

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Ephesians
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Stop Sleepwalking
Ephesians 5:1-21

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 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. 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. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; 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. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 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.”**

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.

Hey, good morning, Harris Creek family! Good to be with you all. We got any Baylor Bears graduating? [cheers] There you are. Okay, let's go! Man, every school's letting out TSTC, MCC, all of you guys. Congratulations! High school's coming up. It's a good, good season. The sun's out today. I walked the stage half drunk when I graduated from Baylor. Like, I was an idiot. And so, plan now, honor the Lord, give Him glory, and don't walk with regrets, as I did. He's worth it. He's worth it.

So, recently, one of our kids comes and they're like, “Hey Dad.” It's bedtime. They're like, “My toilet’s stopped up.” And so doing the dad thing, it's one of my jobs, plunging the toilet, get it cleared. All the kids have gone to bed. I get upstairs, two-story house, and I hear water running. And honestly, I'm like, “Oh my goodness!” Like whatever I did downstairs plunging, it like broke some, you know, I'm not super plumber. I don't know what's going on,

but I'm like, I can hear running water. All the lights are off. Doors are shut. Everyone's asleep. I'm like, "Got to be kidding me!" So, I turn on my flashlight. I'm like, looking like, "Where's this water coming from?" And I'm like, "Wait, that's coming from a bedroom."

I opened the bedroom door and there is our six-year-old just peeing on the floor. [laughs] He's been potty trained for like three years. I'm like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, hold up, buddy! What are you doing? What's going on?" He's out of it. He doesn't stop. He doesn't know that I'm even there. He's just full on, full sin, going for it. I get him back into bed and I'm like, "What is happening?" This has never happened in our family. He was sleepwalking. I've never known him to sleepwalk, ever. And when you sleepwalk, you do things you normally wouldn't do. Like things you would, he's never done that in his life. Things that are completely abnormal when you're awake, you do when you sleepwalk.

I start there. Because I think that all of us in some regard or another, spiritually speaking, are prone to sleepwalking. I think there's areas of our life where we are prone to sleepwalking spiritually. Things that we would never do if we were in the light. But in these moments of our lives, we just fall into spiritual slumber. And we start to do things that if all the light was on and we were present with others, that'd never happen. But the spiritual sleepwalking, in case you're arguing in your mind like, "No I'm not, I don't spiritually sleepwalk. Like fully alive and awake to the Lord." You think about some areas that there might be drift, where you start to become numb to the things of the Lord, like focusing more on your kid's activity than their spirituality. Maybe working super diligently at work and then being lazy in marriage and family. Maybe it's that your go-to superpower is control or anger when things aren't going the right way instead of prayer and petition. Maybe it's laboring so hard for your kingdom instead of Christ's Kingdom. Being full of this kind of perpetual lust as you walk through life versus love. There's all this like heart drift, spiritually speaking, where we fall into sleepwalking. And not walking in the light that is Christ. And while it's super funny for a six-year-old, it's sad and sobering when it's us as Christians and the children of God.

And so today we are going to look at three ways to snap out of spiritual sleepwalking, the antidote to spiritual sleepwalking through life. And we're going to be in Ephesians chapter five, verses one through 21. And for context, if you've been journeying with us here at Harris Creek or online, you know that we've been walking through Ephesians and the first three chapters of Ephesians are all orthodoxy. And then you have chapters four, five, and six that are orthopraxy. So, orthodoxy is right thinking, and then it leads to, four, five, and six, right living. You've got your doctrine that inform your deeds. You've got your right beliefs, that is how you would have right the ways to live. It's your belief determining your behavior, and you're going to see it even in the passage today. It's going to be a lot of the orthopraxy, but even here, Paul will begin with orthodoxy because the source then informs how we live.

And so, what we will walk through today is three things. One, to walk in love. Two, to walk in the light. And third and finally, to walk in wisdom. These are the antidotes to sleepwalking through life and spiritual slumber. So, let's read, it'll be on the screen. This is the ESV, Ephesians chapter five, verse one through seven.

"Therefore, be imitators of God as, [He's going to remind us of our identity, this is the orthodoxy] as beloved children, [Now the praxy] walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, [that's the cross] his sacrificial life, is a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named

among you as is proper among the saints. [He's reminding us of our identity.] Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 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. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them;”

From that, and you see it right there in the second verse, we have our first point, which is to walk in love. That's five, verse two, it says, walk in love as Christ loved us. Walk in love.

