

Sermon 20: Embracing the Spirit's Ministry: Ephesians 5:15-21

Text: Ephesians 5:15-21 "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 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; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God..."

Summary: Since we tend to drift into complacency, we must regularly choose to embrace the Spirit's personal ministry in our lives.

Proposition: God wants us to live Spirit-filled lives.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: Embrace His wisdom: 5:15-16 "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil..."

- **Three basic wisdom principles:**

- **Principle 1: We must be vigilant: 5:15** "See then that ye walk circumspectly..."
 - **Walk carefully.**
 - The Christian life is not a carefree life.
 - This world is evil and we will face struggles.
 - **Later: Ephesians 6:10-11** "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day..."
- **Principle 2: We must embrace every moment: 5:15-16** "Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time..."
 - **Make the best use of the time you are given.**
 - **Ecclesiastes 9:11** "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all..."
 - **Ecclesiastes 11:4-6** "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all...In the morning sow

thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper..."

○ **Principle 3: We must remember life is uncertain: 5:16**

"Because the days are evil..."

- **Ecclesiastes 9:12** "Man...knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them..."
- **Ecclesiastes 12:1** "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them..."

- **His point:** Don't be naïve, life is short and uncertain, so you must seize every moment and live it to its fullest for God's glory.

Truth 2: Embrace His will: 5:17-18 "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..."

- **God's will for us today is simple: 5:17** "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is..."
- **Two sides:**
 - **Negatively: 5:18** "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess..."
 - **Let's not put ourselves under the numbing influence of intoxicants.**
 - **His immediate examples:**
 - **"Awake:" 5:14** Don't sleep
 - **"Arise:" 5:14** Don't be like a dead person
 - **"Be sober:" 5:18** Don't be numb to reason
 - **Three great enemies to our souls:**
 - **The World:**
 - **Ephesians 4:17** "Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind..."
 - **Ephesians 5:11** "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them..."
 - **Our Flesh: Ephesians 4:19** "Being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness..."
 - **The Devil and the Kingdom of Darkness:**
 - **Ephesians 6:11** "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil..."
 - **Ephesians 6:12** "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places..."

- **Positively: 5:18** "Be filled with the Spirit..."
 - **We must put ourselves under the Spirit's influence.**
 - **How can we do this?**
 - **First: We have been united to Christ: Ephesians 1:3** He has "Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ..."
 - **Second: We have a persistent heavenly Father: Ephesians 2:10** "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."
 - **Third: We have the Spirit: Ephesians 1:13-14** "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession..."
 - **Fourth: We have His word: Colossians 3:16** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..."
- **Question: Are we walking in the Spirit:** Everything in the Christian life, flows out of the Spirit-filled life.
 - **It will keep us from sin: Galatians 5:16** "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh..."
 - **It will produce godly virtues in our lives: Galatians 5:22-23** "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance..."
 - **It will give us joy and a deeper understanding of who we are in Him: Ephesians 3:16-19** "That he would grant you...to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God..."

Truth 3: Embrace His worship: 5:19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord..."

- **The Spirit's influence should penetrate every sphere of our lives:**
 - Practical daily living
 - Corporate worship
- **Corporate worship should have the following marks:**

- **It should start with the Spirit: 5:18** "Be filled with the Spirit..."
- **It should engage the mind: 5:19** "Speaking to yourselves..."
- **It should stir the emotions: 5:19** "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..."
- **It should express itself in song: 5:19** "Singing and making melody in your heart..."
 - **Psalms:** The Old Testament Book of Psalms
 - Laments from a sufferer:
 - Song of thanksgiving to God:
 - Hymns of Praise that celebrate God's greatness:
 - Songs that give practical Godly wisdom
 - **Hymns:** Songs that celebrate the greatness of God and His ways
 - **Spiritual Sings:** Songs that express personal Spirit-filled reflection to God.
- **It should be directed to God: 5:19** "To the Lord..."
 - Crying out to Him.
 - Thanking Him.
 - Praising Him.
 - Expressing our joy to Him.
 - Reminding ourselves of His wisdom.

Two questions:

- Are we committed to the regular gathering of the local church?
- Are we active participants in that worship, being mentally and emotionally engaged?

Truth 4: Embrace His walk: 5:20-21 "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God..."

- **The order of this section:**
 - **Relationship to God as an individual: 5:15** "See then that ye walk circumspectly..."
 - **Relationship to God within Christian community: 5:19** "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..."
 - **Relationship to God in society: 5:21** "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God..."
- **Why order matters:**
 - It is impossible to live the Christian life without being a new creature in Christ.
 - We must prioritize our lives in a distinctly Christian way.

Application:

- **First: Get back to the basics:**
 - **Priority 1:** Be a healthy Christian.
 - Embrace godly wisdom.
 - Be vigilant.
 - Embrace every moment to its fullest.
 - Hold your plans loosely.
 - **Priority 2:** Be an engaged member of a healthy local church.
 - Be faithful.
 - Be focused.
 - Be fervent.
 - **Priority 3:** Relate to others in a distinctly Christian way.
 - Let every relationship be shaped by your relationship to God first.
 - Realize God has planted each person in your life for a reason.
 - Don't waste the opportunities God has given to minister.
- **Second: Walk in the Spirit:**
 - Remember who you are in Christ.
 - Remember you have the Spirit.
 - Remember your Father is shaping your life to reflect Christ.
 - Get into His word and allow it to shape every aspect of your life.
 - Do it as a way of life.