

Come on y'all, let's celebrate God together.

Yeah.

It's super good to be here today at Heartland.

I'm going to tell you, I often say that Heartland is by far one of the most gospel-saturated, most welcoming, most friendliest churches that I've ever been to in my life.

And I'm going to tell you, I'm not only saying that because I'm scared of Jeff.

But, like, I really mean that.

I mean, every time I come, right, I mean, it's always open arms, handshakes, hugs, and you can tell it's genuine.

Man, listen, Heartland, thank you for your support of Faith Community Bible Church, right?

I mean, this year, Faith Community celebrates 10 years, right?

And...

And Jeff has really been supporting faith community since year one.

He ran away to India for a couple of years.

Right.

Came back and said, you know what?

We still want to support in some way, shape or form.

And I'm going to tell you guys, me and Jeff laugh about this.

Right.

But there was a time when Jeff and I just like we was like bumping heads, not really into it, but just different guys.

Right?

However, we started spending time together when both of us was in difficult places in life.

Right?

And the gospel melted our hearts together.

And now, and I'll tell you, now Jeff Neville is one of my closest friends.

One of the guys who I know who gonna check me when I need to be checked.

Right?

And, I mean, we sit at dinner.

We having conversation.

He's like, I mean, well, what does Tracy think about that?

Right?

I'm like, but I'm not talking about church, right?

So super good, super good, man, to just be here today.

And then just knowing that, like, he's on sabbatical.

I haven't been here for men's retreat, and I'm here today.

He ain't afraid.

I mean, not that he got a reason to be, but I'm just like, man, such, such good, such a good church, good people.

Y'all, I'm ready to preach today.

I'm ready.

I feel, I was talking to my dad on the way here.

I was like, dad, let's switch spots.

I had a bad case that I don't feel like it's right.

But then he said, no.

So I guess I don't have a choice.

So grab your Bibles.

Let's go to Ephesians chapter five.

Ephesians chapter five is where we'll be.

Faith community is like, thank you, not X. Ephesians chapter five is where we'll be.

We're going to start reading that verse one.

As you guys are standing and turning, faith community, just by way of announcements, just want to let you know that on August 19th, we start our new Growth Night sessions.

Sign up is ready in the app, right?

We're going to be surveying Philippians.

We're also going to survey 1 John.

You get information for those inside of the app.

I'll also tell you, this is faith community announcements.

We here might as well do it, right?

Faith community, don't forget, remain faithful in your giving.

Remain faithful in your giving.

You can jump inside of the faith community app to give, or you can do so online.

But just because we ain't in our building, don't mean.

Oh, yeah.

Heartland for y'all, too.

You can tap the back of your seat.

Right?

Good stuff.

Right?

But let's make sure.

Heartland faith community.

Let's continue to support the mission of God financially.

Amen.

Ephesians chapter five, starting at verse one.

Here's what it says.

Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children and walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you as is proper for saints.

Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks.

For know and recognize this, every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person who is an idolater does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Let no one deceive you with empty arguments for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things.

Therefore, do not become their partners.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light.

For the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth, testing what is pleasing to the Lord.

Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them.

For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret.

I wonder what would happen if God would survey our Facebook pages.

That ain't even in here.

That was my brain.

Everything exposed by the light is made visible.

For what makes everything visible is light.

Therefore it is said, get up sleeper and rise up from the dead and Christ will shine on you.

Pay careful attention then to how you walk.

Not as unwise people, but as wise, making the most of the time because the days are evil.

So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled with the Spirit.

Speaking to one another in songs, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Singing and making music with your heart to the Lord.

Giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

Let's pray together.

Father, just as the angels we cry holy.

Not because we deserve to, but because you are really holy.

You are righteous.

You are just.

You are perfect.

You are amazing.

We extol you.

We honor you.

We magnify you.

We make your name big.

We beg you, God, to hear our hearts cry, hear our plea as we aim to live lives that honor you.

God, what a joy it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in unity.

I echo what Austin said.

We don't connect because we from the loo.

We connect because we your sons and daughters.

So God, today we pray that biblical unity will go viral.

That people who look for dividing lines will see us trying to erase one.

Looking for ways to give you glory in our everyday life.

So as we worship around your word in this moment, I pray that you will unstop our ears, encourage our hearts, make us uncomfortable.