1. Walk in Love.

The source is we are beloved children, then the manner of our walking is to walk in love. And the reason for this is because who you follow changes how you walk. Who you follow changes how you walk. As we follow the world, we look like the world. As we follow Christ, we start to look like Christ.

I thought recently about our spring break trip we took as a family. And because of a mechanical delay with the airplane, we weren't going to make our connecting flight. And so, we're like telling the flight attendant, we're like, “Hey, you've got to call ahead to our gate. We're not going to make it there. Tell them that we're here. We're in the airport. We're coming from a delayed flight. We're going to make it.” Then I turned to the kids. I'm like, “Kids, listen up! Get everything out of the seat back pocket. Go to the bathroom right now, because once we hit the ground, you're not going to be able to go to the bathroom. Get all your stuff together, and as soon as that plane door opens, I'm right now behind you, I'm going to get in front of you, and you follow me. Like, don't do anything, nothing but follow me. We have no time, we don't have time to go to the bathroom, we don't have time to get a drink, we don't have time to get gummy nerds at the newsstand. You follow me, period, or we're not making it to the destination. Got it?” And they're like, “Got it.” Like they think this is incredibly serious. It was, it was our spring break. So those doors open and it's like bob and weave. I'm jumping over Samsonite. Like they're all following, every now and then a glance behind me. I got three kids plus a wife. We're going, we're going to make it. We get finally there. And they're like, door shut. And they're like, “Sorry, sir.” Except this one attendant goes, “Elmore family?” And I was like, “Yes, that's us!” She's takes out her badge, swipes it. She's like, “You made it just in time.” Only because we didn't stop. We had a singular focus. In this time, my kids were following me, and it changed how they walked. Normally, it's like, dude, they'll stop for anything. They're like, “Let's go to Chili's! Chick fil A! Stop! Can we get candy? I got to go to the bathroom!” It's like bathroom stop after bathroom stop. Because it was a singular focus how they walked was informed by who they followed. Who you follow changes how you walk.

And that's how we got to our destination. And it's what the Lord says to us here. He says, “Walk in love.” And He tells us, just like my kids following me through the airport, He says, **“Imitate God as beloved children.”** That we're children following our father to a destination with a singular focus, not being distracted by the pulls of this world. And he gives us the list. He says it's sexual impurity, and idolatry, and filthy speech. They're all going to be like, calling for your attention, follow me, and it's going to change how you walk, that you would walk in love.

But it's an interesting phenomenon, like our family, and you guys know this, surely, I'm not the only one in the room, that sometimes we treat the ones we love the most, the worst. Don't nudge your spouse or your kids right now. But it's this strange reality, where sometimes the ones we love the most, we treat the worst, and I think it's because we presume upon the relationship. Whereas if you treat a friend bad, the friend can just be like, "Dude, I'm done being your friend." But your mom's not going to stop unbeing your mom, your wife's not going to stop unbeing your wife, your kids can't unbe the kids, they just are, and I think we presume upon that, and we do the same thing with God. I know I do, where I'm like, "Well we're good." And so, I can be a little lax here, because I've been adopted, Ephesians chapter one, through the blood of Christ, and that can't be undone, and so we'll give ourselves a hall pass. We think because we're justified, right with God, we're justified to sin.

This happened to me a few years ago. This has crept into my life. I would never cuss when I was angry, but I would do it sometimes for shock value or humor. I'd be like, "Well that's just kind of funny. Like nobody would expect it from me, and I'll work it in. Not out of anger, just to be humorous, like to drop something in and make everybody laugh." And this guy in Re:Generation, the recovery ministry, he walks up to me one time in private. He said, "Hey, can I ask you something?" I thought he was going to ask me, you know, yeah, let me tell you some theology. "Yeah. What do you have in mind?" Hypothetic union of Christ. "Yeah, what's going on?" He's like, "How come you think it's okay to cuss sometimes?" I was like, "You're such a Pharisee." I didn't say that out loud. I thought it in my mind, but I was like, "What do you mean?" He's like, "Earlier you said a cuss word. I know you were trying to be funny, but why do you think that's okay? Like Scripture says, 'let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth.'" And in the moment, truly, I'm like, "Gosh, you're like a spiritual hall monitor. Are you kidding me?" And then the Spirit convicted me. I was like, he's right. Like, why do you think it's okay to justify that small sin because you're justified with God? You think because you're right with Me, it's right to sin? And here, in this verse, it says, "**Let no one deceive you because of empty words.**" That would mean to say, "Hey, it's okay, we're going to get married someday, so we can live in the sexual sin as we date." That's to lead someone astray. He said, "**For such things, the wrath of God is coming.**"

