

A New Way to Be Human

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[0 : 0 0] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Ephesians chapter 5, beginning in verse 15. I'm going to read all the way to verse 21. So Ephesians chapter 5, verse 15. Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise.

Making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing a making melody to the Lord with all your heart. Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 1 4] Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. This is the word of the Lord. Praise to you, God. Amen. Mark Twain once said that life would be infinitely happier if we could be born at the age of 80 and gradually approach 18.

But alas, we all are old and getting older. You know, for me, getting older means regular eye exam. Now, you used to have great eyesight, but age and books have taken their toll.

And each year, it gets progressively worse. And you hit 40 and it's like falling off a cliff, you know, and it changes rapidly. So I make my annual visit to the optometrist.

As I sit in the chair, they ask me to take out my contacts and look at the graph on the other side of the wall, the pyramid-shaped graph with the big letters on the top and the small letters down on the bottom, and ask me to read as much as I can of that pyramid.

I can barely see any of them without help. Thus begins the process of zeroing in my sight. They lower a contraption over my eyes to look through and ask me to recite the letters again.

[2 : 3 2] I can see more of the letters, but eventually I can't see. They add more and more magnification so that I can recite the letters.

I can read now as they increase that magnification until I can read the graph pretty clearly. Then they cut out the lights and they want to make what I can read even clearer.

And that's when the optometrist gets uncomfortably close to you, two inches from your face, and says, do you like one or two? Two A or two B? Two C or two D?

Three or four? And it's super anxiety-producing. You're like, I don't know, three or four. Can I see three again? No, it's four. Definitely maybe three. Let's go back. What's going on?

But gradually, after about ten minutes, they zero in. He writes me a new prescription and I'm on my way. I can see again. Birds have color again.

[3 : 31] The Christian life is a bit like receiving a new pair of glasses. The glasses of the Holy Spirit. Without the glasses of the Spirit, we cannot see and understand the truth of the gospel.

Scripture is clear. We're dead in sin and must be born again by the Spirit. We're darkened in our understanding, as we learn in chapter 4. And need the light of the Spirit. No one comes to understand the truth of God apart from the work of the Spirit of God.

You remember when Jesus was at Caesarea Philippi with his disciple. He says, who do you say that I am? Simon Peter, ever the one to step up and announce his answer.

He says, you are the Christ. Blessed. And he said, blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And we know he's revealed it by the Spirit of God. But what if after coming to Christ, we took the glasses of the Holy Spirit off?

[4 : 29] What would happen? Now, if I went home with my new prescription. And took those glasses off and kept wearing my old prescription. I know exactly what would happen.

I wouldn't be able to see. And yet, many Christians, in so many ways, take the glasses off of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was given to us to help us see and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But it was also given to us to live an entirely new life. A life empowered by the Spirit. In Galatians, Paul says we've got to walk by the Spirit.

Be led by the Spirit. Keep in step with the Spirit. Bear the fruit of the Spirit. Sow to the Spirit. The Christian life is a spiritual life.

Gordon Fee, in his wonderful volume, says, For Paul, the Spirit, as an experienced and living reality, was the absolutely crucial matter for the Christian life from beginning to end.

[5 : 39] The Spirit, as an experienced and living reality, was the absolutely crucial matter for the Christian life from beginning to end. The idea is that without the Holy Spirit, Christianity is just a philosophy, a code of conduct, a religion.

But with the Holy Spirit, Christianity is a life. A life to live. Where we're going, in a word, let us be continually filled with the Spirit, magnifying God together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So let's be continually filled with the Spirit, magnifying God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. The first heading, we're going to break it out in, is the need of the hour.

The need of the hour. You know, the book of Chronicles talks about the sons of Issachar. They stood out because they knew the times. And so, the Lord is urging us to understand the times.

He directs our attention not to the ungodliness of the culture, though, or the corruption of our cultural moment. He directs our attention to how the gospel has changed everything.

[6 : 47] Now, you remember, we come into this section. We were learning last week about how to walk in the light. Learning about the unfruitful works of darkness that fill this world that we're not supposed to be party with.

