

## **Sermon 18: Imitate God as Beloved Children: Ephesians 5:1-7**

**Text: Ephesians 5:1-7** "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.."

**Summary:** Imitate God as a beloved child, rather than the world at war with Him.

**Proposition:** We must embrace the distinct walk of a saint.

### **Introduction:**

- **God's plan for us encompasses past, present, and future.**
- **We are already saved but not yet experiencing all of our salvation.**
- **Every day, we must do four things:**
  - Ponder who we are in Christ.
  - Identify and put off the works of the flesh.
  - Put on the new life we have in Christ.
  - Be renewed in our minds.
- **The following section of Paul's letter expands these concepts further.**

### **Summary:**

- Christians must choose to follow God as a beloved child, rather than the world at war with Him.
- We must embrace the distinct walk of a saint.
- How can we do this?

**Truth 1: Remember: We are God's beloved children: 5:1** "As dear children..."

- **People become children in one of two ways:**
  - **Natural birth:** We are literally our parents' offspring.
  - **Legal process:** Our parents set their love on us and choose to go through the legal process to make us their child.
- **Believers are God's children in both senses:**

- He gave us life and we were born into this world estranged from Him.
- **He gave us new life when we were born again: 1 Peter 1:23** We are "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God..."
- **He made us His child through a legal process: Galatians 4:4-6** "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father..."
- **We are the objects of God's love in at least four ways:**
  - He loved us when He established a means of redemption.
  - He loved us when we were His enemies.
  - He loved us when He drew us to Himself.
  - He loves us as His eternal children.

**Truth 2: Commit: We are commanded to imitate Christ: 5:1** "Be ye therefore followers of God..."

- **"Followers:"** the word "μιμητής" means to mimic someone.
  - **Illustration:** the difference between your dog who follows you around the house and your child who tries to do what you do.
- **This walk is more than a list of rules; it is loving imitation:**
  - **John 13:34** "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you..."
  - **1 John 2:7-8** "I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth..."
  - **His clarification: (6)** He "Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked..."
  - **Philippians 2:5** "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..."
- **Love and admiration shape behavior:**
  - We naturally want to be with people we love and admire.
  - As we spend time with them, our lives are shaped by their lives.
  - When we respect them, we follow their patterns of life.

**Truth 3: Put off: We must deny ourselves: 5:2-3** "And hath given himself for us..."

- **Positive:** There is no greater example of self-sacrifice than Christ:
  - **Two phrases are connected:**

- "As Christ also hath loved us..."
    - "And hath given himself for us
  - **God's love for us was revealed when He gave Himself for us:**
    - **1 John 4:9** "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him..."
    - **Romans 5:8** "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us..."
  - **This offering was fully pleasing to God:** "Aa sweetsmelling savour..."
    - **Isaiah 53:10-11** "It pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied...he shall bear their iniquities..."
- **Negative:** Our fleshly passions are the opposite of godly self-sacrifice.
  - **He focused on sexual sin and its various expressions:**
  - **This was a particularly serious problem in the Greco-Roman world but has not stopped being a problem today.**
    - **"Fornication:"** Any sexual sin in thought or action
      - Between an unmarried man and woman
      - Unfaithfulness to one's marriage covenant
      - Between people of the same sex
      - Whatever this broken world can imagine
    - **"All uncleanness:"** The defiling result of these sinful acts
    - **"Covetousness:"** The sinful root of these sinful acts
    - **Demoting the sacred:**
      - **"Filthiness:"** Obscene or indecent language
      - **"Foolish talking:"** Empty words that communicate a lack of moral sensitivity.
      - **"Jesting:"** Shocking crude joking
  - **God's standard is good and sacred:** Sexual sin undermines His good design and is destructive to individuals and society.
    - **He created male and female for a specific purpose.**
    - **He created marriage to protect the sacredness of human life:** This is why under OT Law, murder, adultery, and homosexuality were handled the same as capital crimes.
    - **His design is simple and good:**
      - One man and one woman
      - Till death separates

- The union of male and female is sacred and designed by God to be an exclusive to the marriage covenant.
- It is an essential part of establishing that covenant and faithfulness to one's marriage is bigger than just someone and their spouse.
- He even ordained the marriage covenant to be a sacred picture of His love for the church.
- **At the root of these sinful responses is a desire to gratify self at the expense of others:** "Not convenient" means it goes against intended design.
- **As saints, we are called to put off these selfish, sinful impulses.**

**Truth 4: Put on: We must embrace His design: 5:4** "But rather giving of thanks..."

- **Ingratitude is the root sin that expresses itself in sexual perversions: Romans 1:21-22** "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools..."
  - Rather than rebelling against God's unique design for man and woman, people must embrace it and thank God for it.
  - Rather than rebelling against God's design for marriage, people must embrace it and thank God for it.
  - This principle goes beyond sexual ethics, but it is uniquely personal in this realm.
- **It is not enough to be neutral or to abstain.**
- **We must positively celebrate God's design and embrace it.**

**Truth 5: Be Renewed: We are distinct from the world around us: 5:5-7** "For this ye know...Let no man deceive you with vain words...Be not ye therefore partakers with them..."

- **This section is critical to understanding his point.**
- **It is something that should be obvious:** "For this ye know..."
- **Paul's list is a restatement of the first with one distinction:**
  - List one emphasizes someone's actions, thoughts, or the root of their behavior.
  - List two emphasizes someone's identity.
- **Examples:**
  - **List one:** "Fornication," "uncleaness," and "covetousness"
  - **List two:** A "whoremonger," an "unclean person," or a "covetous man"
- **His point:** Since you are believers, it is unthinkable that you would live like the world at war with your Savior.

- **When an unbeliever sins, he sins because that is who he is.**
- **When a believer sins, he sins against his nature.**
  - **5:5-7** "For this ye know... because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience...Be not ye therefore partakers with them.."
- **Other places in scripture making this point:**
  - **1 Corinthians 6:11** "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God..."
  - **Romans 8:2-9** "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit...(7) the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit..."
  - **Romans 6:1-2, 11-13** "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body...Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead..."

### **Application:**

- **Unbeliever:**
  - Perhaps you have found yourself enslaved to sinful passions like the ones described in these verses.
  - You fear God's wrath against your sin and you do not know how to be freed from this enslavement.
  - It is impossible for you to live the Christian life that Paul is telling us to live.
  - These commands begin with the words "therefore" and as "beloved children"
  - Salvation is available to you, and God is calling you through His word to repent and believe on Christ.
- **Believer:**
  - **Remember:** You are a child of God and He loves you.

- **Commit:** Purpose to follow God in all areas of your life.
- **Put off:** Identify sinful passions and practices, especially those that are rooted in discontentment and put them off.
- **Put on:** Put on a godly spirit and be grateful to Him for His rich grace.
- **Be renewed:** Since you are believers, realize it is unthinkable that you would live like the world at war with your Savior.