

LESSON THREE

**LIVING IN LOVE AND LIGHT
&
LIVING BY BEING FILLED IN SPIRIT**

Scripture Reading:

Eph. 5:1 Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children;

Eph. 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

Eph. 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or greediness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints,

Eph. 5:4 And obscenity and foolish talking or sly, filthy jesting, which are not becoming, but rather the giving of thanks.

Eph. 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolater) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Eph. 5:6 Let no one deceive you with vain words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

Eph. 5:7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;

Eph. 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light

Eph. 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

Eph. 5:10 Proving what is well pleasing to the Lord.

Eph. 5:11 And do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them.

Eph. 5:12 For the things which are done by them in secret it is shameful even to speak of.

Eph. 5:13 But all things which are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for everything that makes manifest is light.

Eph. 5:14 Therefore He says, Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Eph. 5:15 Look therefore carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise,

Eph. 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

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

Eph. 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph. 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord,

Eph. 5:20 Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father,

Eph. 5:21 Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ:

Questions:

Section 1

1. Why can we believers imitate God in a real way?
2. What should be the inner source of how we walk/live today? Why is this deeper than grace and truth mentioned in chapter 4?
3. In Eph. 5:5, what does it mean for us to subjectively know these points? If we know them subjectively, what will be our reward?

Section 2

1. How does an intimate relationship with the Father keep us from partaking of the things mentioned in the first 7 verses of chapter 5?
2. What is the proof that we are walking as children of light? Describe what the fruit of walking in the light is.
3. In your experience, is it easy to expose the works of darkness? Likewise, is it easy to receive an exposing from someone? According to verse 13, what do we need to be to give and receive exposing?

Section 3

1. What is the source of our christian virtues?
2. What is the difference between 'filled with the Holy Spirit' and 'filled in spirit'?
3. What does it mean to 'redeem the time'?

Section 4

1. What is one way for us to be filled in spirit and also to overflow with Him in our christian life?
2. When should we give thanks? How should we give thanks?
3. What should be our relationship with Christ, the Head and the members of the Body?

[Section 1]

LIVING IN LOVE AND LIGHT

I. AS BELOVED CHILDREN, BECOMING IMITATORS OF GOD

Verse 1 says, “Become therefore imitators of God, as beloved children.” Paul’s word here is an imperative, a command. He commands us to become imitators of God. What a glorious fact that since we are His beloved children, we can be imitators of God! As the children of God, we have His life and nature. We imitate God, not by our natural life, but by His divine life. It is by our Father’s life that we, His children, can be perfect as He is (Matt. 5:48).

According to the New Testament, the believers in Christ are children of God. As God’s children, we have God’s life. John 1:13 says that we have been born of God. To be born of God is to have the life of God. Furthermore, 2 Peter 1:4 says that we are partakers of the divine nature. Because we have the divine life and the divine nature, we can be imitators of God. Imitating God in this way is much different from training a monkey to imitate a man. A monkey does not have human life or human nature. But we have the divine life and the divine nature. Therefore, we can be imitators of God.

II. WALKING IN LOVE

In verse 2 Paul issues another commandment: “Walk in love.” As grace and truth are the basic elements in 4:17-32, so love (5:2, 25) and light (5:8, 9, 13) are the basic elements in the apostle’s exhortation in 5:1-33. Grace is the expression of love, and love is the source of grace. Truth is the revelation of light, and light is the origin of truth. God is love and light (1 John 4:8; 1:5). When God is expressed and revealed in the Lord Jesus, His love becomes grace and His light becomes truth. After we have, in the Lord Jesus, received God as grace and realized Him as truth, we come to Him and enjoy His love and light. Love and light are deeper than grace and truth. Hence, the apostle firstly takes grace and truth as the basic elements for exhortation and then love and light. This implies that he wants our daily life to grow deeper, from the outward elements to the inward.

Love is the substance of God within, whereas light is the element of God expressed. It is possible to sense the love of God inwardly, and it is possible to see the light of God shining out. Our walk in love should be constituted of both the loving substance and the shining element of God. This should be the inner source of our walk. It is deeper than grace and truth.