But instead, to expose. And then he begins to tell us to watch our step now. To walk differently. Look in verse 15. He says, look carefully then how you walk.

It's the sixth time the Apostle Paul has used this metaphor of walking. What he's saying, there's a different way to live now. There's a new way to be human now. There's a new way to walk.

You must not return to your old manner of life. It's so easy to stumble and fall if you do not watch your step. But watching your step is not just important when walking through a pasture or hiking.

You need to watch your step to live the Christian life. If you're going to live the Christian life, the idea is you must be careful. You must pay close attention to your life.

[7 : 47] No one drifts into following Jesus Christ. Otherwise, this walk is the wrong direction the whole way. So he continues and describes how we're to walk with these two contrasts.

And you see them in the text. Not, but, not, but. Curse three times. Look there in verse 15. We continue. Look carefully how you walk. Not as unwise, but as wise.

Verse 17. Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Not unwise, not foolish.

And there would be great value in talking about wisdom and how to walk wisely. And going to Proverbs and other places to talk about how to live a wise life. But that's not mainly what these contrasts are about.

These verses are trying to make clear we're supposed to live completely different because of what God has done in Jesus Christ. If you remember, Paul began the letter praying that we would not be foolish, but would have a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

[8 : 57] Remember that? And he said the will of God, the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the will of God is bound up in what God is doing in Christ, uniting all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

And so he's saying, as it were, do you understand what time it is? Do you know what time it is? And he's saying something very powerful here. Time is not about the ticking of a clock.

Time, biblically, is about the unfolding of the plan of God. From the beginning of the foundation of the world, God had a plan. He predestined a people to call Him Father.

When God created all things, He was unfolding a plan. When Adam failed, He was unfolding a plan. When God called a people in Abraham, He was unfolding a plan. When God gave them the law and taught them what God is like and how to follow God and love one another, He was unfolding a plan.

When God brought judgment and threw them off the land into exile, God was unfolding a plan. When He called the prophets to call the people to repentance, God was unfolding a plan.

[10 : 01] And most importantly, the plan that He was unfolding was brought to pass in a decisive moment in the fullness of time in the coming of Jesus Christ.

So it's vital what's going on here. Paul's not saying don't spend more than you make. Now that's a wise thing. Don't do that. Don't burn the candle at both ends. It's not merely being wise. Don't sleep around if you want to have a good marriage.

He's saying make sure all of your life aligns with what God has done in Christ. Now we've got to zero that in a little bit.

Think about this for a moment though. We have a complicated relationship with time. When we're young, we talk about how time drags.

When we're old, we talk about how time flies. When we fall in love, time seems to stand still. When we lose love, time seems to slow down.

[10 : 59] We talk about being behind the times. No one wants to be behind the times and dress and things like that, right? But we also talk about being on the wrong side of time. What if we value something and we look back and it's not something we should value?

But almost all the time, we talk about time running out. But what does it all mean? In his philosophy book, in a lot of ways, Augustine said, What then is time?

If no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to someone who asks, I do not know. But we know now.

That's what he's saying. That's what God's revealing in Ephesians and in this passage. God is eternal. God is outside of time. God has no past, present, or future. But God made time to display the wonders of his steadfast love and mercy throughout time.

And especially in the fullness of time in Jesus Christ. One day, we will be with the redeemed outside of time. Worshipping God forever and ever and ever.

[12 : 05] But until then, our lives are in his hands. And our time is a gift from him to align with Jesus Christ. There's a sudden, suddenly after understanding all this, a sudden purposefulness that occurs to life.

I remember when I first became a Christian, suddenly everything had meaning. Because we want to invest it for Christ. But how do we do it?

How do we walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ in real time? And in between these contrasts there in verse 16, he tells us how. Making the best use of the time because the days are evil.

Making the best use of time because the days are evil. The days are evil. Now the day in and of itself is not evil. He's not saying there's something inherently evil about Tuesday or Thursday or Saturday.

Though I'm sure he agrees that Monday is dreadfully wrong. The day is not evil. The days are evil because Christ has not rid the earth of sin.

