

EPHESIANS 5:1-14

In chapter 4, Paul encourages us not only to be united with other Christians, but also some things that we should be doing and feeling now that we are made new. If you remember, he told us not to walk as Gentiles do (using Gentiles to represent unbelievers), and he uses the phrase “in the futility of their minds.” Paul often associates the new life with a new mind. This says something about the faith we have – it is not at all blind, it is reasoned, consistent, logical, and evidential.

The only problem with this is that no amount of evidence will convince an unbeliever that Jesus is worth believing in. Remember how often we have heard the following words applied to us in our unbelief – blind, deaf, dead, enslaved, enemies of God, futile, suppressing the truth, and so on. The clear testimony of scripture is that, unless God opens your eyes by raising you from the dead, you will never see the depths of your sin nor will you see the beauty of Jesus, whose name is the only name under heaven by which we must be saved.

And it is with that history that Paul brings us to his next thought – walking in love.

Love means many things to many people, and even for the Christian, love can play out in many ways. So, let’s see what Paul would teach us about walking in love.

1. In verse 1, to what is the *therefore* referring?
2. In verse 1, Paul tells us to be imitators of God.
 - a. In what ways can we imitate God?
 - b. In what ways can’t we imitate God?
 - c. Read
 - i. 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1
 - ii. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-7
 - iii. 3 John 1:5-12
 - iv. Genesis 3:1-7
 - d. What would it look like in your life to imitate God?
 - e. Why are we supposed to imitate God (the *therefore*)?
 - f. How are we supposed to be considered as we imitate God?
3. In verse 1, Paul uses the phrase “beloved children” to describe Christians.
 - a. Read
 - i. 1 John 3:1-10
 - ii. 1 John 5:1-5
 - iii. Romans 8:12-17
 - iv. Gal 3:23-29
 - b. Do children imitate their parents?
 - c. Define *beloved*. What images come to your mind when you hear the word *beloved*?
4. In verse 2, Paul tells us to “walk in love”
 - a. We have heard the phrase “walk in...” before, what does it mean to “walk in...”?
 - b. The word *love* is contextualized here – what kind of love is Paul referring to?
 - c. How did Jesus love us?
 - i. 1 John 4:7-11
 - ii. 2 John 1:4-6
 - iii. Romans 5:6-8
 - iv. John 10:7-18

- d. What did love drive Jesus to do?
 - e. Define *offering*.
 - f. Define *sacrifice*.
 - g. Read
 - i. Hebrews 7:22-28
 - ii. Hebrews 9:22
 - h. Who was the fragrant sacrifice?
 - i. What does that mean for us as we imitate Jesus?
 - i. Read Romans 12:1-2
5. Right after Paul tells us to “walk in love”, he talks about sexual immorality. Before we get into it, why do you suppose Paul would do that?
 - a. How do you see society defining *love* today?
 6. In verse 3, Paul tells us how we should treat sexual immorality
 - a. Why does Paul connect *sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness*?
 - i. Defining them may help
 - b. You’ve heard the phrase “love is love” in popular culture.
 - i. When is love not love?
 - ii. Are we free to love however we want? Why or why not?
 - iii. Are we free to define love however we want? Why or why not?
 - c. Why do you suppose Paul addresses sexual immorality right after talking about love?
 - d. How severely does Paul command us to treat sexual immorality?
 7. Verse 4 hits really close to home.
 - a. Why does Paul contrast this kind of talking with giving thanks?
 - b. Read
 - i. Ephesians 4:29
 - ii. 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11
 - iii. Philippians 4:4-9
 - iv. Matthew 15:10-20
 - c. We see that behavior is important. Why is it so important?
 8. In verses 5 and 6, Paul states what seems to be a pretty harsh condemnation
 - a. What kind of people won’t inherit the kingdom of God?
 - b. Is Paul talking about one time offenders or habitual offenders or both?
 - i. Is it the offense or the heart behind the offense?
 - c. In verse 6, Paul explicitly identifies the people he is talking about. Who are they?
 - i. Read
 1. Ephesians 2:1-10
 2. 2 Corinthians 7:9-10
 - ii. How does that give you hope? How does it lead you to repentance?
 - d. Define *inheritance*.
 - e. Read 1 Peter 1:3-7
 - i. Can you lose your inheritance?
 9. Verse 7 starts with another *therefore*.
 - a. What does Paul tell us to do in the first part of verse 7?
 - b. Another way to read a *therefore* is something like “in light of that”, or “for that reason”. In this verse, what does Paul connect this *therefore* to?
 - c. Who are the “them”?

