

#36

August 19, 2018

Ephesians 5:15-20

5:15 Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise,

5:16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

5:17 So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

5:18 Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,

5:19 as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

5:20 giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In all of Paul's letters, the first half is celebrating what God has done through Jesus Christ. You might call them doxologies or praise. We were dead in sin. By our faith in Christ we have been brought to new life in Him. Through the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross and His resurrection we are given hope and joy and peace. We look forward to that day when all Christ shall return and all will be reconciled to God.

The second half of the letters are practical advice as to how we should live in response to the love of God and how we should express our love for God.

Today we continue in the letter to the Ephesians. A primary focus of this letter is the unity of the church. Where does unity come from and how do we keep it? We do not have to look far away and think about other churches or denominations. I believe we are to look at our church and ourselves individually.

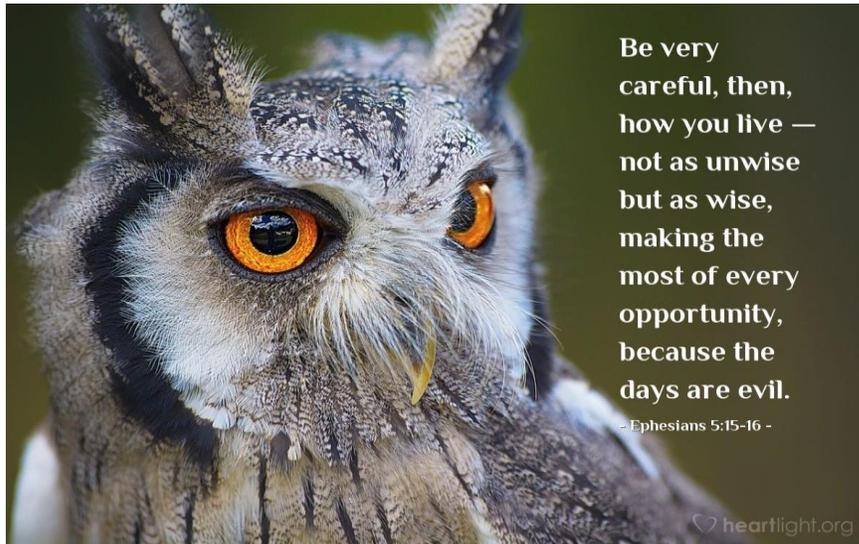
I shared my story at the Bible study about my very first Sunday as a pastor, but I would like to share with you all.

“ ... ”

We start by examining own hearts. Ask yourself, “Am I living in unity with God? Do we as a church express the unity that God has in mind for us?”

We are called to relate to each other differently than the way the world does.

It is tempting to think about how others should be acting but we must start with ourselves. A few weeks ago we started with Ephesians 4, being humble, gentle and patient. Last week we talked about anger. We do get angry, and it is not a sin, but



keeping anger opens the door for evil. We sin when we allow anger to fester.

“Be careful, then, how you live.” For me it sounds like a caution. I hear Paul saying, “You can live your life as an unwise person. I believe, even we as Christians can live our lives unwisely. Sometimes it is even more dangerous for us. We can go into a deep sleep in our faith. True renewal of our lives and the world needs to start with us who are believers. Perhaps we, as believers, should realize, that we do not always live as disciples. By the Holy Spirit we can grasp the huge need for us to change our lives and turn back to the Lord and start proclaiming the gospel with love with passion.

So where do we start?

- **frequent examination of my life.** We have to ask daily, “How is my relationship with God. How is my relationship with the church and with my family? How did I live today?”
- Secondly it means **purposeful application to my life of the truths I am learning.** I am to make sure that my motives and actions express the new person that I am in Christ. I start my day by turning to God. I have begun to offer a minute or so a little devotion on Facebook. Please join me in a little prayer, little focus on Word of God. Maybe you also can share something to encourage us all to stay focused on God.

More and more I encourage us to join in being a missional church bring Christ's love to our neighbors. I am very excited to start this relationship with middle school. I am grateful for the ladies who do the good news club in the elementary school.

I have witnessed that you all have big hearts and have such a willingness to do good. Let us encourage one another to join and experience God's power so we might be a light and make a difference together as a body of Christ.