The Lord will live lives to honor you.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

My rock and my redeemer.

This prayer and all of our prayers we ask in Jesus name.

Amen.

Amen.

You may grab your seats this morning.

As we lean into these verses, Ephesians chapter 5, verses 1 through 21, I want to use, if I can, as a subject, watch how you walk.

Watch how you walk.

Watch how you walk.

In...

I read an article a few years ago by Dr. Gwen Dwar and she shares in this article that most babies start walking independently within two to three months of learning how to stand up by themselves.

She shares that before they can actually walk, what babies need to do is to develop strength and coordination to maintain an upright posture on their own before they learn how to put one foot in front of the other to move in the direction that they're supposed to move.

She also shares that they need to be able to bear most of their weight at least momentarily on one foot in order to be able to walk properly.

She says in this article that babies are moving closer to being independent in their walking when they display certain motor skills, like putting oneself up in a standing position.

Maybe we think about that by gripping furniture or holding on to the hand of someone else or grabbing a table.

Babies develop that ability about four months before they take their first independent steps.

Baby, she said need to learn how to walk with support having strength to shift their weight from one leg to the other she talks in this article about how Babies as they learn how to walk they first need to learn how to stand alone Not that they will always have to walk alone, but they have to learn how to stand alone because sometimes They gonna fall

But the more they learn how to stand, they learn how to get right back up.

See, when babies are learning to walk independently, they fall down.

Not just sometimes, but a lot.

Some babies don't seem to mind much falling.

They enthusiastically throw themselves into something, to some sort of project, learning how to walk quickly, but sometimes within a few days, they mess around and stand better than their parents.

In this article, she shares that a baby should never be left to stand alone, because as they're learning to walk, a fall could cause serious injury.

After I read that article and I thought about my youngest son, Tyler, when he was learning how to walk.

Since he's not here, I'm going to give you all an illustration.

Tyler, as a baby, his head was bigger than his body.

And when Tyler learned how to walk, he didn't just walk like this.

He would lean forward and then learn how to walk.

And I watched him and realized that the further his head leaned, the faster he walked.

And I remember one day he leaned all the way forward and he was running to see what the end going to be.

And then he fell.

When he fell, he cried.

But as he cried and he got up, the first person he looked for was his father.

Because he knew that though he fell, he could never lose the love of his father.

He knew, right, that though he had tears in his eyes, though he was just learning how to walk, he needed to place his hands in the hands of someone he trusted.

Needed to place his hands in the hands of somebody who knew was going to hold him down.

I wonder how many genuinely converted, blood-bought believers in this room are falling but trying to put their hands on other stuff.

Falling, trying to put your hands on somebody else.

What I want to tell you is you got to learn how to walk.

You got to learn how to stand on your own two feet.

The joy of being blood-bought is that when you learn how to stand on your feet, right, you learn you ain't standing on your own feet.

Because for God we live and for God we die.

We can stand on him.

Dr. Dwyer pointed out some great facts about the life of an infant who's trying to walk.

But I want to suggest really that to some that some of the things that apply to infants also applies to us as we walk with Jesus.

See, one of the biggest causes of division within the body of Christ, believe it or not,

Isn't just words.

It's how we walk.

It's how we behave.

It's our conduct.

Because for whatever reason.

We've bought into this idea.

That our experiences.

Outweighs biblical truth.

But that's a lie from the pits of hell.

Your experiences or just your experiences.

But the word of God is the truth that outweighs anything we can ask or think.

Right?

We have convinced ourselves that how we walk, how we behave, how we conduct ourselves don't matter too much.

Perfection is something that we'll never attain.

So let me not aim for it.

Grace is always extended.

So I'm cool to do what I want.

I'm still young.

I got time to get this right.

Yeah, okay, keep on living.

We think that how we walk doesn't affect anyone else.

But do you know Paul addresses this long before he gets to the church at Ephesus.

He addresses this in Romans.

He says, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Guess what it says in the Michael Standard Version.

Heck no.

No, right?

I want to share with you today that you're walking.

The way you walk, believe me, the way you handle yourself, it affects people around you.

You're walking.

You're walking.

The way you walk, it can either encourage others or it can discourage others.

You're walking.

Let me ask you, does it push or pull other people?

Your walking, your conduct, your behavior, does it show an example to others?

