

# "As Wise, Redeeming the Time"

## Ephesians 5:8-17

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### **Ephesians 5:8-17:**

*"8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."* (Eph 5:8-17)

The Apostle and urged the church, because of the nature of God himself for us to "be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:32 )

In verses 1-6, as we saw last week in chapter five he calls us to:

*"1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."* (Eph. 5:1-6)

In other words, do not walk like the damned; don't do what those who are going to hell do; do not shrink from living like those who will someday walk in the light of God, enjoying His fellowship, and enjoying His favor. You are an elite people; walk like it. Do not be embarrassed by setting high standards for yourself in speech, in conduct, in theology, in intellectual pursuits; in all things.

He summarizes this exhortation in verses 8-10:

Vs. 8-10: 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” This simply summarizes what I just said.

A. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. These are the fruit of light, not darkness.

B. We are the children of the light and we are to walk as children of the light. Cast off the works of darkness. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the amour of light.” (Ro 13:12)

C. You are not darkness anymore; you are light and life. We are to “prove” the thing that is “acceptable’ or pleasing to the Lord. Proving it, as you would bring the gold to the assayer, to find out if it is true gold.

1. The Scripture is the test. We bring our deeds, our attitudes, our desires, to the Scripture for that is the only place where they can be tested and proved. The Scripture with the Holy Spirit, with the counsel and advice of Godly people, these are the ways we learn whether our deeds are acceptable.

2. The Lord has shown what it is that pleases him: Do we walk to please ourselves, to please others, or to please our God. I hope and pray that He will continue His good work in each of you, so that your life and your death will be pleasing to God, a sweet sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to Him even Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (Re 1:5-6 ) Let us walk before Him as kings and priest unto our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Verses that follow 11-17, we have some “therefore’s”—the implications that come from the things that he has said. Let us look at them. Remember, we are to be no more children, tossed by every wind of doctrine and manipulated by the craftiness and deceitfulness of men. We are to be grown up, not infatuated by every spam message we get in this world. We not only need to have good spam filters on our computers, but more importantly, we are to have good spam filters on our minds and hearts.

Let us look at the words:

***11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. [Eph. 5:11-13]*** There are several things to say on this text:

I. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

A. We will first quote Calvin: “It is not enough that we do not, of our own accord, undertake anything wicked. We must beware of joining or assisting those who do wrong. In short, we must abstain from giving any consent, or advice, or approbation, or assistance; for in all these ways we have fellowship. And lest any one should imagine that he has done his duty, merely by not conniving, he adds, but rather reprove them”

B. We are not to strain at gnats and swallow camels, and this is not Calvin’s meaning. And he is not even saying that we should be constant reprovers of all kinds of sins, for this would consume us as though we had nothing else to do, and that this were the only good in the world.

C. The context are those shameful and abominable things that are done in secret—things not even fit for the light of day or the speech of good men and women.

D. It is the light that shows the nature of the ungodly deeds, and we are children of the light; in the manner of our lives, the purity of our speech, the

soundness of our doctrines, the joy and beauty of the Lord that reproves the world and brings glory to God.

E. This is one element of a temperate the well-balanced life. We are not to be consumed by evil, as if all we had to do were to fight sin, and we may be instructed by the example of many who lived in very wicked times and walked humbly with God; Daniel, Joseph, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and our Lord Jesus Himself as well as the apostles. Scripture is very profitable for us if we are not to be fools.

F. The reproof must not only come from individuals—for we are moral beings and are responsible for making moral decisions; but also from proper ecclesiastical and civil authorities, for wickedness will completely consume a people if it is not reproofed and brought under restraint.

II. People reveal that these deeds are shameful by lying about doing them, or attacking those who reveal them. By their very nature, they must be done in secret away from the light. It is often sadly true that these works are done by Christians, but are concealed from view. These things ought not to be done. God is light and all his works are done openly and before men. In Him is no darkness at all, although there is much darkness in us, so that we do not understand the things that He does.

III. As children of the light, our very lives and witness is a reproof to the world and to its dark deeds. It is especially necessary to reveal the hypocrisy and deceit of men, who put on robes of piety and virtue to conceal their wicked deeds. As Jesus, “They stand on the street corner and make long prayers. They put fringes and phylacteries and put dust and ashes on their heads, to pretend to fast and humble themselves. They stand a the front of the church.....” Jesus didn’t shoot into the air; he had specific targets in mind, probably looking at some pompous scribe while He was describing him.