It's okay to do this little shortcut on your taxes because everybody does. So, it's going to be all right. I mean I used to cheat on my tests at Baylor by getting old tests through the fraternity. I would study tests that had been smuggled out of professors' classrooms. And I just thought it was okay. It's just normal. That's just what you do. I'm just learning the content on the exam. It was not okay. Like totally lack of integrity. But it was a way that I was sleepwalking. And there's a thing that's happened. In the 80s and 90s, I think within the church, there was legalism. It's like, there's Christian liberty, where we can live in the freedom of Christ. Augustine said, "Love God and do as you please." Now that doesn't mean we get to sin. But if the church then was like, "Well, we're going to be legalistic. We're going to draw the boundaries a little further and say, don't do this because God says don't do this. So, we're going to back it up a little." That's legalism.

Now I think the pendulum has swung, and here we find ourselves in a different error, which is licentiousness. And it's to say, "We're Christians and we get drunk, and we don't hurt anybody or do anything wrong when we get drunk." Or "We're Christians, like me, and we're foul mouthed, only for humor's sake, never in anger." Or "We're Christians, and we're going to get married one day, and so our dating looks a little different." "We're Christians, and we do good, we just like to have a little fun." And we start to live like the world, and look like

the world, and we're not walking in love, we're sleepwalking. It says in 1 Corinthians 15:33, it says, **“Do not be deceived, bad company corrupts good character.”** Here in this passage, it says, don't even be partners with them. Like don't associate with them because he knows there's going to be a drift on our life if we're with those who are drifting, we're not going to be walking in love. There's a phrase that's incredibly helpful. It says, “show me your friends and I'll show you your future.”

We are to walk in love with those who are walking in love as beloved children and not have selective sanctity. Sanctity or holiness in certain areas of our life, and then giving ourselves a hall pass in another one. As 1 Corinthians 5 says, **“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”** Get rid of all sin, all impurity, this passage says. And to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice wholly unto God. It says, **“As we are to imitate God's beloved children,”** it says, “as”, really powerful word, small word, incredibly powerful. As, A-S, **“As Christ gave himself as a fragrant offering, was pleasing to God, as a sacrifice.”** A sacrifice, biblically speaking, was the entirety of an animal, and it was to be spotless and pure. Malachi rebukes some of the offerings that they were giving to God. He's like, “You're bringing me these broken and lame lambs that are blemished. You wouldn't give these to an individual, let alone giving it to God.” And so, in the Scripture, in this passage, he says, “As you walk in love, give the totality of your being to God. Don't separate any other part off and be like, “Well this part you don't get.”” But rather than it's all, and it is holy, H-O-L-Y, holy, meaning set apart entirely under God, and then wholly, W-H-O-L-L-Y, meaning entirely. So holy for God and wholly, entirely for God, that's how we are to live this “walk in love.” Loving God and loving others.

Let's continue in the passage. Ephesians 5:8-14. **“For at one time, [he's going backwards] you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”** This is interesting. He doesn't say positionally, you were in darkness and now you are in light. He says an identity statement. He's like, “you were darkness.” It embodied you. You were, positionally, your identity, you were darkness, not where you were, but who you were, and now you are light in the Lord. **“Walk as children of light, (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true) and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it's shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything comes to light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says, [and there's an old Christian hymn, and it's also pulled from Isaiah, it says,] “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”**

So, the first was walk in love, and here in this passage, we see walk in the light. That's verse eight.