Your walking, believe it or not, has the influence to either cause unity or cause division.

We see this today, right?

Because we live in a world where the churches are now producing more politicians than disciples.

Simply because we tend to think that our political party determines how solid we are.

But let me tell you something.

The last time I checked, Jesus was the only one riding on clouds.

He wasn't on no elephant.

Right?

We have to pursue biblical gospel unity.

That should be what fuels us.

I don't care what side of the political stance you on.

I don't care what side of the hood you on.

If it's South County, hood.

Or North City, North County, it don't matter.

We all need the gospel.

Those of us who've been rocked by the power of God, we got to stand on that.

We got to stand on it.

Right?

Your walking, believe it or not, has the influence to either cause unity or cause division.

And I want us to know today that our walking, our behavior, our conduct, it fuels our unity.

Believer, listen.

Hear this.

The way you live your life, it either strengthens the unity of the church or it weakens it.

The way you behave as a Christ follower, either you strengthen the Lord's church or you weaken it.

When we walk like Jesus, we make it easier for the body of Christ to walk together.

Here in Ephesians though, here in Ephesians chapter 5, Paul says,

Paul begins to share with the church at Ephesus about their responsibilities because of, like really, he leans in in chapter 5 because of what he leaned into in chapter 4.

Because in chapter 4, right, he says, notice how he, how do I know this?

Because the first word in Ephesians 5, verse 1, guess what the word is?

Therefore.

Y'all already heard me say whenever you see the word therefore, you got to know what it's there for.

So what he's getting at is, because of everything else that I've said, well, what did he say?

Because of the unity and diversity in the body, because of the gifts given to equip the saints for the work of ministry, because of the product that comes from this, the product that comes from us walking in unity, the product that comes from us exercising our spiritual gifts in a way that honors the Father, the product that comes from us living the way God has called us to live,

is to be imitators of God as beloved children.

He says, therefore, be imitators of God, in verse 1, as beloved children.

Now, this word translated as imitators simply means, hear this, mimic.

And if we are called to mimic God, see, that kills all these conversations, Pastor Darren, happening that quick trip because you will never be God.

You can just mimic the real God.

Right?

I don't care, like, how many people call you diva, right?

You will never be God.

Right?

He says be imitators of God in other ways.

Like, am I walking like him?

Am I talking like him?

Does my life point to him?

Right?

Imitators.

Mimic.

This word mimic to copy in action and in speech.

It has the positive connotation, if will, of emulating a pattern set by a mentor.

Notice here that when he instructs us to be imitators of God, he didn't indicate that this meant that we should act as though we are divine.

He didn't say act as if you are omniscient.

He didn't say, let's pretend like you possess godlike powers.

That's why any type of theology or thought that makes us gods is inaccurate.

He says, be imitators of God as beloved children.

Listen, a child imitating his or her parent is one of the most natural things in the world.

I remember when my dad used to be driving on Saturday mornings playing his jazz music.

We thinking we getting ready to go out and have some fun.

We getting ready to go to Showbiz.

If you know what Showbiz is, you old now.

We thinking we getting ready to go to Showbiz.

He riding Jeff with his windows down, right, playing jazz music to take us to the car wash.

Dad, we're going to have an altar call in a minute.

He got some repenting to do.

But what's interesting is I remember riding with him in the back seat and he would be driving and whatever he did, if he was moving his head, I was moving my head.

To this day, I love me some Kenny G. I love some Boney James.

I love some great jazz music.

Even twist a little bit of Gerald Albright in there, right?

Because my daddy was listening to it.

My daddy rolled with his coolness.

So now I'm like, I want to be

Just like my daddy.

That's what it really means to be imitators of God.

I'll never be my daddy, but because of what he showed me, I can at least get close to it.

We got to learn, right, that we ought to be imitators of God.

And that's the type of mimicry that Paul is alluding to in Ephesians 5.

He didn't just tell us to imitate God as dearly beloved children, but that we must do so with how we walk.

How we walk as children of the father.

We walk like our father.

And I want to tell you that as your father teaches you how to walk, he's not leaving you to walk alone.

As you walk, you might fall.

You might scratch your knee.

You might even bump your head.

But listen to this.

Get up, sleeper.

Dust yourself off and keep on walking.

When Paul is talking about walking here, he's talking specifically about behavior.

He's talking here about conduct, right?

