

As Dear Children

Ephesians 5:1-7

- There are a lot of big words in our passage of the day
- And we could easily get distracted by some of them
- Which would take us away from the essential point of the text
- That is, to be a follower of God - pleasing Him
- And to avoid that which dishonors God

- The Apostle Paul speaks to the saints at Ephesus
- And he tells them to be Christ's disciples, walking in love
- Then describes some of the behaviors that characterize unsaved people
- And says they shouldn't participate in any of them as believers in Jesus

- When we come to know Him as Savior
- We can often be pulled back into the old ways of thinking and acting
- But this should not be the case

- We'll look at some general and specific principles in Ephesians 5:1-7
- And talk about following God "As Dear Children"
- Which is our theme of the day

- There are a number of lists, many of them written by Paul, in the New Testament
- Sometimes they are lists of Godly behaviors and character traits
- And sometimes they are lists of sinful behaviors and character traits
- We'll find the latter in today's text

- But we should preface this with a reminder that we are not Christians by checklist
- That means, people who do (or are) the things on the good list go to heaven
- And the people who do (or are) the things on the bad list go to hell
- Not true
- We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone
- Doing good can never save us
- Only Jesus can save us

- The lists provide us with traits that characterize one kind of person or the other
- A person saved by faith in Christ
- Or a person lost, outside of God's family, without Christ

- I hope you'll get a better idea of what I mean as we read our passage of the day
- And we'll read the whole thing, then take a closer look at the individual verses...

Ephesians 5:1-7

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 sweetsmelling savour.

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.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

- The passage begins with a gentle reminder
- But ends with a strong warning
- We have need of both
- And we'll discover why as we continue...

Ephesians 5:1

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

- Christians - believers in Jesus Christ - are always followers
- We are called His disciples
- That means we observe what He said and did, and do likewise

- We see what God is like in Christ
- He is the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3)
- And we know that we are following God if Jesus is our example
- We make His actions and attitudes our actions and attitudes

- How are we to do that?
- As dear children
- We know that when we come to faith in Christ
- We are brought into God's family
- And we seek to please our father in heaven

- We are loved
- And we love Him enough to do His will
- Not because we are earning His favor
- Never
- Because He has already showed us favor - which is underserved - in sending Christ

- His love means something particular for us...

Ephesians 5:2

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 sweetsmelling savour.

- The kind of love that Christ showed us
- In coming to be the sacrifice for our sins
- Should be the model for the way we show love to the world
- Giving ourselves for others

- As we live, being one of God's beloved children
- We come to understand what His kind of love looks like
- And we are given the capability, by His power, to demonstrate this love

- As Christ's obedience was acceptable and well pleasing to the Father
- Our obedience, in loving others, can be the same
- This is a wonderful understanding for anyone striving to serve God

- But there are plenty of temptations along the way
- Even for the man doing his best to follow Christ
- And they are named here...

Ephesians 5:3-4

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.

- We see the importance of avoiding these things when it says
- "Let it not be once named among you"

- God wants to make our responsibilities clear
- He begins with sexual immorality
- Fornication is sex outside of marriage
- Sex is between a married man and his wife alone
- Any sex outside of this relationship is forbidden
- No matter what our culture says
- No matter what our hearts tell us
- No matter what is widely accepted as normal

- Uncleanness is often associated with fornication
- It is a sin against our own bodies
- As I Corinthians 6:18 indicates...

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

- And he specifies (in our text) that it is "all" uncleanness
- Any illicit relationships fit into this category

- Or covetousness

- That is, an insatiable desire for more
- You'll remember it from the ten commandments in Exodus 20:17...

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

- All three items in this list have a similar nature
- They are about the desires that come from our flesh
- They should not be once found among those who are Christ's
- There is another list
- Let's read that verse rephrased, which might help us
- From the ERV...

"Also, there must be no evil talk among you. Don't say things that are foolish or filthy. These are not for you. But you should be giving thanks to God."

- And from the ESV...

"Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving"

- Not only should we avoid unclean actions
- But also unclean words
- Instead, we should thank God
- Replace the crude with thanksgiving
- We should keep something we already understand in mind...

Ephesians 5:5

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.

- The sexually immoral
- The people who are habitually committing sexual sins
- Following after evil
- Always selfishly wanting more
- That is, practicing idolatry
- Don't have an inheritance in heaven
- So...believers should not be drawn back into these ways
- As the next verse warns...

Ephesians 5:6-7

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

- The behaviors spoken of in verse 5 are characteristic of the disobedient
- Those who are not following after God
- As dear children
- They are outside Christ
- And the wrath of God is upon them

- What they do destroys them
- And they will wreak havoc on the believer too
- We must not be partakers in them

- Be followers of God
- Because we are His dear children
- Love as Christ loved
- Don't be tempted into sexual immorality
- Or covetousness
- And remember
- Those who live in those evil ways habitually
- Have no part in heaven
- So, don't be partakers

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023