IV. This does not mean that we practice shunning of the wicked, even those excommunicated from the church. Jesus did not do that, but ate with publicans and sinners, those cast out by the Jewish church, for he came to seek and to save those who were lost.

A. We are commanded to salute not only our friends, but our neighbors, and even our enemies—to show that we have no ill will to them and love and mean them good. We are commanded to salute those who have the rule over us; to salute all the saints, etc. It means that we are not to hold grudges but to be merciful and kind to all men. This verse does not contradict that duty.

B. But it does mean that we have no fellowship in their evil works. Yes, we do distinguish between the sins and the person who sins. If God did not do that, none of us would be saved; for at the cross our sins were taken from us, the sinners, and placed on Him, the holy one, and the holy one was punished for the sins of His sinful people. And His righteousness is placed upon us and imputed to us, although we had done nothing worthy of eternal life. In the same way, we can show mercy and kindness to the sinner while hating and having no fellowship with his ungodly deeds.

***14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” (Eph 5:14-17)***

There are four things that the apostle commands here: I. “Awake” “Arise” Paul is not quoting a specific Old Testament scripture. Either, he is speaking under inspiration for God himself, or giving the sense of the message of the Old Testament. God’s word to us is for the purpose of rousing us from the slumber of unbelief or the deadness of wickedness. Only those who are awake and alive can see and be made better by the light. If you are dead in sins, you must be made alive by the Holy Spirit, as he said in chapter 2. If you are alive but asleep, you are no good to the world, and you need to wake up. Don’t dream your life away.

II. He changes the metaphor from sleep and death to walking: Walk circumspectly—under the eye of God and man.

A. This contrasts with the whispering and the secret things. Jesus said, we are to let our light shine before men. It like every Christian is on a stage and will be evaluated by all those around him.

B. Walk with that mind set: walk “circumspectly” –This word is taken from a word that described the most conscientious and rigorous of the Pharisees. They were most zealous to do what they thought was the will of God in keeping every minute rule of the law. As Christians we must be most rigorous in keeping most exactly everything that our Lord spoke to us

C. We are the light of the world, let your light shine, but let is shine in sincerity and truth, as an example of what all men ought to be.

D. Don’t walk as a fool; walk as a wise man.

III. We are to see that time is a valuable economic good.

A. There is nothing more precious than time, and it is to be used in fruitful undertakings: not in “fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks,” as he said.

B. Time is not to be wasted: not on the telephone, not on the computer, not in sleep and laziness. Some of our most egregious sins are not those that we commit in activity, but what we commit in inactivity. In the things that we did not do. “I don’t have time,” is not a time statement; it is a value statement. “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not; to him it is sin.” If you know someone is plotting to kill you neighbor you become a partaker of his wickedness if you do not raise the alarm, even if no one knows that you know. If your neighbor’s ox goes astray, you are required to drive it home again, or shut it up until you can find whom it belongs to. You are to restore the lost, recover the blind, etc. We are to do good to all men, especially the household of faith. We are not to just look our own things—although we are to take care of our own business—but we are also to fulfill the obligations of love to our neighbor.

C. How much has been lost to the world because of indolence and laziness; how many bad sermons have been preached because the time of the minister was not redeemed; how many good sermons have not been heard because the listener was too lazy to pay attention. May a cure for cancer would have been found years ago if some young boy or girl had paid attention in school and got an education and worked hard, instead of blowing his mind on drugs or such. Who knows. Or maybe this boy or girl didn’t even see the light of day because his mother was too lazy to think about rearing another child and murdered the baby in the womb.

D. Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do with thy might, the wise man said, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

E. The reason to redeem the days are evil. Time is short. Evil days are coming, when no man can work. To walk in the light, is to walk when there is opportunity; when there is time. “The night comes when no man can work,” Jesus said.

IV. Don’t be unwise, but understand what the will of God is.

A. It is stupid not to know what the will of God is. It is expressed in very specific and clear terms in this passage, and we are fools not to pay attention.

B. We now have a complete picture of what light is and what it means to be children of the light:

1. It means walking in faith, not in unbelief.
2. It means walking in the obedience of light, not in works of darkness.
3. It means walking in understanding, not in foolish ignorance.
4. It means walking while you have time; not when the opportunity and the time has passed.

Amen and Amen.

God bless you.