Paul, here in this text,

He discusses what behavior is and is not a worthy imitation of God and befitting for us as God's children.

And Paul here in his text, I love it because he shows us really four ways that we must walk.

Shout out to Josh for giving me the baby towel.

I love it.

I love it.

I'm sorry, Josh.

You know.

Four ways.

He shows us here four ways, right, that we must walk, that should fuel our unity as genuine believers.

Watch what he says.

The first thing he says here in this text, he says that we got to walk in love.

He says to walk in love.

Now, let me tell you what this means.

Let me tell you what this means.

To walk in love, it means choosing to put the good of others ahead of your own preferences.

Listen to this.

Even when it's costing you something.

Right?

For example, walking in love is choosing to forgive somebody.

It's choosing to forgive somebody who hurt you instead of holding on to that offense and treating them differently.

Walking in love is saying, I got every right to pop off on you.

But you know what?

Praise the Lord.

I love you.

Walking in love is saying, you know what?

You did this.

You hurt me.

You said this.

You said that.

I know it was you.

I know you did it because I looked dead at you when you did it.

But you know what?

None of us are perfect.

But we got to learn to walk in love.

Watch what he says in verse 2 of the text.

In verse 2.

He says, and walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you as is proper for saints.

Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks or

For know and recognize this, every sexual immoral and impure and greedy person who is an idolater does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

We got to walk in love, see, because understanding this, walking in love is to walk in the same actions that God our Father has walked in with us.

See, because we're not walking in some type of Valentine love.

No, he ain't talking about a red box that's filled with chocolates.

You never know what you're going to get.

He's not talking about this Valentine love, not some love that's based on conditions, but the love that is selfless, love that pushes past our pet peeves and embodies Philippians 2, 3, doing nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but counting others more significant than ourselves.

See, this word love, when he says walk in love, this word love here,

simply is agape right that agape love is sacrificial it's unselfish is unconditional love that proves itself through action see because the love that the world teaches us is based on conditions

I'll love you as long as you got money coming in.

I'll love you as long as you do what I say.

I'll stay in love with you as long as you look this way, as long as you got hair.

Thank you for Tracy's example.

Loving me even though I'm bald, right?

We tend to love people based on conditions.

But the agape love, the love of God that's powered by gospel is not based on conditions, right?

Because if the love of God was based on conditions, all of us would be going straight to hell, sleeping in our grave.

But thanks be to God.

That he didn't think it strange to lift us up out of the horrible pit.

Out of the miry clay and place our feet on the rock.

We heard it said this way, Pastor Darren.

When nothing else could help, love lifted me.

Love lifted me.

I love Romans 5, 8.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus went.

To Calvary.

To save a wretch like me.

That's love.

They hung him high.

They stretched him wide.

They hung his head.

For me he died.

That's love.

But that's not how the story is.

Because in three days he rose again.

That's love.

Sacrificial love that says it ain't based off how I feel.

It's based off what he does.

Love.

We got to walk in love.

Walk in love.

We got to walk in love.

You want to see unity?

Hear this.

That's the type of love that we got to walk in.

But I want to tell you, I want to be honest with you.

That involves your heart posture, though.

It involves your heart position.

This involves words that come out of your mouth.

Paul says, like, it involves your heart posture.

It involves the words that come out of your mouth.

But let me tell you this.

It also involves what you do with your body.

Amen.

Right, that's why Paul, he connects the dots here.

But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you.

But here's the conviction and the heartbreaking reality that, right, pornography, the statistics about pornography says that pornography percentage is highest among Christians.

But we saying we pure.

Yeah.

That's because you ain't sleeping with it.

You're still wrong if you're using your hands.

I'm just being honest.

Well, there's kids in the room.

Well, maybe if we talked about it in the church, we can protect it from happening later.

God has called us to live pure.

He's called us to live free.

And if we walk in love, it means that I want to live in a way that honors him.

I want to use words that honor him.

Even how I use my body, I want to honor him.

He says here, how does this have to do with my words?

Watch what he says here.

Let no one deceive you with empty arguments for God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient.

Because of these things, therefore, do not become partners with them.

See, walking in love means that we have to avoid dumb dialogue.

Let me tell you this.

Just because you can't say it don't mean you have to.

Just because you can't say it does not mean you have to.