[13 : 16] He's capturing something that he explains in Galatians when he calls it this present evil age. The idea is we're in this age in which the truths of the gospel, all that God has done in Christ, is completely true.

We're forgiven of all our sins. But we're not rescued and exported into direct fellowship with him. We're in this days where evil and good overlap and the earth is filled with the unfruitful works of darkness.

So until he does rid the earth, till he redeems as far as the curse is found, time can either be wasted or redeemed.

Now it's not insightful to say time can be wasted. Pink Floyd saying, ticking away the moments of a dull day, you fritter and waste the day in an offhand way.

And then one day you find ten years have got behind you and no one told you when to run. No one pointed out the starting gun. All kinds of people talk about how not to waste your life.

[14 : 24] Get some atomic habits. Get seven habits of highly effective people. Get a bucket list. You know, that's the way to not waste your life. But the problem is you can be good at not wasting your time and good still at wasting your life.

William Carey said, I'm not afraid of failure. I'm afraid of succeeding at things that don't matter. In 10,000 years, will you care what car you drove?

How much money you made? Will you care whether you saw the Grand Canyon? But time can be redeemed.

I love that. You know, most of the old translations would use the word redeem there. Redeem the time. You probably heard that phrase. The KJV, others in ESP, I think.

And you use that. Redeem the time. It's the same word used in Galatians. Twice in Galatians, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

[15 : 29] He was born under the law, Galatians 4, that he might redeem those under the law. So even though the world is still marred by sin, even though the unfruitful works of darkness continue, even though the risk of wasting time is still real, you can redeem it.

Now, this could be a whole series of messages, how to redeem your time. But how do you do it? One minute at a time. One day at a time.

Begin by realizing it's not your time. Time is a gift. Begin with your relationship with God. That's my burden for you this morning.

Begin with your relationship with God. One author has said, we worship our work, we work at our play, and we play at our worship. Is that true, you know?

We think carefully about how we work and how we play. We agonize over financial statements and retirement savings. We study golf swings and vacation plans and sourdough and handguns and all these types of things.

[16 : 33] But do we think carefully about our worship? Do we consider Sunday the Lord's Day? And you're here on the Lord's Day. And it's the grace of God in your life.

The wonderful thing. But this is not the weekend. This is the first day of the week for us to worship the Lord. And so we redeem our time with Him.

When we gather, and outside of that, the next best thing, as we gather before our Bibles. This is the greatest way to redeem the time.

It's in prayerful meditation upon Scripture and communion with God. You don't want to get to heaven and not know the King of the Universe. You want to get there and be so in love with Him.

All right, we've got to keep going. Point two, the command of provision. So the need of the hour, the command of provision. The need of the hour is serious. The risk of wasting our lives is great.

[17 : 34] But there is much provision. Verse 18 continues with the third contrast. And it appears just like another contrast. But it's clearly the hinge of the section. It begins a new long sentence that continues all the way to verse 21.

So the contrast comes in verse 18. Do not get drunk with wine without debauchery. But be filled with the Spirit. Now, this command is a bit surprising. If you're just reading along in this text and not redeeming your time, suddenly do not get drunk.

And, you know, some in the temperance movement shouted at you like that too. But that's supposed to be a joke. No one laughs. That's all right. You're going to be a tough crowd. That's fine. Well, I work alone today.

But why is Paul suddenly talking about drunkenness? Why is it suddenly? I mean, is it because it's cultic practice in Ephesus? That's what some said. Or was it because there was abuse in the sacrifices and the feast among Jewish members?

Something like that. Is it because of that? Drunkenness in those things? I think it's more likely just another unfruitful work of darkness. What happens in the dark throughout this county?

[18 : 43] Drunkenness. Drunkenness. So often, right? Around that midnight. It's clapped and sang. You know, that's when it happens. But Paul also, it's almost like he stumbles into this command.

But he uses this drunkenness, drunkenness to say something very incredible about the Christian life. There's a similarity between drunkenness and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Not many, but there is one. Both have obvious effects. The command is, to state the obvious, is not do not drink wine.