Paul commands us to walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and “gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (5:2). In 4:32 the apostle presents God as the pattern for our daily walk. Here he sets forth Christ as the example for our living. There it is God in Christ as our pattern since, in that section, God’s grace and truth expressed in the life of Jesus are taken as the basic elements. According to 4:32, we are to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us. This means that God is the pattern of forgiveness. But in chapter five Christ Himself is our example since, in this section, love expressed by Christ to us (vv. 2, 25) and light shined by Christ upon us (v. 14) are taken as the basic elements. Here Christ, who loved us and gave Himself up for us, is the example of walking in love.

Paul says that Christ “gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” In the Bible there is a difference between an offering and a sacrifice. An offering is for fellowship with God, whereas a sacrifice is for redemption from sin. Christ gave Himself up for us both as an offering to have fellowship with God and as a sacrifice to redeem us from sin.

In loving us Christ gave Himself up for us. It was for us, but it was a sweet-smelling savor to God. In following His example, our walk in love should not only be something for others, but also a sweet-smelling savor to God.

III. THINGS NOT FITTING FOR SAINTS

In verses 3 and 4 Paul lists certain things not fitting for saints: “But fornication and all uncleanness or unbridled greedy lust, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; and filthiness and foolish talking or coarse jesting, which are not becoming, but rather giving of thanks.” Nothing is more damaging to mankind than fornication. Unbridled greedy lust is a lust full of greed and uncontrolled. Such evil things should not even be named among us, as is fitting for saints, for persons separated unto God and saturated with God, living a life according to God’s holy nature.

Instead of foolish talking or coarse jesting, there should be the giving of thanks. To give thanks to God is to speak God as truth, whereas foolish talking or coarse jesting is to speak the Devil as falsehood.

IV. NO INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF GOD

Verse 5 says, “For this you know, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or person of

unbridled greedy lust, who is an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” The Greek word rendered know is oida and signifies subjective knowledge, whereas the Greek word rendered knowing is ginosko and signifies objective knowledge. What Paul speaks in verse 5 we are to know both subjectively and objectively. We must realize that no fornicator or unclean person or person of unbridled greedy lust has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. In the eyes of God, a person of unbridled greedy lust is actually an idolater, one who worships idols.

In this verse Paul speaks of the kingdom of Christ and of God. The kingdom of Christ is the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6; Matt. 16:28); it is also the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:41, 43). The believers have been regenerated into the kingdom of God (John 3:5) and are, in the church life, living in the kingdom of God today (Rom. 14:17). Not all believers will participate in the millennium; only the overcoming ones will. The unclean, defeated ones will have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God in the coming age.

According to John 3, all those who are regenerated are in the kingdom of God. Romans 14:17 also indicates that in the church life we are in the kingdom of God today. However, the millennium will be the kingdom in a way that is more practical than what we are experiencing in the church today. Only in the millennium does the kingdom of Christ also become the kingdom of God. Therefore, the term the kingdom of Christ and of God refers not to the kingdom today in the church life, but to the manifestation of the kingdom in the coming millennium. Today all believers are in the kingdom of God, but not all of them will have an inheritance in the coming millennial kingdom. Both the defeated ones and the overcoming ones may be in the church as the kingdom of God. But only the overcoming ones will inherit the kingdom during the millennium. The fornicators, the unclean persons, and those of unbridled greedy lust will have no share in the reign of Christ in the millennium.

V. THE WRATH OF GOD COMING UPON THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE

Verse 6 continues, “Let no one deceive you with vain words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.” The wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience mainly because of the three evil things spoken of in verse 3. The sons of disobedience are the unbelievers. We, the believers, are beloved children of God.

Nevertheless, some of God’s children behave as if they were sons of disobedience. Therefore, the wrath of God will come upon them. For this reason, in verse 7 Paul tells us, “Do not become partakers together with them.” We should be good imitators of God and not be partakers of any unclean thing.

[Section 2]

VI. WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

In verse 8 Paul says, “For you were once darkness, but now light in the Lord; walk as children of light.” We were once not only dark, but darkness itself. Now we are not only the children of light, but light itself (Matt. 5:14). As light is God, so darkness is the Devil. We were darkness because we were one with the Devil. Now we are light because we are one with God in the Lord.

In this verse Paul exhorts us to “walk as children of light.” As God is light, so we, the children of God, are also the children of light. Because we are now light in the Lord, we should walk as children of light.