All of these empty arguments that we think we need to have in order to flex even our theological muscles, we got to avoid this stuff.

Like, do you know that the Lord gave his life for you not so you can be the dopest person theologically?

He want to see your heart transformed?

Right, but we thinking that, well, if I can quote Greek or Hebrew or if I'm reformed.

No, no, no.

Are you gospel rich?

Do you know the Corinthian church was even getting the gospel wrong, but Paul still called them saints?

But here it is, we finding ourselves, right, not standing on the same theological things.

And we like, well, certainly they're not blood-bought.

Come on, stop it.

If you're going to walk in love, let's stop looking for ways that divide us and look for ways to unify.

I ain't saying it's easy.

I'm saying it's worth it.

Walking in love fuels our unity not only with the Father but also with one another.

Let me ask you, are you walking in love or are you walking in selfishness?

He shows us, number one, walk in love, but then number two, he shows us something else.

Second thing he shows us, not only walk in love, number one, but number two, we got to walk in light.

We got to walk in the light.

Walking in the light, it means choosing to live honestly before God and before others, refusing to hide or excuse the things in our lives that don't honor Christ.

Because, Kenny, here's what we do.

As long as don't nobody see it, I'm cool.

As long as don't nobody hear it, I'm cool.

But can I tell you, Deacon Dad, what the text says?

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

We got to walk in the light.

An example of walking in the light is admitting when you've done something wrong instead of lying about it.

Admitting you did something wrong instead of hiding it.

If you did it wrong, admit it.

And don't blame nobody else.

Y'all, you know what?

We talk bad about Adam, but we just like him.

Y'all know Adam was out here tripping.

And then when God came, God like, man, what's up?

Man, I told you, boom, boom, boom.

What happened?

Adam said, man, it was that woman you gave me.

It was that woman.

Right?

Here's the thing.

I agree.

Yeah.

But here's the thing.

Do you know every finger, every time you point a finger at somebody else, you point more at yourself.

We got to walk in the light.

Watch what he says.

Verse 8.

For you were once darkness, but now, hallelujah, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of the light for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth testing what is pleasing to the Lord.

Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them.

For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret.

Everything exposed by the light is made visible for what makes everything visible is light.

Therefore it is said, get up sleeper.

And rise up from the dead and Christ will shine on you.

When we walk in the light, we cannot continue to walk in darkness.

Light and darkness cannot dwell in the same place because light is the element that destroys darkness.

Let me tell you, sin is left in the shadows as we let our light shine before men, as Matthew 5, 16 tells us, right?

It is God's plan for us to become more like Christ.

We see that in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 3.

Walking in the light, it means that we consider Jesus as the light in this world, and we walk in that light by following his precepts, living in his power, and growing in his grace.

Do you know that that's really what he was really getting at in 1 John 2?

My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you won't sin.

Like, y'all, I'm going to tell you something.

I just believe that God was a comedian.

Because like, Pastor Jeff, he's writing 1 John, my little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you won't sin.

Then it's almost like he insert not a say lie, but a ha ha right there, right?

And he said, so you won't sin, but because I know you will.

Because I know you will.

He says, you have an advocate with the Father.

Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation, not just for your sins, but for the sins of the whole world.

That big word, propitiation, it really leans into what he said prior, because I know you will, right, saying that.

I already knew that you couldn't do it on your own, so Jesus' finished work on the cross is satisfactory.

And when we know that...

Why wouldn't we want to walk in that light?

Why wouldn't we want to behave as he wants us?

Why wouldn't we want to follow his precepts?

Why would we not want to live in his power?

Why would we not want to grow in his grace?

See, we have a difficult time walking in light probably because we try to compare walking in the light how we think about our light deal.

I don't want to walk in light.

Ain't nobody in that room.

Cut them lights off.

Anybody, you be like, you ever go in your kid's room, broad daylight, and they light on?

What?

Six, seven, right?

It's like... But sometimes life feels so dark.

But when you walk with Jesus...

What should have been hidden is not hidden anymore.

Because light is the element that not only destroys darkness, but it exposes it.

Right?

So the more we walk with Jesus, the more we behave his way, he says, you know what?

I want to do what he want me to do.

I want to walk the way he want me.

To walk.

We have a difficulty walking.

Y'all, God's word is the light.

And to walk in the light is to bring our life into alignment with the word of God.