My favorite day of the year is Pentecost. People were together when the Holy Spirit was poured out. They were waiting and expecting that God's promise will be fulfilled. They received and went in groups to be disciples. We are called to serve together and experience how God's word and promise comes to fulfillment. We need each other, we are not fully functioning if somebody is not joining. We are missing puzzle pieces.

kairos καιρός

(n.) the perfect, delicate, crucial moment;
the fleeting rightness of time and place
that create the opportune atmosphere for
action, words, or movement

Verse 16: "*Make the most*" comes from the Greek word for redeem which means to pay a ransom or buy up. There is a commitment, a cost, a choice to be made, if we are to live carefully as Christians. Then the word for "*time*". "making the most of the time," Greek has two main words for time. One is *chronos* which means the measure of time. Our word chronometer for example means an accurate watch to measure time. The other Greek word for time is *kairos*. That word does not refer to the measure of time but to a window of opportunity in time. There are opportunities in our times window. Opportunities for you and me to serve God in our moments and our places.

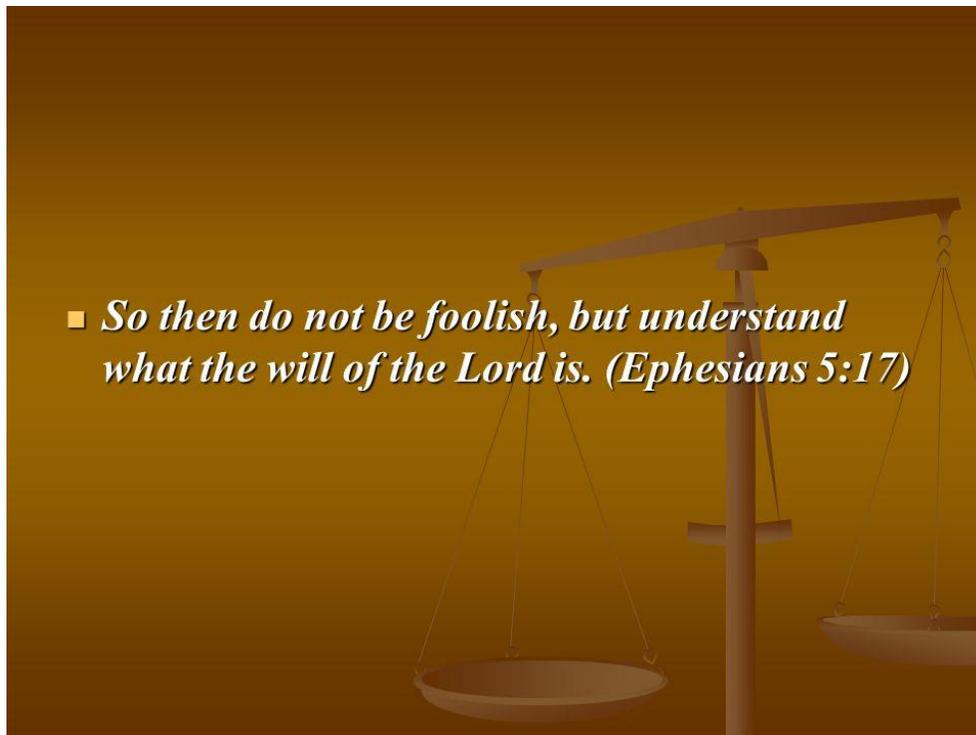
One of the examples we heard at the Global Leadership Summit was the Kodak Company. They had the opportunity. They created cameras and were very successful. But they refused to change and they went bankrupt. The opportunities come for us all. It is so scary sometimes. It feels safer to stay where we are. If we are not changing and growing we are dying. Opportunities, these moments in time, come but they are not

forever. We are not here forever. Kairos is a moment today, when you hear the word of God, will you apply it or let it go.

Why we should use all the opportunities? “Because,” Paul says, “the days are evil.” You can wish. You can ignore or pretend. There is evil and there is a lot of pain, suffering and death. I see kids who suffer from abuse. I see parents who suffer because of their children. I see addictions that destroy lives. I see people who do not want to live. There is a battle in my own life and spirit.

I hear the thoughts that say I am not good. Do not record the Scripture devotion on Facebook. You will mess it up. I hear voices saying me do not start that mission in school. You have no time. It is not worth it. I get angry at home. I want to scream. I have to make choices all the time. I have temptations to do the things that are not important. I have temptations to work too much, to spend money unwisely... I still mess up. But I do fight, I examine myself, I pray and I choose to be and to serve God with others.

“So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is”.



In this information age, a steady stream of input is bombarding us. Like water from a fire hose, information overwhelms and numbs us. But are we any wiser? Are we any closer to God, or to God’s design or intentions for life?

