

Studies in Ephesians - Part 5

by William MacDonald

The Christian life is a life of self-discipline, restraint, and godly living, which can only be achieved by yielding to Jesus Christ and living the life he wants us to live.

Duration: 59:21

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-19, Ephesians 4:32, Ephesians 5:14, Ephesians 6:10-20

Topics: "Studies"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by addressing the need for preparation for conflict. He emphasizes the importance of relying on the strength and power of the Lord, rather than human might. The speaker then discusses the nature of the battle, highlighting the need for momentary dependence on Jesus and walking by faith in Him. The sermon also touches on the marks of a Spirit-filled person, which include speaking, singing, giving thanks, and submitting. Additionally, the speaker delves into the plea for personal purity and describes the pagan life that the Ephesians lived before their salvation.

Transcript

Ephesians chapter four, and we'll begin reading with the seventeenth verse through the end of the chapter. Ephesians four and seventeen. This I say, therefore, and testify of the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus. That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lot, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your rod, neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good for the use of edifying, that it may minister great unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Now we mentioned last night that we'd be beginning with chapter four of this epistle. We begin, shall we say, the practical section, which we entitled Duties of Grace, chapters four through six.

And we saw that chapter four began with a plea for unity, verses one through six, and then with God's program for the growth of the Church, verses seven through sixteen. Now beginning with verse seventeen of this chapter, Paul begins a plea for personal purity, and that plea extends down through the twenty-first verse of the fifth chapter. This is a very practical section, and you'll notice that the remaining part of chapter four is made up of a series of contrasts.

Beginning with verse seventeen, down through verse nineteen, you have a description of pagan life. You have a description of the type of life which the Ephesians lived before they were saved. And what characterized that life? Well, what characterized it was a lack of self-control, a lack of restraint.

They just gave themselves over to evil passions, to sensual greed, to moral covetousness. And so Paul exhorts them in verse seventeen, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk. That word walk is a characteristic word in this epistle.

In fact, a very excellent title has been given to the epistle, The Wealth, Walk, and Warfare of the Christians. Wealth, that is what he is in Christ. Walk, that is what we're studying now.

And warfare, that is what comes in the last chapter of the Christians. Now, I say in these verses, seventeen through nineteen, you have a description of that life of evil passion. And Paul says in verse twenty, But ye have not so learned Christ.

Those are the things that are characteristic of the Christian life. The Christian life is a life of self-discipline, a life of restraint, a life of godly living. And so he's contrasting the pagan life and the Christ life.

Now, I think we should just stop here to emphasize that the Christian life is nothing that a person can live in his own strength. It's absolutely impossible for a man to live the Christian life by himself. The Christian life is not me living the way I want to live, but it's the Christian turning his life over to Jesus Christ that the Savior might live his life through us.

It's absolutely impossible. Beyond human attainment, we can only do it as we're yielded to him. So he says, But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus.

Then in these next verses, twenty-two through twenty-four, he contrasts the old man and the new man. Now, the old man is all that I was as a man in the flesh. All I was as born into the world.

All I was, let us say, as a child of Adam. And in the reckoning of God, that old man has been crucified with Christ. God couldn't do anything with it and didn't try.

He couldn't improve it, couldn't reform it, couldn't make it over. God condemned that old man and nailed it to the cross when the Savior died. Now he says, That has happened in my reckoning.

I want you to practice what has happened at Calvary. I want you to put off the old man. He has been crucified positionally.

Now put him off practically. You see, there are two creations. There is a creation headed by Adam.

He was the federal head of the human race. And all that creation led to was sin and failure and misery. But God has brought in a new creation, and that new creation is headed by the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

And that creation brings in life and victory and glory. Now the Christian is to live practically putting off the old man and putting on the new man. And so he says in verse 24, and that he, no in verse 22, that he put off concerning the old manner of life.

His conversation means manner of life, not the words we say. That he put off concerning the old manner of life, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful law. It's hard for Christians to realize that their old nature is no better after they're saved than it was before they were saved.