The command is, do not get drunk. Do not be filled with wine to the point that it leaves you obviously impaired.

Now, the psalm says, wine gladdens the heart of man. But do not be filled with wine until it leaves you obviously impaired. Rather, be filled with the Spirit.

- [19 : 49] The connection between the two is that being filled with wine and being filled with the Spirit both have obvious effects. You can tell when someone's filled with wine. So, too, you can tell when someone's filled with the Spirit.

Gordon Fee, again, helps us when he says, The richness of the metaphor comes in part from its contrast to being drunken with wine. And in part from the verb to be filled.

Together, they do not picture a person who is drunk on the Spirit, as it were, as if there were virtue in that. But a person whose life is so totally given over to the Spirit, that the life and deeds of the Spirit are as obvious in their case as the effects of too much wine are obvious in the other.

When we're filled with too much wine, we slur and stumble, get louder and bolder, say things we shouldn't say, do things we shouldn't do.

The effects are obvious to everyone, even if they're not obvious to you. But the effects of the Spirit are also obvious. Isn't it striking that on the day of Pentecost, when they were filled and speaking the great things of God in unknown tongues, some said they were drunk.

- [21 : 15] Because the Spirit of God was moving. Even as Jesus said, the wind blows where it wills, and you see it not, you hear not its sound. And yet you can see its effects.

Now the effects of the Spirit of God filling us is not mainly goosebumps and liver shivers and unknown tongues. The effect, most often or most important, is a changed life.

It's love in the face of persecution, forgiveness instead of retaliation, perseverance through chronic pain. In fact, threading through the Ephesians, there's this emphasis on fullness, on God filling all things.

It says in Ephesians 1 that He gave Him as head over all things, and He gave Him to the church as head over all things, the fullness of Him who filled all and all. And in chapter 2 it says, we are His dwelling place.

He dwells with us now. And then in chapter 3, He talks about us being filled in all things at the end of that prayer. And so it seems, that's what's going on here.

- [22 : 23] The idea is the Spirit comes to fill you with the fullness of God, to look more like Jesus Christ, to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. And so there's an effect, an obvious effect, to your life.

You know, Martin Lloyd-Jones once said, the only people who have a right to say anything about Christianity are those who have felt its force. What's that mean?

The only people who have a right to say anything about Christianity is those who have been born again, those who have felt its force. The idea is that the Christian life can only be lived when you're born again.

It's something so radical that has to happen. The only thing comparable is a new birth, an entirely new existence. That's what we celebrate in Caleb's life.

He's been born. Have you been born again? I'm not asking have you been baptized. Do you know the force of Christianity? That's what the gospel offers. It offers a relationship with God, a new life, to be someone who knows the Spirit of God, born again by the Spirit of God, treasures Jesus Christ, and follows Him in the power of the Spirit.

- [23 : 36] Today could be the day of salvation. For you of transformation, if you would but come to Jesus Christ and trust Him. And so the Spirit has obvious effects, but there's a difference between being filled with the Spirit and with drunkenness.

The difference is you cannot have too much of the Spirit. Too much wine is a waste. It's a waste of time.

It's a waste of money. It's a waste of energy. How many people do stupid things when they've had too much wine? It's a waste of wine! But you cannot have too much of the Spirit of God.

Think about that. The command is present tense. Be continually filled with the Spirit. It's the only time in the New Testament we're commanded to be filled with the Spirit of God. Presumably, it's the only place we're commanded to pray to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Now, some denominations say the Spirit of God comes in a second blessing. So, just like the disciples, you've got to wait for the power to come from on high. And so, this second blessing, this baptism of the Spirit, that's how the Spirit comes into your life.

[24 : 50] Some people say that. Is that what this verse is commending? Wait for the Spirit of God. This second work that God does after salvation to cause you to be, to treasure Him more, to receive more from Him.

I don't think that's what it is. I think the Scriptures are very clear. No one can confess that Christ is Lord apart from the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 12, 3.