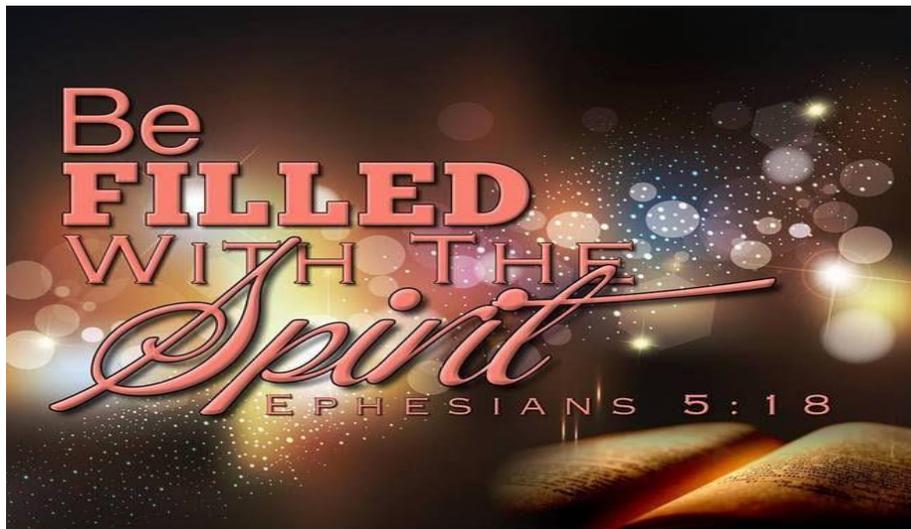
One person noted that we are in a “wisdom famine.” Wisdom comes from Lord. The wisdom is being able to choose good and right. I am very confused in many things. Sometimes I am not so sure what is good. I trust in God. I trust not in my own understanding.

I know one thing for sure. I am called to serve in love and proclaim good news. That is enough for me today. And I do not have tomorrow. So today I am very aware of my time and the opportunities we have to redeem.

5:18 Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,

We already know the ravages of alcohol. I am not going to focus on “Do not get drunk with wine”, but for sure I want to elaborate on being filled with the Spirit. Our activities are not what we do in order to get the Spirit to fill us. Our activities flow as a result of the Spirit’s work among us. I know the Spirit is alive and is among us. I know it is the Holy Spirit who provides. We seek joy. We want good company with others. We need recovery from a bad day. We want to celebrate a good day and just relax.

This is what wisdom looks like, and what the Spirit’s filling brings- joy, company that guides us in right directions, helps us to recover from hard times and gives us new chances. Wisdom is a resource given to us but we have learned so little about how to use it. There is no recipe.



“*Be filled with the Holy Spirit*” is a present passive command which means that this is a command to let God continually fill you with the Holy Spirit.

First, you have

● **to be hunger, feel the need for it**

Second,

● **A clean, pure heart.** You need to have a clear conscience so that you know of no sin that is between you and God, and you and another person.

Third,

● **A willing submission to God.** The filling of the Holy Spirit is about submitting to God. When we come to God and offer our whole life to Him, He will guide us by His Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not a feeling. It is not necessarily speaking in tongues. It is the character of Jesus being expressed through you and the power to witness about Jesus to others.

Fourth-

● **obedience.** Complete submission to God means we are willing to fully obey God. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to speak, or witness, or repent, or ask for forgiveness, or humble yourself

When you seek, when you trust and open yourself up, when you make time and space, I am certain you will find yourself more and more in tune with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

“as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

I do not have to tell you stories, how much the hymns and songs mean to us. We know that when there is nothing left, the melody and the words of the song is the only thing that we remember or brings us to life. Fill yourself with songs, even if you do not sing melodiously, fill yourself with that praise. Even if you will not sing to others out loud, your heart sings and then you will speak and act through this filled Spirit heart.



Verse 20 speaks about giving thanks for “everything” (NRSV) or for “everyone” (NET “each other”). We too easily forget to give thanks for others. To be filled by the Spirit does not lead to private projects or mystical experiences, but to the common work of the community’s worship and mutual building up. The wise life in Christ is one that is embraced within a context of worship, and one which itself becomes an act of worship in thanks to God.

In summary, these six verses from Ephesians remind us of what we already know. They are practical steps in growing in the knowledge, grace, joy and love of God. I encourage you to carefully examine your own life and to pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance as you seek to please God in all you say and do.