Awfully hard to realize that, isn't it? But it's true. The old nature doesn't improve a bit at salvation. God gives a new nature.

And he says, now keep the old nature in the place of death. I crucified it positionally at the cross of Calvary, God, so now I want you to reckon it to be so, and keep it in the place of death. And that he put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Now how do you do that practically? Well, you do it by occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ. You do it by being occupied with him, by going back to the Gospels and going to the Word of God and studying the Savior. And you know, a wonderful transformation takes place.

The more we behold him, the more like him we become. It's one of the great principles of life that what you worship, you begin to resemble. They say over in India that it's often the case that men go into those heathen temples and they sit with their knees akimbo, and they watch those Buddhas and just gaze upon them, those bronze statues, and they look and they look and they look, and it is truly said that after years those men just become like the Buddhas.

They just come to look like them. It's absolutely true. The scripture tells us that we're changed into the same image from glory to glory by beholding him, and that's how we put on the new man.

Now the next contrast is made between lying and truth. Verse 25, it says, Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Now does it not seem a bit strange to you in an epistle that began with such exalted truth as the Christian seated with Christ in the heavenly, that we should talk about such a mundane thing as lying? Well, someone has very pointedly said that Ephesians begins in the heavenly, then ends in the kitchen, and that's true.

It tells us what we are in Christ, and then brings us right down to earth and says, now look, in practical everyday living, this is how you're to work it out. It ends in the kitchen. And so it says, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.

Now neighbor here means Christian neighbor, doesn't it? Not just his neighbor in the community, although that should apply too. But it must be his Christian neighbor because it says, for we are members one of another. And truth is a debt we owe to one another.

Now to me, this gives a very blessed view of Christianity. Many people think that Christianity is don't do this, and don't do that, and don't do the next thing. Well, it does say putting away lying, but it also says speak every man truth.

There's a positive side to Christianity, and that is more beautifully brought out down below. It says, be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath. And the contrast here is between sinful wrath and righteous anger.

Now there is such a thing as righteous anger. I believe the Lord Jesus manifested it when he took the scourge of small cords and drove the money changers out of the temple. And they remembered, it says the disciples remembered that it was written of him, the zeal of thine house has eaten me up.

What does that mean? Well, it means that the Lord Jesus Christ was consumed with a passion for the things of his father. And when he saw those men coming into the temple and defiling the sanctuary of God, he became righteously indignant. There's no sin connected with that.

But for the Christian, it can issue in sin when righteous indignation becomes intemperate. I think that can be true in the case of parents disciplining their children. There is such a thing as righteous discipline.

But then when our passions run away with us and we just begin to take it out on one another, then it is sin. Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

Even in the case of righteous anger, keep short account. Square things up before the end of the day. Now, you know, the Bible is good for you, not only for your spirit, but for your soul and for your body as well.

And one of the great fields in medicine nowadays, I understand, is called psychosomatic medicine. For many years, I believe that many men in the medical profession just thought that man was a body, and that whatever ailed him was the result of bodily processes. But now men increasingly are finding out that the spirit and the soul and the body are very closely linked.

And if a thing is good for your spirit, it's good for your body, too. And it seems to me that this is true in the case of anger. A person who's given to anger, to willful intemperance, reaps the fruit of that in his own bodily health.

I don't know whether it'll manifest itself as ulcers or some other way, but I have no doubt it does. And if we would just go by the teachings of the word of God, I'm sure a lot of those things would be avoided. Be angry and sin not.

Let not the sun go down upon your rock, neither give place to the devil. Don't give him any chance. You know, the devil is clever.

The devil looks upon my little life as an acre of land. And he doesn't come to me and say, now I want the whole acre. He says, I just want that little spot in the middle of that acre.

And he knows very well if he can get the little spot in the middle, he can tromp all over the rest of the acre to get to it. He has that right. And so the scripture says, neither give place to the devil.

Don't give him that little spot in the middle of the acre. Don't give him any place at all. Now notice verse 28, and here the distinction is between stealing and giving.