And listen, we can't do that on our own.

So stop trying.

Right?

The more we yield ourselves to the personal work of the Holy Spirit, the Word becomes our life.

And nothing that you do will remain in conflict with the Word of God.

He says, this is the message in 1 John.

This is the message which we've heard from Him and declare to you that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

If we say...

that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

Here's what I want you to know.

Darkness is sin.

The light is truth.

It shows where there is still, like we got to walk in the light because it shows us where sin is still operating in our flesh.

Our job is to love the truth, to acknowledge that there is sin in our lives that needs to be cleansed out.

The word of God comes to us in a way that helps us to know and understand that we must lean and depend on him.

Let me tell you, light and darkness can't dwell in the same place.

And our Christian responsibility does not stop with our own rejection of evil.

We are responsible for exposing and opposing darkness wherever it's found, especially when it's found in the church.

We should expose darkness, not pour gas on it.

See, that's one of the dangers of community.

When we want to be around people who think like us, we want to be around people who walk like us, we want to be around people who behave like us, ultimately, we're drawn to what we desire.

But do you know sometimes you got to push back against those circles that are familiar to you?

And say, you know what?

I want to be in circles that make me uncomfortable.

Because I know that in that, right, I can draw nearer to the Lord.

The salvific power of Jesus.

Because of that, we are able to be brought out of darkness and into the marvelous light.

Right?

He talks about that.

In Colossians, he delivered us from the domain of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his beloved son.

And when we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

Y'all, we got to walk in the light.

We cannot force our light on people, but we have to walk in the light.

And those who walk in the light, let me tell you, if you walk in the light, you're a disciple of Christ.

But don't continue to walk in a way that makes you happy.

Walk in a way that gives him glory.

And if it makes you happy in the process, cool.

But we exist to glorify him in everything that we do.

That's walking in the light.

But here's the third.

Here's the thought.

But the third.

Walk in love.

Walk in light.

But then third, he says, we got to walk in wisdom.

Yes.

And to walk in wisdom means making everyday decisions based on what pleases God, not simply on what feels good or convenient in the moment.

See, because understand this.

Walking in wisdom is knowing when you should speak, knowing when you should close your mouth.

It's knowing when to simply walk away from an argument that won't glorify God.

See, because here's the thing.

For whatever reason, we think that life is all about us.

We think that all this good is happening because of me.

It's happening because it's connected to me.

It's happening because I'm on God's mind.

No, Jesus is on God's mind.

Right?

Glad that, you know, you with him.

But listen, life don't revolve around you.

Right?

And walking in wisdom.

See, the issue is that too many of us know the word, but we're not applying it.

We quote it when it make us feel good.

Right?

But wisdom, let me tell you what wisdom is.

Wisdom is the word of God applied.

And some of us think that, oh, I'm older, I'm wise.

Just because you old and got gray hairs don't make you wise.

They make you old with gray hairs.

Amen.

But the wisdom is the word of God applied.

And we have to apply the word of God to our lives and walk.

And watch what he says in the text.

Verse 15.

Pay careful attention then to how you walk, not as unwise people, but as wise, making the most of the time because the days are evil.

So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

What are we getting at?

Walking in wisdom, it involves, hear this, using discipline.

One of the ways we fail in using wisdom is really how we use our time.

We don't make good use of our time.

Pressing snooze instead of getting up.

Causing us to be late for everything.

This friend of mine sets all his timers 10 minutes early.

I don't understand why, because he always 20 minutes late.

But we got to learn, like, it's simple things like making the best use of our time.

Like, if Heartland starts at 10, 10, 15, right, why is it that you're walking in at 10, 45?

I'm just getting there for the word.

No, you're late.

Well, they're sitting in my seat.

No, your seat is in the back.

You're late.

Right?

Right?

What if?

Just what if?

Like we make Christianity so difficult and think that it's only about these big things but what if God wanted to use your time to honor him?

Just by you like it started at 11 but you getting there at 1030 just to greet somebody.

Just to you never know how you just getting there and saying how are you?

Somebody may bust out crying you know nobody's ever asked me.

I'm going to tell you one day

I was walking with somebody.

We was doing some prayer walking, and we ran across a guy who was just down in the dumps.

You could tell that he wasn't in a good place.

So we started talking to him.

We was on Page and Martin Luther King.