2. *Walk in the light.*

Walk as children of the light, we're to walk in the light. What I would say here, where he says, “you were darkness and now you are light”, that's an identity shift, whole identity has shift. In Ephesians two, it says, **“We were children of wrath, dead in our sins and trespasses.”** And now we are children of light. There's an identity change. Your identity changes your activity, who you are changes what you do. It's just true. When I was an unbeliever, I was a total drunk. I was a chameleon. Cheated, lied, cursed. Like, your identity changes your activity.

Being new to Waco and new to the staff, a lot of times, it's like, "Hey, what's your name? Where'd you move from?" And then another question, usually third or fourth, they'll say, "Hey, so what are your hobbies?" They're trying to get to know me. "What do you like to do?" And it's funny because I'm like, I'm thinking about it. My knee jerk is, "I like, cut my kids fingernails and toenails. I plunge toilets, I take out the trash, I help make meals. I play catch and the football with the kids in the front yard." I don't, I'm thinking about, I'm like, "I don't think I have hobbies. I take my wife on dates; I really enjoy that." But those are, because of who I am as a husband and dad, my activities have changed, and you can see them like backing off a little, they're like, "I don't, I thought I wanted to hang out, I don't want to hang out. I don't want to cut your kid's toenails. Is that really what you do?" It is what I do. And I don't resent it. I don't resent that those are my activities because my identity has changed.

When I was a single guy, I could do whatever I wanted, like hunt, fish, road trip, travel, whatever. And we still do some of that, but it's like, my identity has changed my activity. And that is the same in this Christian life that once we're in Christ as a natural, as a supernatural outworking, our identity changes our activity entirely. And so, you're going to hear me say this phrase, often probably, I think it's, I think it's foundational, because you see in the scripture, in verse three, he says, "**As is proper among the saints.**" That's a Greek word, *hagios*, it means holy ones. That if you're in Christ, you are a holy one. That's how God sees you because the blood of Jesus that has washed you from sins. So oftentimes people are like, they'll say as a Christian, "Well, I'm just a sinner." You're not a sinner who sometimes saints. You're a saint who sometimes sins. And again, it really matters because your identity will change your activity. Your identity will change your activity.

The second thing that I want you to see here as we walk in the light, is that light is for life and not lecturing. Light is for life and not lecturing. When my kid was going to the bathroom on the floor and we flipped on the light, it was not so that we could be like, "Alright Judd, have a seat on the bed. You know that we go to the bathroom and the toilet. You know that we never pee on the floor. You know that you should always go to the bathroom before you go to bed because you had too much Gatorade and your bladder was full." You know, that is not at all what happened. I already knew, like oh, he was like so embarrassed and ashamed. We got to get him back to bed, get him cleaned up, clean up that thing. All it was, we flipped on the light to see how we could help in this situation. And we're down on our floors, cleaning everything up, cleaning him up. We're not shaming him. We're helping him. And in the same way, and this is especially important as we're here as fellow believers walking together. In life, in life groups, caring for each other, is that we flip on the light, we bring things into the light, we expose the deeds of the darkness into the light, not for shame, or condemnation, or to make anybody feel less than, but for life, not for lecturing, for healing.

And hear me say, the Scripture is telling it right here. There is no healing without revealing. There will be no healing without revealing. We've got to bring things into the light. And it says that when we do the light of Christ will shine on you. That's a blessing. That's bringing life to you. As you bring things from the darkness into the light, no healing without revealing.

Look, Re:Generation every Monday night, people are going through Step 4. Step 4 is where you list harms done to me, harms I have committed, sexual sin, anger, resentments, recovery struggles. They're listing things out and then confessing them to one another. And some of you are like, "Dude, I'm never going to Re:Gen. That's what you do?" But here's the deal.

They're getting healing on Monday that some of you are never experiencing on a Sunday. Because again, there's no healing without revealing. They're coming forward and being like, "Alright Lord, this is hard, but it's good. So, I'm going to bring things into the light, not for condemnation, [but] so that Christ's light can shine on me." Proverbs 28:13 it says, "**He who conceals his sin will not prosper.**" You won't advance, you won't go forward. Like that's sobering. "**Who conceals his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces will find mercy.**" What an incredible gift. I've heard it said this way, the N.E.T., New English Translation, it says, "Whoever conceals his sin, God will expose. But if you expose your sin, God will cover it." If you cover your sin, God will expose it. If you expose your sin, God will cover it with the blood of Christ. You'll be found with mercy. We walk in the light.