- d. List one or two things that “partner” can mean.
10. In verse 8, after Paul tells us what not to do in verse 7, he tells us why we shouldn’t do that. What is the “why”?
- a. Notice how Paul uses the words *darkness* and *light*. Do you find anything interesting about that?
 - b. Finally, Paul commands us, once again, to do something. What is that?
 - c. In the ESV, if you do a search for the words *darkness* and *light*, you get a lot of hits. Read these examples:
 - i. John 1:1-5
 - ii. Isaiah 9:1-7
 - iii. Matthew 12:4-17
 - iv. John 3:16-21
 - v. In the ESV, if you do a
11. From verse 9...
- a. What are some characteristics of those who “walk in the light?”
 - b. Read the following
 - i. Nehemiah 9:9-15
 - ii. 1 John 5:18-21
 - iii. John 14:1-7
 - iv. Psalm 119:160
 - v. John 17:14-19
12. From verse 10...
- a. Another command – what is this command?
 - b. Define *discern*. Why is discernment so important? How can we become discerning?
 - c. List some things, either from this study so far, or from other things you have read, that are pleasing to the Lord. How do you know that those things are pleasing to the Lord?
 - d. Read
 - i. Romans 14:20-23
 - ii. Hebrews 11:1-6
 - iii. Micah 6:6-8
13. In verse 11, Paul gives another “do not...” and then a “do...”
- a. What are we supposed to *do not*?
 - b. What do you suppose are some of the things that Paul is thinking about as he writes “works of darkness”?
 - c. What does he call these works?
 - d. What are we supposed to *do*?
14. Read the following passages about how darkness is exposed
- a. Luke 12:1-3
 - b. Luke 8:16-18
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:1-4
 - d. Ecclesiastes 12:9-13
15. In verse 12, Paul is very clear how we should view these things
- a. What word does he attach to these works done in darkness?
 - b. If that is the way we should see even *talking* about such things, what do you think Paul would say about *practicing* such things? (Read Romans 1:26-32)
16. From verse 13, what exposes things?
- a. How does it feel when things you thought were secret are exposed?

- b. Given what we have read, how would you explain why nothing we do is truly secret?
17. Finally, in verse 14, Paul is referring back to Isaiah 60:1-3. Read that passage.
- a. What is Paul's desire for the people of God?
 - b. Why does God in both Isaiah and here tell us to "wake up"?
 - i. Read the following:
 - 1. Mark 13:32-37
 - 2. Matthew 26:36-46
 - 3. Matthew 25:1-13
 - ii. What does it mean to be awake?
 - c. Who raises us from the dead?

In this passage, we are told a lot of things about darkness and light. We are told what the light does, and how nothing we do is ever truly in secret. We are even told that talking about these things that are done in darkness, in any way other than to condemn and expose them, is shameful. Shameful!

Imagine then, if talking about them is shameful, what the condemnation is for those who not only think that there's nothing wrong with those things, but who also encourage others to do those things!

But Paul, knowing that we cannot be victorious over these things without Jesus, ends this section with this plea:

Ephesians 5:12–14 (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." (ESV)*

"Awake, O sleeper!"

But it's not just so we can see, because it is possible to wake up at night when it is still dark.

No, unless we have the light of Christ shining on us, we will be in the dark.

So, Paul is not telling us to simply wake up, because the very next statement...

... "and arise from the dead" ...

... points to something that no one but God can do for us.

God the Father calls and draws us, God the Son pays the price for sin, and God the Spirit applies that payment to our account, thus waking us from our slumber, raising us from the dead, and shining His light on us!

So, now that Jesus' light is shining on you, walk in that light so you don't stumble!