And we started talking to him.

We said, hey, we're just walking, praying.

We told him, we're just praying.

Any way we can pray for you?

And he said, yeah, you can pray for me.

I got too much to tell you what to pray for.

Just pray.

And as soon as I grabbed his hand, Pastor Darren, he starts crying.

And I'm like, what's wrong, brother?

He said, nobody has touched me in years.

And initially I was thinking, man, this prayer walk almost over.

Lunchtime is coming.

But just taking that time, making the best use of that moment.

I was able to encourage somebody just by holding his hand.

Here's the thing.

What if we allowed and leaned into wisdom to say, you know what?

Time don't belong to me.

Time belongs to him.

I know you think it do because you got an Apple watch or you got a Samsung watch or you got a Seiko, right?

Or if you like Deacon Dads, you got a Rolex, right?

But just because you can tell time don't mean it belong to you.

Time is not a luxury that we own.

We ought to make the most of our time on this evil earth.

Well, what should I be doing with my time?

Come here, 1 Corinthians 10, 31.

Whatever you eat or drink, whatever you do, give glory to God.

Use your time.

Use wisdom.

Not to please yourself, but to please God.

How does God want to use you?

You look at his word.

In what ways in your life do you need to apply the word of God and stop running from it?

Too many of us are using our Bibles as a coaster for our coffee cup.

But not a scalpel for our heart.

But let me tell you.

If you're going to watch how you walk, you got to walk in love.

You got to walk in light.

You got to walk in wisdom.

But this last point is this.

You've got to walk in the spirit.

We got to walk in the spirit.

To walk in the spirit.

allowing the Spirit of God to guide our attitude to guide our choices to guide our responses instead of us being controlled by our flesh see walking in the spirit is when somebody is getting on your last nerve instead of reacting out of anger you allow the Spirit of God to help you respond with patience and self-control

Understand this, walking in the Spirit has nothing to do with how well you shout.

Walking in the Spirit has nothing to do with you speaking in tongues.

Because if you read Galatians 5, fruit of the Spirit or evidence of the Spirit was not speaking in tongues.

I can get into that another day.

It's not.

Walking in the Spirit does not mean you don't have a flesh.

It means that your flesh doesn't get to lead the way you walk.

See, because our flesh really, our flesh says react.

But the Spirit of God tells us to respond in a God-honoring way.

Our flesh tells us to get even.

But the Spirit says forgive.

The evidence that we're growing is that you don't have to respond to everything the way you used to.

See, we've bought into this thing.

Don't make the old me come out.

Oh, they almost made me go back.

Well, how can they make you go back if the old you is really dead?

Stop giving people so much control over you that their actions puts you back to a place that God told you to crucify.

You know, one of the hardest things about Christianity is us choosing to define words our own way.

Let me make it clear.

Because we shout.

We talk about Jesus was crucified for us.

We say hallelujah.

Because the gore.

The nails in his hands.

And the crown of thorns on his feet.

They crucified him.

We like who wouldn't serve a God like that.

But when it comes to crucifying our flesh.

For whatever reason.

We don't define the word the same way.

Crucify my flesh.

Oh let me burp it.

Let me burp my flesh.

Let me give it some high quality H₂O.

No.

Crucify means kill it.

Stop fueling it.

We continue to put ethanol in our old self and then wonder why it's rising up.

We got to kill it.

Let me tell you.

We got to crucify our flesh.

We got to stop fueling it.

Well, I don't think I'm fueling it.

Okay.

Let me ask you some questions.

What are you listening to?

What are you watching on TV?

Who are you spending your time with?

Because if you're listening to that one song and it brings back that one memory, you need to take that song out of your playlist.

Right?

Because I'm going to tell you, all of those things tend to distract us from where God really wants us to be.

Right?

He says in the text, don't get drunk with wine.

which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

When he says here, walk in the Spirit, what we got to understand is,

We can't intoxicate ourselves in ways that's going to cause us not to think godly.

He didn't say, don't drink.

That ain't what he said.

Jeff was like, wait, my sabbatical ain't over yet.

Hold up.

He didn't say don't drink.

He said don't be drunk with wine.

What he's getting at here, don't get drunk with wine.

What he's getting at here is don't become like so inebriated with stuff that you can't think clearly, that you can't walk clearly, that you can't talk clearly.