And so, it says, "**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.**" And that's interesting, because he's writing to the Ephesian church, who are believers, and yet he says, "**Awake, O sleeper.**" And you're like, "Okay, so sleepwalking?" But then he says, "**And arise from the dead.**" We know from Ephesians two that those who are without Christ are dead in their sin. So, Paul's bringing the Gospel in thinking, "You know what? There may be somebody in the Ephesian church who thinks this is all by works, or that their sin is too great to keep them from God. And so, I'm going to wake them up and tell them, you can be saved! You can arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you." It's the Gospel, that there's no amount of good works that will keep us, get us to God or no amount of bad works that will keep us from Him, but rather by trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, believing that He died on the cross and rose from the dead. We will cross over from death to life. And it says "**Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.**" Meaning, you will become a child of light, from darkness to light. [Amen]

And y'all, Amen indeed, get a load of this! JP was at University of Tennessee this past week for Unite. It's a gathering of thousands and thousands of college students. He's been doing it on various campuses. Well, he said Spirit of religion was thick on that place, kind of the contextual like, "Yeah, of course I'm a Christian, because I'm not a Muslim or a Hindu, so yeah, I'm a Christian." Just by like, sociological reasons. But is there a change within? He says he's just preaching, sharing the Gospel every way he knew how to do and not getting through. And then finally, he presents one more time at the end after multiple times of presenting the Gospel, getting no response. And he said, "In that moment, thousands stood up to receive Christ and hundreds were baptized." [cheer] Absolutely! It's incredible! Like revival breaking out on that college campus by the Gospel and Christ shown on them.

Now I think at the same time, one of the dangers with sleepwalking is just like Lazarus, where Jesus says to Lazarus who was died, he had died. He said, "Lazarus, come out!" And then he says to those around him, "Take the grave clothes off of him." I think some of us, we've been raised by Christ. We're alive, born again, and we're still walking, wrapped up in the grave clothes. And when you're wrapped up like that in sin, in the grave clothes, the things of death, you can't get yourself out. So, Jesus says to those around him, "Take the grave clothes off of him." And they start unwrapping Lazarus, and we need that in our life. There's no Lone Ranger Christianity. We're so wrapped up in whatever sin that might be. You've got to bring it into the light so that your brothers and sisters in Christ can take those grave clothes, the things of death, off you and let Christ shine on you.

We walk in love, we walk in light, and now this last one, as we look at this passage in verse 15, it says, "**Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise. Making the**

best use of the time, [not my time, *the* time] “because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery” [Which just means like riotous living] “but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody of the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything” [I mean, there's nothing that doesn't fall within those two categories. He says that temporally and circumstantially; always and for everything] “giving thanks to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

I want to point out a couple of things here. One, that's a Trinitarian passage. We worship one God in three persons, and here it says, “**Be filled with the Spirit.**” We're a vessel to be filled. He says, “**Giving thanks always and for everything to the Father.**” And then he points to the Son. And he says, “**Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**” So, you've got the Trinity represented there in the passage. The other thing that I want you to look at there, he says, “**Making the best use of *the* time.**” It's not our time. But that's how we talk about it. I do. My time. My schedule. My Outlook calendar. My semester. My weekend. He says here it's *the* time, that *the* time is God's time, and that the way we're supposed to steward God's time is according to God's will. It says, but that we should try to discern and understand what the will of the Lord is. So, it's His time, His will, and not mine.

I have this friend, they're actually traveling right now, I believe. It was a couple months ago, and he's like, “Yeah, my wife and I are taking a vacation.” “That's amazing! Where are you going?” He's like, “Italy!” It's like, “Oh bro, you're going to love Italy! My in-laws took me there once. Like, what are you going to do?” He's like, “I don't know.” I was like, “Well, where are you flying into?” He's like, “I think Rome.” It's like, “You think Rome?” It's like, “Dude, it's a big country. Like, how long are you going to be there?” He's like, “Eight days.” “Well, what's your plan? Like, where are you going to be?” He's like, “I don't know. I heard Lake Como is nice.” I'm like, “What? It might be, but bro, are you going to see the architecture of Florence? It's like walking through a movie set. Are you going to go to the Academy and see the David? Like, the best sculpture ever been made on this creation by man. Are you going to go to Rome and see the Colosseum where Christians were martyred? Are you going to see Paul's maritime prison where he wrote some of the prison letters? Are you going to go to the Amalfi Coast or Cinque Terre and see God's creation? Like, what are you going to do?” And he's like, “I don't know about any of that, man.” I'm like, “You got to make a plan! Like what? You can't just show up and wing it. What does your wife want to do?” He's like, “I think she wants to see some of that stuff, eat well, and sleep.” “Like, then you need to understand what the will of your wife is, because the time, and make best use of it. And so, he develops this itinerary.