No one can say, Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. Now, people can utter that, right? But no one can truly worship Jesus as Lord except in the Spirit.

Dead fish don't swim upstream. If anyone confesses Christ, it's because they've been born again. It's because they've been made new. It's because they've been baptized. So, what I believe is the baptism of the Spirit and our sealing of the Spirit, as we just sang about, you know, when you believed in Him, it was sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1, 14, is the same thing.

So, we don't need to wait on a second blessing for the Spirit to come out. The baptism of the Spirit is that new work, that wonderful work, the greatest work of the Spirit when we're regenerated to trust in Christ and suddenly, the light, we see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and we're made new.

[26 : 11] So, there is not, in my opinion, a strong argument for a second blessing theology. And if you know what that means, then you've probably wrestled through it and keep wrestling.

We can talk about it. But even though all people are filled with the Spirit at conversion, baptized, sealed with the Spirit at conversion, and then all have a foretaste of the Spirit, a down payment of the Spirit, not all Christians have the same amount of the Spirit.

Right? Some have greater measures of the Spirit. We know that in spiritual gifts. More pronounced spiritual gifts, more evident. Some appear to be filled to overflowing with the Spirit.

That's why I love being around people who are newly converted. They're just filled to overflowing with the Spirit. Some clearly are too empty. They're driving on empty.

Not all Christians who are filled with the Spirit at one time need less of the Spirit as they continue. We see that in the book of Acts when Peter's filled with the Spirit at Pentecost.

[27 : 19] He preaches, right? Proclaims the Gospel in power. And then yet, several verses later when he's before the religious rulers, he's filled with the Spirit again. Even Peter needed more of the Spirit.

So if he did, you do. The idea is we're meant to be continually filled, longing for more and more of the Holy Spirit.

That's the Christian life. More and more of the Spirit to fill us with the fullness of God. D.A. Carson helpfully says, although I find no biblical support for a second blessing theology, I do find support for a second, third, fourth, and fifth blessing theology.

What's he saying? I find biblical support for being continually filled with the Spirit. Spirit. So how should we seek to be filled with the Spirit?

I think the secret is that the Spirit is a person. The Spirit is not a powerful influence or impersonal power.

[28 : 22] He's not a force that must be brought down by incantations that we can sing about the Spirit hovering over the waters until He comes or something like that. That's not what we're commanded to do. Nor is He a liquid that we drink down, even though the metaphor being filled is here.

He's a person. He's the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is like a house guest. Now, if you're like my family, anytime you have guests in the house, everybody's attentive to the guest.

The kids wake up an hour early, tiptoeing through the house. Are they still in the bed? Yes. Be quiet, please. No banging.

No rough. You know, you're trying to be sensitive around the guest. Everybody's closing every door so quietly. Normally, they just slam them shut, rise and shine, you know, but not when the house guest is there.

The Holy Spirit's like that. He's a person. He's not a tank of gas that you just fill up and you're riding on full your whole life.

[29 : 26] He's a person that you can cherish, that you can listen to, that you can align your life more to, that you can be sensitive to.

He's also a person you can drive away. You can grieve Him. You can grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

You can quench Him. You can neglect Him. You can all but snuff out His influence in your life. Wow. What do we need more than the Holy Spirit?

John Owen said that the Spirit is the second great gift from God. Think about this. God did not spare His own Son. God did not spare His Spirit to dwell with you, to be with you, but far too often He is neglected.

How do we know when we've neglected the Spirit when we're weary? You don't conquer weariness by clearing the calendar. You conquer it by calling on God to fill you with strength.

[30 : 42] That's what I see in the book of Acts. People are calling on the Lord, not canceling everything on the calendar, but calling on the Lord. He's the one who sustains the weary. That's what's going on. I love it.

I'm reading Acts right now in my devotions. They're in Antioch. They're persecuted. Suddenly, after they're persecuted, driven out of another town, they're filled with joy and with the Spirit. Why? Because strength is meant to come from God.

You can walk around with your crutches, but I want the Holy Spirit. I don't want a crutch. I want to lean on Him when we're overly anxious. That's a good sign that we're neglecting the Spirit of God.