Let me tell you, you're fooling yourself.

I know where my line is.

I can stop at any time.

Well, how come you haven't?

It's not just alcohol.

Some of us, oh, marijuana is legal.

Let me tell you this.

Not if you want to walk in the spirit.

Well, I'm not smoking it.

It's just a gummy.

Foolishness.

Stop believing the lies.

You're intoxicated and it's not causing you to think well.

It's not helping you to walk in the spirit.

You got to cut the rope.

You got to cut the rope.

We got to walk in the spirit.

Like we got to yield to his control.

We got to follow his lead and we got to allow him to exert his influence over us.

Believers, we have the indwelling spirit of Christ, the comforter who proceeds from the father.

The Holy Spirit, we have it.

He's assisting us as believers in prayer, as Jude 20 talks about.

He intercedes for us, as Romans 8 talks about.

He also leads the believer into righteousness.

We see that in Galatians 5.

He produces his fruit in us who yield to him.

Believer, we must submit

it to the will of God and walk in the spirit walking by the spirit it's just living a life in the spirit it's living your life in the continual presence of the spirit of God simply being connected to the vine I love how Jesus said Jesus says in John 15 he says I am the vine

And my father is the gardener.

Every branch in me that does not produce fruit, he removes and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it'll produce more fruit.

You want to produce fruit.

Are you walking in the spirit?

I remember one of our first Bible studies at Faith Community.

Tracy, remember this while she started laughing.

We was talking about fruit of the spirit.

And I asked a question in the room.

I said, hey, if I were to take you to the store and I was to give you a bag of fruit and it was rotten, would you still eat it?

This guy stands up and said, eh, no.

Right?

I said, why?

Because it's rotten.

It flies all over it.

If you would present rotten fruit to you, why would you present rotten fruit to God?

But if you walk by the Spirit, what you're saying is, you know what, God?

I'm entrusting my life to you.

I'm entrusting my walk to you.

Let me tell you, when a baby is learning how to walk, nobody expects them to get every step right.

They're going to stumble.

They're going to wobble.

They're going to lose their balance.

And every now and then, they're going to fall.

But when the baby falls, a loving father don't just look at the child and say, since you fell, you no longer belong to me.

A loving father is going to say, you know what?

No, you're still my child.

And because that's my child, I'm going to reach down and I'm going to pick my baby up.

I'm going to put them on their feet.

I'm going to grab them by the hand and say, come on, baby, let's try it again.

And somebody needs to hear it today.

Really, that's the gospel.

You haven't walked perfectly.

This week, some of us have stumbled.

This morning, some of us have stumbled.

Some of us fell into something that we knew better than to fall into.

Some of us haven't walked in love.

You've been hiding in darkness.

Some of us have been making foolish, selfish decisions.

And some of us have allowed our flesh to lead us instead of the spirit.

But I got some good news for you today.

Jesus came for people who couldn't walk right.

Jesus Christ came down from heaven, stepped into our brokenness, lived a life that we could never live, and then walked up the Calvary carrying a cross that didn't belong to him but belonged to us.

They put nails in his hands.

They put nails in his feet.

He hung his head.

He shed his blood.

He died for our sins.

They used to say back in the day, Kenny, but right early.

Right early.

Sunday morning, he got up with all power in his hands.

And because Jesus got up, when you walk in and you fall, you ain't got to stay down.

Because grace says, get back up.

Mercy says, get back up.

The cross says, get back up.

The empty tomb says, get back up.

And when you get back on your feet, hear this.

Watch how you walk.

Stop trying to walk your own way.

And walk the way the Lord wants you to walk.

Maybe you need to confess some stuff to him.

And as the worship team comes and lead us in another song real quick.

Listen to this.

Do your Jesus business.

Talk to him if you need to.

Be honest and confess where you're struggling in your walk.

Be honest and confess to him.

Where you struggling?

Maybe you need to tell them, God, for too long I've been holding the wall.

For too long, God, I've been holding the handlebars.

For too long, God, I've just been trying to figure it out.

But what God is really saying is, you spending all your time trying to figure it out, but I done already worked it out.

Or you going to continue to walk in your own way?

Or are you going to trust him?

As the worship team leads us, spend some time right where you are.

If you want to worship, worship.

If you need to pray, pray.

But spend some time with the Lord.