And the reason why it was so important, I was like, “Bro, you got a finite amount of time, and you're in a foreign land, so you got to know how to use that, and so are we. We have a finite amount of time. And we are living in a foreign land. This is not our home. We try to make it our home. It's not our home. Scripture tells us we are aliens and strangers. And so, in this passage, he's like, “Hey, you have a finite amount of time. It's not your time. It's the time. It's God's time. You're living as a foreigner in a foreign land. And so, you need to understand and discern what the will of the Lord is so that you can walk in wisdom, the wisdom of the Lord.”

3. *Walk in wisdom.*

And the second thing that he says is “to be under the influence.” And don't take that out of context. You're going to leave this church and be like, “Man, they told us to be under the influence, see?” It's under the influence of the Holy Spirit. See, in Ephesus, they would worship the gods of Dionysus and Bacchus. And they thought that they could hear from these gods and relate to these gods by getting drunk. That when they were subdued by spirits, alcohol, they could connect with spirits. And Paul's like, “You know how they do that? Well, I want you to instead be filled by *the* Spirit, the Holy Spirit.”

As a recovering alcoholic, I've got some experience, I've got some reps in drunkenness. And when you're drunk, you do things you normally wouldn't do, you say things you normally wouldn't say, and you think things you normally wouldn't think. And Paul is drawing a parallel. He's giving an instruction, and then he's also giving an invitation. The instruction is, don't be drunk. The Bible doesn't say, don't drink, but it does say, don't be drunk. And then he says, but you know how when you're drunk you do things you normally wouldn't do, say things you normally wouldn't say, think things you normally wouldn't think? In the same way, I want you to be filled with *the* Spirit, the Holy Spirit, not spirits, alcohol spirits, by *the* Spirit, and when you are, you will think things you normally wouldn't think. You'll be thinking about the glory and goodness of God. You're going to do things you normally wouldn't do. Like giving incredibly and sacrificially and generously, you're going to be sharing the Gospel. You're going to be seeing every walking soul as an immortal being who will spend eternity in heaven or hell and actually love them and want to lead them to Jesus when you're filled by the Spirit, when you're under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

So, you should know, I don't believe in a second filling of the Holy Spirit. I believe in a daily filling of the Holy Spirit. A daily filling, and the reason why is because the verb here in this passage is present tense, passive, imperative. I'm going to go grammarian on you real quick. Present tense means it's ongoing, that every day we are to be filled by the Holy Spirit. If we're not, we're going to be fueled by the flesh. Pick one. Fueled by the flesh, filled by the Spirit. Second, it's passive, meaning the action is being done to us. You can't do it. But He can. He will fill you as you avail yourself to Him. And then third, it's an imperative. Meaning, this is not a suggestion like life might go well if, or you might consider, instead it says, “Be filled by the Holy Spirit.”

Now here's the deal. It's been said, you can't get more of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit can get more of you. And I understand the heart behind that. I think it's because there's the sealing of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:13, where it says when we placed our faith in Jesus, He sealed us, meaning signet ring, ownership, you belong to God. But it's different here. That was sealing. This is filling. And so, the filling, think about it this way. It's been said, you can't get more of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit can get more of you. I think it's actually better said, “You get more of the Holy Spirit *as* the Holy Spirit gets more of you.” You get more of the Holy Spirit *as* the Holy Spirit gets more of you. I mean think about it. Mary got more of Jesus than Martha did. Why? Because Mary was sitting at Jesus feet while Martha was busy doing other things. They were both believers. Both believers, both are going to be in heaven. Mary got more. She got more because she was with him more.