So this is very precious to me. It says, let him that stole, steal no more. Writing to Christians, let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Now this is beautiful. Christianity isn't a matter of don't steal, but it's work so that you can have money to give to people that need it. Isn't that lovely? Isn't that lovely? That's certainly going beyond the claims of law.

The law would say thou shalt not steal, but Christ says work hard so you'll have a little extra money so that you can give to the work of the Lord, so you can give to him that needeth. I could mention a friend of mine in the north who doesn't have to do it, but she takes a job for two months every summer working in a flower shop, and every cent she earns goes to foreign missions. Isn't that lovely? Who would have ever thought of such a thing? I think she must have read Ephesians 4.28. I really think she must have read it one time, and it must have sunk down to her heart.

And she said, well, I don't have to work, but I can make a little extra money. She sends every cent of it off to the mission field. It must be of great price in the sight of God.

Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that which is good for himself and for his fellow men. Let it be productive labor that he may have to give to him that needeth. Now, the word of God is really wonderful.

Perhaps if you and I were writing this to Christians, we'd never say that him that stole, steal no more, and yet God knows when he wrote this book. God knows it down to the history of the world. Even Christians would slip.

Satan would get an advantage of them. Perhaps they'd do things they shouldn't do. Perhaps they'd even take things that perhaps they didn't think it was wrong at the time, and yet the word of God is seen fit to include this admonition, and not without reason.

Now, next to contrast, speech that defiles and speech that edifies. It says, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Now, this is a lovely thing.

It isn't just that my speech should be negative, that I shouldn't say certain things, but it's that I should make a deliberate effort to edify my hearers. One of the highest compliments I ever heard paid to a man was this. You can't get his conversation off the Lord Jesus.

And I remember when I used to be with Dr. Ryanside and visit, invariably he'd say, say, did you ever think about that verse, do ye set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church? And then he'd just give you a little exposition of a difficult verse that perhaps you had never even thought about before, and you'd never forget it. He made it a point that his speech would edify his hearers. It wasn't just that his speech was pure, but that it was profitable.

And then it says in verse 30, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. The scripture speaks of various attitudes we can take to the Spirit of God. One is, he can be

grieved.

Another is, he can be quenched. Another is, you can do death's fight unto the Spirit of God. And you can resist the Spirit of God.

Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. Now, this word grieve, how do we grieve the Holy Spirit? Well, I would suggest, first of all, that only a Christian can grieve him. The unsaved can do death's fight to him and resist him, but only a Christian can grieve him.

To grieve the Holy Spirit is to do things he doesn't want you to do, or fail to do things he wants you to do. You can only grieve someone who loves you. Your neighbor's children don't grieve you, the brat.

They annoy you, don't they? That's the way you feel toward them. But your own children grieve you. Why is that? Because you love them.

And the Holy Spirit loves us. And when we refuse to let him have his way in our lives, he's grieved. When we refuse to allow him to occupy us with Christ, he has to turn from that ministry, which he so loves to do, to restore us to fellowship to himself, doesn't he? And so it says, "...grieve not the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Of course, this verse teaches the eternal security of the believer, doesn't it? It doesn't say, whereby ye are sealed until the next time ye sin.

It says, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. When the Holy Spirit comes to indwell a man, he stays there as the seal of ownership, as a mark of ownership until the day of redemption. And then the next contrast, and the final contrast here, is between all evil and all goodness.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice, and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. In other words, once again, it isn't just a matter of the negative side putting these things away, but it's the positive side. Treat your brethren the way the Lord Jesus has treated you.

How has God forgiven me? Well, he's forgiven me when I didn't deserve it, and that's just how we should forgive one another. He has forgiven me freely. He has forgiven me in love.

And he forgets my iniquities. He puts them far away from him. And so it says, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, not for your own sake, but for the sake of his beloved Son, has forgiven you.

Now, chapter 5 goes on with other exhortations intimately connected with these, the first of which is follow love. And verse 1 of chapter 5 is closely connected with verse 32. It says, be ye therefore followers of God and dear children.

And that word followers means imitators. Did you ever think of that? That God wants you to imitate him? God wants you to be like him. You say, well, I couldn't do that.

