't, you know, judge them or us or yourself by, you know, like things that are spooky or mystical or whatever it is.

Look at how they relate to their husbands and wives and kids and parents and people at work. You know, this is where the rubber hits the road. Well, how does the Spirit work in filling us?

[36 : 46] Paul says, I think this is from Steve's passage. If I can take you back to chapter 3, and this is where I'll finish. Chapter 3, verse 14.

For this reason, I bar my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in life, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The way the Spirit works is, if you ask him, he will give you power, and if you're tired, and if you're dry, what you need to do is to go to God right now and ask him for power.

It's a very evangelical thing to say, by the way. Ask him for power, the spiritual power, and when you have that power, do you know what will happen? To lead you to this Spirit-filled life?

He will give you understanding of the love of God. God. That's what the Spirit will do.

[38 : 05] The Spirit will strengthen you in the inside by reminding you, explaining to you in ways that you cannot imagine how much God loves you.

What you need to know is the love of God to live the type of life that Paul is talking about. Let's give any thought about Hal and we have a