Or think about my kids. The kid that spends more time with me is going to know me more. They're all my kids. All three Elmore kids are Elmore kids, always will be Elmore kids. But

the one that spends more time with me will get more of me. They will know my heart more, my mind more. They'll start to look more like me. So, you can get more of this Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit gets more of you. And conversely, I guarantee you, when I'm being short and harsh with my kids, when I'm being short with my kids, there's a direct correlation, because I have been short with my time with God. If I have short time with God, I will be short with my wife and kids. There's a direct and inverse correlation there because I'm not as filled as I could be of the Holy Spirit. And then there's another thing that happens. So, he says, **“Be filled with the Holy Spirit”** [That's vertical, spirit to us. Then he says,] **“addressing one another”** [This is now horizontal] **“with Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”** That's because part of the filling of the Holy Spirit happens when we gather corporately, like we are right now on Sundays, when we're addressing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

My wife was diagnosed with breast cancer three years ago. She's okay now. They got everything. We're three years into this. They'll declare you cancer free in five. But I remember the first week we walked into church, having gotten that diagnosis, no treatment done yet. And I'm just like, bomb went off, shell shocked. It's not that I was shaking my fist at God. Like, “I can't believe you'd allow this!” I know like we're promised suffering in this life, but I walk in and everybody's singing and I'm just staring at the carpet. Like I can't bring myself to sing. But what happened spiritually is by the end of that third song, my arms are lifted, and I am singing. Because of the reality of this verse, where it says, **“Be filled by the Holy Spirit, addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”** That as the body of Christ was singing around me, the Spirit filled me, and led me to then praise and give thanks to God, for everything and always just as the Scripture said, not because I volitionally decided to, but because those around me carried me along in the Spirit to the Spirit.

Now, before you give my wife too much sympathy for walking through cancer, she is the sweetest wife ever. If, it's conditional, there's an asterisk, if she is well fed. If she's had three meals a day, sweetest wife ever. If she misses a meal, it's not even hangry. It's like, put her in solitary confinement. She's a danger to herself and others. And so, it is with us spiritually. We've got to be fed and filled by the Spirit. When we are, the fruit of the Spirit is just pouring out. But if we're not, if we self-starve ourselves from the Spirit, Dude, we're going to be hangry and all sorts of kinds of the flesh coming out. And so, we are filled by the Spirit. This is the way that we walk in love, we walk in the light, and we walk in wisdom.

You remember my son going to the bathroom on the floor? So, I ask him. I knew this passage was coming up. We're going to be talking about how to stop spiritually sleepwalking, to walk in love, and light, and wisdom. I said, “Hey Judd, can I tell them that you peed on the floor?” He's like, “No. Do not say that!” And then he stopped, and he goes, “Actually, you can, if you tell them that I was sleepwalking. If you tell them I was sleepwalking, then you can tell them.” The reason why that mattered so much to his little heart is he's like, “I don't want them to think that's normal for me. I was just sleepwalking. I wouldn't normally do that.” And how crazy would it be if I told you as a family? “Yeah. At night, before bed, we all get together, we all pee on the floor. [laughs] That's just, that's how we roll. I mean, you know, we do good in school, I work hard, but that's just one of our quirks.” You'd be like, “Dude, you're a weird family! Go back to where you came from!”

But how much weirder would it be if this city knew, “Wait, aren't you the family of God at Harris Creek? Aren't you beloved children of the Father? So why are you sleepwalking in that

area of your life? I think I know you better.” And while we can laugh at the weirdness of what it would be like in my family, may it never be named among us. And may we wake up from spiritual slumber, never sleepwalk. That instead the city would look and be like, “Dude, those people are walking in love, they're walking in light, and they're walking in wisdom, all for the glory of Christ.” Let's pray.

Father, thank you for adopting us. Thank you for bringing us out of darkness. And not just out of it, we were darkness. We were the embodiment of darkness. But you saved us through Jesus and now have made us to be light. And Lord, we don't have the ability to live this out. We have no total inability to live out what we have just read. But you have promised in your Word that as beloved children, we can imitate you as we are filled by the Holy Spirit, given our lives as a sacrifice as Jesus did. And so, Lord, would you carry us along, carry us by the Spirit? There's no other way. Change us, bring revival individually, corporately into this city, all for your Kingdom and glory and by your power. In Jesus name. Amen.

Y'all please stand to your feet and sing to your risen Savior.