Well, then that's what it says in the Word, doesn't it? Why should we say we couldn't do that when God is telling us, be ye therefore imitators of God and dear children? How can I do that? By forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me. You see that therefore, in verse 1, refers back to the previous verse. And it tells you how to be an imitator of God.

Be ye therefore imitators of God and dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. Now, the Christian can never enter into the atoning sufferings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered once and for all on the cross of Calvary.

And it was said of him as he hung there, himself he could not save. And you know, in a sense, that's true of Christians, too. If we're going to be a blessing to others, we can't save ourselves.

And so the example of the Lord Jesus Christ is constantly brought before us, his example of self-sacrifice, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. Now, the next thing is to flee impurity, and that thought is carried out in verses 3-14. And we must remember that these people were saved from lives of evenism, lives of immorality, lives of idolatry, and human nature hasn't changed until the word of God stands for all time.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as become a saint. One of the things that characterizes a person when he gets saved is that he even stops talking about things that formerly he discussed quite freely. The Christian is quite discreet, isn't he, in his conversation, and it says, don't even let these things be named among you as become a saint.

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks. Now, the thought here is evil communication. I think even the word jesting has the idea of impure jesting, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting.

Rather be occupied with giving of thanks. God loves a thankful spirit, and one of the greatest condemnations of man written in Romans chapter 1 is that neither were thankful. God cannot stand that attitude of unthankfulness.

For this she know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. If a man's life is characterized by these things, he's not saved. He has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

It doesn't teach that a man who has committed these sins can never be saved. It doesn't teach that at all. But it does teach that a man whose life is continually characterized by them is not saved.

He's not on his way to heaven. He will not get there until he repents and trusts Christ as Savior. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

He doesn't only say, you were at one time in darkness, but he says, you were darkness. In other words, they were not only in the darkness, but the darkness was in them. And now he says, it's all changed, and you're light in the Lord.

They're not only in the light, but the light is in them. The light of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ has shined upon them. Now he says, you are light, walk in the light.

And here we have that blessed truth again of the Christian position and the Christian practice. God puts us in the place by grace and then tells us to walk in that place through love to him. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

And I suppose that that means the fruit of the Spirit is manifested, is witnessed for, is shown forth in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord and proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord. And this is a great touchstone for every action in the Christian life, isn't it? The great question when I'm about to do a thing is, is it well-pleasing unto the Lord? And that decides everything. You remember Samson when he was going to get his bride, he said to his parents, she pleases me well.

He should have asked, does she please God well? And he would have saved himself quite a headache, wouldn't he? This verse says, proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord. We're so apt just to please ourselves and to do the things that we like to do instead of asking Him if it's what pleases Him. Now it says in verse 11, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

And this is an interesting thing. The Christian is not only to stand aloof from that which is darkness, the unfruitful works, but he's to reprove them. How? By his lips, yes, and by his life as well.

You know, the greatest reproof that the Christian can bring upon the ungodly is a godly life. Remember, it speaks of Noah building the ark, preaching righteousness, and he says, and by it he condemned the world. And it's possible for a Christian leading a life of purity to bring upon himself the hatred of the world just because of that life.

Isn't it so? How many times it has happened. It's when we have a straight edge that we know when a thing is crooked. If there wasn't such a thing in the world as a straight edge, we'd never know that a thing was crooked.

And it's when the Christian is standing there at the workbench and all those other crooked people are beside him that their crookedness is shown up, isn't it? It's that life of holiness and that conversation that's well-pleasing to the Lord that condemns them. So it says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret, that is, which are done of the ungodly in secret.

But know it, for all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Now the thought here is that the Christian working in an ungodly environment brings the light of God upon the ungodly. He shows them up without even trying.