Anxiety is a fruit of trying to do it on your own. But you're not meant to. You're meant to be led by the Spirit. When we just go through the motions, Sunday mornings or just through the motions, we no longer cry at the same things we cry about.

No longer affected by the same things we're affected. What's going on? We're neglecting the Spirit of God. What is the Spirit always wanting to do? Magnify Jesus Christ in your life. Fill you with the joy of believing and hoping in Him.

[31 : 45] And so, the provision is great. Point three, the abundance of the Spirit. The abundance of the Spirit. The need of the hour is serious. The command is great.

And God gives His Spirit abundantly to those who come to Him after commanding us to be filled with the Spirit. The Apostle Paul unpacks the abundant fruit of the Spirit. That's what I think is going on here. He's talking about being filled with the Spirit and then there's several phrases that come after it.

They're all attached. They all modify. Being filled and the focus is on corporately. When we gather together, how do we know we're filled with the Spirit? That's what's going on here. He says, firstly, addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

When we gather together, we're not just singing to God. We're singing to one another. There's a horizontal dynamic when we gather together. Sometimes we close our eyes and have a me and Jesus moment.

Light our phone up and sing around. Whatever. But when we open our eyes, we realize we've been called together, bound together. This is unlike our devotion.

[32 : 49] This is the people of God singing the praises of God in the power of the Spirit of God. And so the Spirit, what does it do when we gather? Compells us to sing.

To honor Him. To sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Now, a lot of people wrestle about the distinction between these things. It does not seem very clear. It just means there's lots of singing going on.

All types of songs. Yes, we sing this altar, but we sing anything that magnifies Jesus Christ. The Spirit leads us to sing. He continues on this theme of singing.

Singing and making melody to the Lord with all our heart. Verse 19b. He says, there's a vertical dynamic to the Spirit's work when we gather together. We sing to the Lord.

Wonderfully, this reference is to our Lord Jesus Christ. It's not a reference to God impersonal or God the Father. It's a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. When the first Christians began to follow Christ, they didn't just worship God and follow Christ.

[33 : 53] They worshiped Christ. That's what was striking. They worshiped Christ, this Jesus of Nazareth.

They began to worship Him to praise His name. And that's what we do. That's what makes our songs unlike the songs in the synagogue because these songs are about Jesus Christ, about the Lamb who was slain for the sins of the world.

And so, that's what our worship is about. It is to our Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Wonderfully, there's a personal dynamic as well, horizontal dynamic, a vertical dynamic, a personal dynamic.

He said, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. The Spirit does not just create melody with your mouth. He creates melody inside your heart.

What do we do when we're happy? As the old hymn says, I sing because I'm happy. I sing because I'm free. We sing when we're happy. When the Vols score, we sing Rocky Top. By golly, when we're standing on the mountains, we sing, the hills are alive with the sound, or at least some of us do that, you know.

[35 : 03] The hills are alive. We fall in love. We sing. But when we gather together, we realize all that God has done for those who deserve only His wrath. We sing. That's what we want to do.

We want to bless His name, praise His name. Do you still sing? Do you still sing? You're not into singing.

You're not into the Spirit if you don't love to sing. That's what the Spirit does. Sets us free.

Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. What are we singing about? This side of the cross, the hill called Calvary, we're singing thanksgiving to God for Jesus Christ.

Giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every day you and I experience anything but the wrath of God is a day we must give thanks.

[36 : 09] That's the truth of Scripture. Lewis Allen helpfully says, what do we deserve from God? This is to you. What do you deserve from God? Nothing. We could qualify that.

Nothing good. What do we deserve from God? Nothing. All our gifts, all we have is by grace.

A sense of entitlement feeds a greedy heart but a keen awareness that we deserve nothing but have all of God's love and Christ will humble and satisfy us.

Then all of the gifts in our lives, people, circumstances, privileges will be seen for what they are. Stunning blessings from God to be counted up and counted up and treasured with thanksgiving.

