



Every Spiritual
Blessing

EPHESIANS - WEEK 13

The Different Kind of Different

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Here

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Aldo who is planting a church in Los Angeles.

Closing prayer

INTRODUCTION

Paul ended chapter 4 by writing to us, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

He's showing us once again that our behavior springs from the blessings of the gospel. Since we've been forgiven, we can be forgiving.

Big Idea: Our lives should be markedly different.

Now, if that sounds like a tall order, consider this.

Ephesians 5:1-21

5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved

children.

“Be imitators of God.” That’s a pretty tall order. But here’s the key as to how we can be imitators of God — as beloved children.

1 | Point #1 - Living the Christian life is based upon being loved by God.

In other words, living the Christian life is based in the gospel. We know we’re loved because of the gospel. We know we’re loved because God has

demonstrated his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God has displayed his love by sending Jesus. He loved us before he did this. He did this because he does love us.

So, because we are beloved children, Pauls says:

² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Christ gave Himself for you because he loves you. He gave Himself for you. He didn't just do something for you. He didn't just die for you as part of an impersonal mass of humanity. He gave you himself. That's why he died for you. He wanted to give you himself.

- Marriage Counseling

Christ has given us everything and himself. Jesus didn't just die for us so that we could be forgiven and go to heaven. He died for us so that we

could have a relationship with living God, an actual, life-giving, experiential relationship where we get up every day and have moments throughout the day where we are conscious of God. We're conscious of looking to God. We're conscious of depending up God. We're conscious of our relationship with God.

So, there are three ways we can be imitators of God as beloved children.

- Be imitators as beloved children, as loved

ones. Because we are loved, we are loving. (**1 Cor. 13**)

- Be imitators as forgiven ones. Because we are forgiven, we are forgiving.
- Be imitators as giving ones. Because God gave to us, we are giving.

Because we're to be imitators of God we're called to be holy. We're called to be pure. There is no place that purity in relationships goes bad faster than sex.

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

2 | Point #2 - The giving of ourselves to another is God-like. Christian sexuality is based upon joyful giving.

The giving of one person to another of themselves in the context of marriage is beautiful and glorious. Scripture makes it out to be beautiful and glorious.

There are cultural moments that affirm the truth of the gospel. I'm going to adopt the practice of Martyn Lloyd-Jones here and not waste time mentioning the current cultural moment that would say 'Amen' to this segment of Scripture

while at the same time denying Christ as Lord.

Traditionally, the Christian sexual ethic has always set gospel-embracing Christians at odds with whatever culture they find themselves in.

No form of sexual immorality should be named among us. No premarital sex. That's no sex before marriage. No self-stimulation. No off-handed comments to the opposite sex. No pornography of any kind, visual or written.

That's the negative. The Bible isn't against sex, just the wrong use of it.

A Christian man should treat every woman as if she is his sister, because if she is a Christian woman she is your sister. If there is one group of men on the planet who can keep gentlemanly behavior alive in culture that has lost it it should be Christian men.

But Paul drives his point home with the strongest language.

⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

3 | Point #3 - Taking from someone for your own selfish pleasure is the opposite of what God is like.

Our culture has made sexuality all about getting pleasure from someone else. It's about taking from another person. It's all about you and your pleasure and your identity and what you need to be happy. It's all self-centered and selfish. And there's nothing more self-centered and selfish than porn.

Let's restate this for a church culture that has some false ideas about what makes someone a legitimate Christian. If you practice sexual immorality on a regular basis, if it is your lifestyle,

you are probably not born again. He's saying this is a sure sign that your heart has not been changed, that you are still in your sins, meaning you are still a slave to your lusts and not on your way to heaven.

Never think you can make a regular practice of an immoral sexual lifestyle and consider yourself a Christian sealed for heaven. The Word of God testifies against you in the strongest possible language...

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Don't let some well-meaning Christian or therapist comfort you in your sins with empty words or misapplied Bible verses.

7 Therefore do not become partners with them;

Christians want to partner with light.

- Dating

Are there ways in your life that you are partnering with darkness? Is there any way that you are knowingly or unknowingly encouraging avenues in our culture that are in opposition to Christian truth?

We all know what that's like. We know what it's

like to partner with darkness. We've all been there. We've all done it.

⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

4 | Point #4 - The Gospel makes you light.

You're not just in the light, Paul says you are light in the Lord. Because he is the Light, we are light in him.

Imagine this like a science fiction movie. So, Jesus shines with unapproachable light. You can't get close to him or you'll die. Unapproachable light. But everyone who is connected to him glows with the light that he supplies. That's why we take the light of the

gospel to the world.

¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Light exposes darkness.

How many good Christians have covered something up, some evil deed, thinking they were protecting something or someone? They

often think they're protecting the reputation of the church.

12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

**“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”**

Stand under the light and you'll reflect the light.

- Prayer, fellowship, reading the Bible, responding to what you've read by doing it, etc.
- If you're taking it all in, where are you shining it out in the world?

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are

evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

When we're in the light we're wiser.

When we're in the light we make better use of time.

When we're in the light we can know what the will of the Lord is.

When we're in the light we can be filled with the Spirit.

When we're in the light we will love to worship.

When we're in the light we'll be thankful.

When we're in the light we'll be humble.

In the light just means we're engaging in the relationship Christ wants to have with us, engaging in the relationship where Christ wants to give himself to you.