For everything that is made manifest is lightened, is illuminated, is brought out into the light. It's that single Christian in that ungodly company that shows them all up, that illuminates them. Wherefore he saith, or that is, wherefore it says, Awake thou that sleepest, that arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

Now this is not a quotation from any other part of the Bible, verse 14. It perhaps could be a quotation from a hymn which was current in the days of the Apostle Paul, or Paul can just use this as the language of light, as the language that is characteristic of light. Awake thou that sleepest, that arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

And my own personal thought is that as Christians are brought into contact with the unsaved, and the unsaved are revealed as being wicked and unclean, the gospel invitation goes out to the unsaved. Awake thou that sleepest, that arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee. Then in verse 15 we begin another exhortation, and that is, is, walk circumspectly.

Circumspectly means carefully. Walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Verses 15 and 16.

Then the next exhortation is, understand what the will of the Lord is. Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Now, how do we understand what the will of the Lord is? Well, we understand it by studying his word.

That would be one way. In other words, God has revealed his will to us positively and negatively in his word. He says, for instance, wherefore come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

Just that simple verse of scripture gives you God's will in a thousand and one decisions in life. Doesn't it? Tells you to disassociate yourself from evil company of every kind. Then God reveals himself to us in other ways by the converging of circumstances, by the advice oftentimes of godly men.

Through the ministry of his precious word, perhaps just the needed word of advice comes to us at the needed time. He reveals himself to us as we pray, as we're before him on our knees. And our responsibility is to understand what the will of the Lord is.

The next exhortation is to be filled with the spirit, verses 18 through 21. And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit. There's something very similar between drunkenness and being filled with the spirit.

Remember on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, some said, these are drunken with new wine. Why was that? They saw a connection apparently, didn't they? These are drunken with new wine. It's interesting to me how the world is always trying to give a natural, supernatural event.

A noise comes from heaven and some say it's thundered. They couldn't hear the voice of God, so they say it's just a clap of thunder. These men are filled with the spirit on the day of Pentecost.

They say, oh, they're just drunk with new wine. Well, the spirit of God tells us here that there is a connection between being drunk and being filled with the spirit. What is it? Well, when a man is drunk, he doesn't have to tell anyone.

When a man is filled with the spirit, he doesn't have to tell anyone either. You can tell a drunk man by his walk, and you can tell a spirit-filled man by his walk too. You can tell a drunk man by his talk, and you can tell a spirit-filled man by his talk too.

If he's filled with the spirit, you know pretty well what he's going to be talking about. He's going to be talking about the things of the Lord. Now, being filled with the Spirit is not the same as being indwelt by the Spirit.

We're indwelt by the Spirit the moment we're saved. But being filled with the Spirit is a momentary experience, requiring momentary dependence upon Christ. How can I be filled with the Spirit? Well, in

order to be filled with the Spirit, I have to be emptied of myself, don't I? You have to empty the glass of its air before you can fill it with water.

The air has to be out. And we have to be emptied of ourselves before the Holy Spirit can fill us. And to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the Word of God.

Because the Lord Jesus said, the flesh prophesied of nothing. It is the Spirit that quickens it. The words that I speak unto thee, they are Spirit, and they are light.

A man who's filled with the Spirit doesn't go around telling people. He doesn't attract attention to himself. His language is, he must increase, I must decrease.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. This is a continuous process. Yesterday's filling won't do for today.

It isn't a case of a once-for-all experience. It's a case of momentary dependence upon the Lord Jesus, walking by faith in him. Now it's interesting to me that the marks of a Spirit-filled man as given in this portion, there are four of them.

First of all, speaking. Secondly, singing. Thirdly, giving thanks.

And fourthly, submitting. Do you notice that? Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, number one. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, second.

Third, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And fourthly, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Now these are all, these are all participles modifying be filled with the Spirit.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. What is the difference between a psalm and a hymn and a spiritual song? Well I would say that the psalm primarily is a portion of Scripture. The Psalms of David.

A portion of Scripture in meter. Not only the Psalms of David, but there are psalms in other portions of the Word, too. Various songs.

The song of Moses, the song of the Lamb. And then hymns are poems not necessarily inspired, that is, in the sense of the Scripture, addressed to God. Hymns addressed to God ascribing praise to Him.

We mentioned that one last night. Lamb of God, our souls adore thee, while upon thy face we gaze. And many others that we could mention.