That's what our life is. The cheerful heart is a continual feast. What are we doing? We're feasting on all the things we don't deserve. That's on your to-do list this week. Feast on all you don't deserve.

[37 : 11] All we don't deserve. Waked up with a cup of coffee. What? I don't deserve that. The embrace of my kids. Love of my family.

Gathered together in the assembly. Seeing friends. We give thanks always. We give thanks for everything. Even the things that make us desperate for more grace.

We count up our blessings. And when we count up our blessings, we also count up our adversities. Because those are blessings too. In the hands of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks in the name of the Father. And in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I was reading earlier this week that Erasmus, a long, long time ago, kind of mocking the Catholic Church, said that Jesus must get a little jealous up there because of all the prayers going up for Mary and all the prayers going up for these saints.

All the prayers going up for this saint. Well, he's not going to be jealous here. Because all this comes to us through Jesus Christ. Every good and perfect gift is received through Jesus Christ and is offered up to him with thanksgiving in his name.

[38 : 38] Isn't that amazing? Last clause. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Glad we saved this one for last, I guess. But submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. The smart guys wrestle with whether this belongs to the second, next section, verses 22 through 24, or whether it belongs to our section, 15 through 21.

21. I argue that it belongs to our section because it is a participle. It's a, it's, it's, it's modifying that be filled with the spirits.

I think it belongs there even though there is some connection because he turns and says, wives, submit to your husbands. But you'll have to wait till next week to hear about that one. But what does it mean?

Every time this word is used in the New Testament, it speaks to ordered relationships where one party submits to another. And so that makes sense in the way it's used in the next couple of verses. Wives, submit to your husband.

[39 : 40] The church submits to Christ. But it means that similarly here. The idea seems to be that in the church we submit to our Lord Jesus Christ out of reverence to Him.

That's out of the fear of Him. We submit to Him. He's our King. He's our Commander-in-Chief. He is the head of the troops. But we also submit in appropriate ways to one another.

There's ordered relationships within the church. We talked about offices within the church in Ephesians 4 and so too there's ordered relationships. We submit and voluntarily put ourselves under the preacher as he preaches.

And thank you for doing that week in, week out. We submit ourselves to the worship leader as he leads worship. We don't sing our own song. You know, we join in with his song though sometimes we jump ahead of him or fall behind him a bit.

You know, we submit to children's ministry teachers when they teach or lead. We submit to deacons when they lead a service project. The idea is there is an order to our gathering and there's a willingness to submit when it promotes the order within the church.

[40 : 43] We do so joyfully and freely because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We find it a joy. It's striking. In a world that's filled with rank and title, the church of Jesus Christ has no rank.

Jesus has a rank and title but we are all his children and so that principle of submission can play out. I remember years ago there was a guy when I first came into the ministry I was serving a church and there was a guy in our church who was a multi-millionaire.

He led a, I don't know, probably a 50 million dollar company but that's nothing nowadays. I mean just a lot of very, very big successful company and he led our cleaning team.

So he cleaned our offices. Sometimes I would be late there and he'd come in with his cleaning team and he'd turn up his Tina Turner or something like that. He's just a fun jovial guy. He came in with his latex gloves on ready to attack the dust, you know, and attack and clean the place.

This was a guy that could have paid a cleaning team to do it every week but he submitted. He wanted to serve. It's a wonderful thing. Beautiful thing. Pete Hedger did that for years and such a tremendous blessing to our body back in the day and I'm so thankful.

[42 : 01] That's a man filled with the spirit. The rank and title of this world. What's that mean? Oh, you're a lawyer. Great. Doctor, whatever. We can kind of walk around holding those titles.

That's not to be in the church of Jesus Christ. There's a willingness to submit and follow in appropriate ways that honor and glorify him. So don't take off your glasses.

Put them back on. The Christian life is a spiritual life, a spirit-filled life from beginning to end.

It's not a religion. It's a life to be lived. So let us continually be filled with the spirit, magnifying God together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for the privilege of gathering, the privilege of sitting under your word.

We praise you and worship you. We give you our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

[43 : 14] For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us trinitygraceathens.com. Thank you.