Speaking directly to God in our own language, as it were, not particularly in the language of Scripture, although in the scriptural language. And then spiritual songs might be any songs about, let us say, Christian experience. This world is a wilderness wide.

Something like that. It isn't particularly speaking directly to God, and yet it is something which the Spirit of God speaks through us. So I would suggest that as the main difference between these.

A psalm would be an inspired portion of the Word of God, a hymn of praise. And then a hymn is something not inspired in the sense of the Scripture, but ascribing praise to God, directly addressed to Him for His

matchless perfection. And then a spiritual song might be a description of our experience here on the earth.

So that's the first. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Now a happy spirit goes along with being filled with the Spirit. I was amused recently to be in a city. There was a young man there, and he was bubbling over with songs for the Lord.

And after the meeting, he'd go out in the lobby, and he'd burst out into the song. And some of the sisters went, shh, shh. I really believe it was the Holy Spirit just working through him.

But we don't want anything that would, you know, out of the ordinary. Something like that. And I suppose that's what happened after Pentecost.

These great outbursts of joy to the Lord. Shh, we mustn't have anything like that. Well, that's what it says here anyway.

Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God, the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus. A thankful spirit, once again, for all things.

And then submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Esteeming others to be better than ourselves. And that goes with being filled with the Spirit.

Then in the next portion of the epistle, we have specific instructions to various classes of people. I have to put my Bible down, yes. Here we are.

Specific instructions to various classes of people. And as we go along, we'll notice that the Apostle Paul, children and parents, servants and men. He says, why submit yourselves unto your own.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own. At the end of verses, husbands, love your wives. And gave himself for it.

That he might sanctify it and cleanse it with a washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself of glory, his church. He that loveth his wife, no man ever yet hateth his own flesh.

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife. That they too shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself, as the wife see that she reverence her husband. Now the word of God is absolutely marvelous.

In this sense, if the instructions in this portion of the word of God, for instance, were carried out, there would be no divorce, there would be no trouble in the home. Every case of difficulty you would ever think of and ever imagine results from departure from the word of God. It's an infinite book.

And just in those few verses, the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the secret for happy relations between wives and husbands. Now it has been very well said that no woman would mind submitting to a husband who loved her as Christ loved the church. And that's exactly the case.

You see? It's not a case of instruction for one side of the family and not for the other. It's a case of mutual truth. And when the husband loves the wife as Christ loved the church, then there's no cause of difficulty at all, no reason in the world why the wife should not submit.

Then the apostle goes on to children and parents in chapter 6, verses 1-4. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Now I take it that that expression in the Lord refers to the word obey.

I don't think it's your parents in the Lord, those who led you to Christ, but it's obey in the Lord. That is, obey as far as their instructions are in connection with the word of the Lord. For this is right.

Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, that thou mayest live long on the earth. Now this raises a question, doesn't it? The apostle Paul tells children to obey their parents, and then he quotes from the Ten Commandments, the commandment which says to honor your father and mother, the first commandment that had a promise attached to it, and the promise was that if you do this, you'd live long on the earth. But haven't you known young people who loved their fathers and mothers and didn't live long on the earth? Well, I have.

You say, how do you explain it? Is it a contradiction? And I say, no, it's no contradiction. What the Lord is saying in this is, in a general way, that young people who live obediently to their parents live the kind of a life that's conducive to long life. God makes a promise that if you live this kind of a life, it's the life in which you're free from certain kinds of diseases, free from certain kinds of violence, free from the danger of certain kinds of accidents.

It's the life that's conducive to long life. Well, you say, has God broken his promise? If a young person who has been obedient doesn't live to a long life, I say, no, he hasn't broken his promise at all. When God makes a promise in his word, he always reserves the right to give you something better than he has promised.

Never anything less, but he does reserve the right to give you something better. And I say, in any case where the Lord has ever taken a young person away, a person who was obedient to his father and his mother, well, the reason is he has something better for him. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Now, nurture has the idea of chastening, discipline, and admonition has the idea of warning. And those are the two parts of child training, are they not? Discipline and warning. And then the Apostle Paul has a section of servants and masters.

And do you know what interests me greatly? To find that more space is devoted in the New Testament to slaves, to servants, than to any other group of people. Did you ever think of that? If you want to be the President of the United States, you can't go to the New Testament and get any specific instruction for that job at all. But more space is devoted to the subject of slaves than to anything else in the New Testament.

And I believe that there's a good reason for it, and that is this, that no matter where you are in the social scale, you can achieve God's very best by doing all as unto the Lord. You don't have to be great, you don't have to be prominent to be pleasing to him. You can be in a very obscure place in life and fulfill his very highest will for you.

And that's exactly what it says in this passage. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh. The thought is they're only your masters according to the flesh.

They don't control your spirit, they don't control your soul, only your masters according to the flesh. With fear and trembling. Now I don't think that means cringing before them, but fear means respect, and trembling means having a horror of offending them.

In singleness of your heart as unto Christ. Now that's the beautiful part of the verse, as unto Christ. No matter what the job I might be given to do, mop the floor, sweep the streets, it doesn't make any difference.

What my job in life is, I can do it unto Christ and it's very blessed to him. Now I think we should remember that in whatever work we get to do. Sometimes around the assembly we're asked to do something that's pretty menial.

Oh, there they are, they're all up on the platform and here I am peeling potatoes, you know. Peeling potatoes can be just as beautiful in the sight of God as speaking from a platform. It can be just as important in his sight it says, as unto Christ.

You can cobble shoes to the glory of God. And this is very beautiful too in another sense, that it tells us there's no difference between what is secular and what is sacred. We have a funny little way of saying in our own mind's hour, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, that's secular.

Sunday, oh, that's sacred. Oh, this pastor doesn't know what it is. They're all sacred and everything you do should be done with an eye to the glory of God.

Not would I service as men-pleasers, not doing a good job just because the boss is looking on, but as the servant of Christ doing the will of God from the heart with goodwill, doing service as to the Lord and not to men. Now remember that the next time you're asked to do something that's a little bit disagreeable. We'll say, I might not like to do it, it might run against the grain, but I'll do it to the glory of God.

You know, you hear a lot of people in Christianity, they're quitting, they're offended and some little thing happens and they say, well, I'm quitting. Well, who are you quitting? What are you quitting? We should be doing it as unto the Lord and not as unto our fellow men. And that would take all the sting out of us, wouldn't it? It would take all the stigma out of it.

Notice verse 8, Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. It doesn't say whatever Christian service any man doeth. No.

It says, Whatsoever good thing a man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And the thought is that everything we do, we should do well. Everything we do, we should do perfectly because men are looking and they're judging the Lord Jesus Christ by us.

Well, let's do it even if we don't like it. Let's do it even if other people don't want to do it. Let's do it just to please the Lord.

I was touched recently by a dear old lady from St. Louis. I was visiting in Davenport, Iowa, and she was there well on in years. And they were having a conference in Davenport, and all the younger sisters were busy preparing meals, entertaining guests.

And she says, You know, I'm just a little bit jealous. She says, I look back to the time when I used to love to do this for the Lord, and I can't do it anymore. I thought that was very, very sweet.

And I'm sure the Lord will give her credit for just having the desire in her heart, even if she couldn't do it. And that's what this passage teaches. Whatever we do, we're doing it as unto the Lord, in our daily work as well as in the things of the Lord.

And then it says that ye masters do the same things unto them. That is, show the same spirit unto your servants. Forbearing threats.

Don't use threats on them. Knowing that your master also is in heaven. Oh, yes.

Authority doesn't stop with you. If somebody over you, neither is the respect of persons with him. And that brings us down to verse 9. Then verse 10 begins a new section, which is preparation for conflict.

Now, I'm five minutes over time, and any that have to leave should feel free to do so at this time. I realize that there are folks that have obligations, so please feel free to leave. And I'll just try to finish the rest of this chapter quickly.

Preparation for conflict. Chapter 6, verses 10 through 20. It says, Finally, my brethren, be strong, not in yourself, not in human might, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. It describes to us the nature of the battle. What kind of a battle do we fight? Do we fight with swords and guns and spears? No, we do not.

It's a spiritual conflict. And this spiritual conflict is carried on in the heavenlies, where Satan is and where our position is. It says, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

It's not a carnal warfare like the Chinese are fighting right now, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. That is where Satan fights. Now, God has given us an armor for this, and so the whole armor of God is described in verses 13 through 17, which I've just listed here.

The belt of truth. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth.

That is the belt of truth. And that is a great support, a great girdle for us today, truth. And having on the breastplate of righteousness.

That is, I believe, referring to the person's own character. If you have a righteous character, it's a great defense against the darts of the wicked one. The breastplate of righteousness.

You know, if there's a little bit of defect in your breastplate, watch out. There was in David, and Satan knew just where to find it. And there was in Samson, and David knew just about that weakness, didn't he? And there was in Peter.

Satan knew just where Peter was weak. He just knew that little flaw on the breastplate of his righteousness, and it doesn't take him long to find it. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Feet that are ready to run in the errand, taking the gospel of peace to others. It says, above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery dart of the wicked. And I take it that faith here

means dependence, and the Christian's great defense is that shield of dependence upon the living God.

As long as I go forth, and depending on my own strength, I am a conquered foe. But as long as I go forth, nothing in myself, and looking to God for all my strength, Satan cannot reach me. And take the helmet of salvation.

And I think this refers to the hope of salvation. Now, we are saved, and yet we're looking for salvation in its fulfillment. And I think the Christian warrior goes forth into warfare, looking forward to the day when he'll be saved body, soul, and spirit.

And then it says, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Now, all the weapons, all the parts of the armor, except the last, are defensive. Defensive.

And then the last one, the sword of the spirit, is the offensive weapon. And you remember the Lord Jesus used the sword of the spirit in the temptation with Satan, when he said, it is written, man shall not live by burden alone. It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

He used the sword of the spirit, and Satan fled. And then you have the two standing orders of the Christian soldier, pray and watch. Praying always, verse 18, with all prayer and supplication.

I think that means all kinds of prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching their run to, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And then he adds, and not only for all saints, but for me. Now, if I were writing this letter, this verse would be just a little bit different.

That only proves what a fool I am. I would write in, for me that I might soon get out of this prison and breathe God's free air again. Paul never prayed for that.

He never prayed to get out of prison. What did he pray for? Boldness. Isn't that lovely? Boldness to preach the gospel wherever he was.

Thank God for such a man. And for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. Why did he need boldness? Because he was preaching a message that men hated, and that offended men.

It offended the Gentiles. It told them that all their wisdom was as nothing in the sight of God. And it offended the Jews, because it told them that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believed it.

So Paul prayed not for his relief, but for boldness. For which I am an ambassador in bonds. A strange expression, an ambassador in bonds.

You ever hear of it before? No, you never did. One thing this country won't do, or any other country, is put the ambassador of another country in bonds. They just don't do it.

You remember when the Japanese negotiators were at the White House, just before Pearl Harbor, talking with the President of the United States, and while they're talking the bombs are falling over in Pearl Harbor. They put those men in prison? No they didn't. No.

They're granted safety to get out of the country. But Paul says, for which I am an ambassador in bonds. And he just wasn't representing an earthly country, but the blessed Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And they threw him into jail. But therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister of the Lord, shall make known to you all things.

How would you like to be called that? I tell you, that's better than being known as Prime Minister, or Secretary of State, or President, or anything else. Just to have that appellation. I wonder, did Tychicus know, when he was serving the Lord so faithfully, that he would be memorialized down through the centuries, and for all eternity, as a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.

What a wonderful epitaph to have written on one's life. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that ye might comfort your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And how does Paul end his epistle? His grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. How did the epistle begin? It began with grace, didn't it? How does it end? It ends with grace.

What's the story? The story is that Christian life is grace from beginning to end. Shall we pray?

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