In verse 2 Paul tells us to walk in love, and in verse 8 he tells us to walk as children of light. The first seven verses of this chapter cover the matter of love. If we walk in love, we shall keep ourselves from uncleanness. To walk in love is to walk in intimacy with God. An intimate relationship between a daughter and mother may illustrate what it means to walk in love. Certain young women enjoy an intimate love with their mothers. They love whatever their mothers love. Because of the love they have for their mothers, they are not willing to do anything opposed to their mothers’ feeling. Rather, they walk in intimate love toward their mothers. In the same principle, we have an intimate relationship with the Father. As those who have received grace, we may come in the Son to contact the Father. In the Father’s presence we not only enjoy grace, the expression of love, but we also enjoy love itself. We experience this love in a very intimate way. Because we enjoy the love of God in such an intimate way, we do not want to do anything that displeases the Father. The Father hates fornication, uncleanness, and lust. If we walk in love, we shall stay away from such things. Because we love the Father, we shall not do anything to grieve His heart. What a tender, delicate walk this is! This is not simply living by grace; it is walking in love. We should always remember that we are children of God enjoying His love. We are saints separated unto Him and saturated with Him. Therefore, in our daily walk

we would always take care of the Father's feeling, for we live intimately in His tender love.

It is rather difficult to point out the difference between truth and light. In our experience we may often realize God as truth to us, as our reality. But sometimes when we get into God's presence, we sense that we are in the light. At such times, we are not only experiencing reality, but we are in the very light itself. Thus, the experience of light is deeper than the experience of truth.

After commanding us to walk as children of light, Paul inserts in verse 9 a parenthetical statement regarding the fruit of the light, saying that "the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Goodness is the nature of the fruit of the light; righteousness is the way or the procedure to produce the fruit of the light; and the truth is the reality, the real expression of the fruit of the light. This expression is God Himself. The fruit of the light must be good in nature, righteous in procedure, and real in expression so that God may be expressed as the reality of our daily walk.

It is significant that in speaking of the fruit of the light Paul mentions only three things: goodness, righteousness, and truth. He does not speak of holiness, kindness, or humility. The reason he mentions just three things is that the fruit of the light in goodness, righteousness, and truth is related to the Triune God. Goodness refers to the nature of the fruit of light. The Lord Jesus once indicated that the only One who is good is God Himself (Matt. 19:17). Hence, goodness here denotes God the Father. God the Father as goodness is the nature of the fruit of the light.

Notice that here Paul speaks not of the work of the light nor of the conduct of the light, but of the fruit of the light. Fruit is a matter of life with its nature. The nature of the fruit of the light is God the Father.

We have pointed out that the righteousness denotes the way or the procedure of the fruit of the light. Righteousness is the procedure by which the fruit of the light is produced. In the Godhead, the Son, Christ, is our righteousness. He came to earth to produce certain things according to God's procedure, which is always righteous. Righteousness is God's way, God's procedure. Christ came to accomplish God's purpose according to His righteous procedure. Therefore, the second aspect of the fruit of the light refers to God the Son.

The truth is the expression of the fruit of the light. This fruit must be real; that is, it must be the

expression of God, the shining of the hidden light. No doubt, this truth refers to the Spirit of reality, the third of the Triune God. Therefore, the Father as the goodness, the Son as the righteousness, and the Spirit as the truth, the reality, are all related to the fruit of the light.

Verse 9 is the definition of walking as children of light. If we walk as the children of light, we shall bear the fruit described in verse 9. The fruit we bear by walking as the children of the light must be in goodness, in righteousness, and in truth. The proof that we are walking as children of light is seen in the bearing of such fruit.

VII. EXPOSING THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

In verse 11 Paul commands us to expose the unfruitful works of darkness. In verse 13 he says, "But all things which are exposed are made manifest by the light; for everything that makes manifest is light." The Greek word rendered exposed may also be rendered reprove or rebuke.

It is a very difficult matter to expose or rebuke someone. Most people reject a rebuke and feel enmity toward the one who rebukes them. There is an element in the fallen human nature that rejects rebuking, reproof, or exposing. Therefore, if possible, we should not expose or rebuke anyone. However, there are times when rebuking is necessary. At such times, the one who does the rebuking must be sure that he himself is very clean. He is like a surgeon who must cleanse himself of all germs before performing surgery. If you have not been purified, you are not qualified to operate on someone by rebuking or exposing him, for the germs in you will cause the other to be contaminated. The reason most rebukes are not successful is that those who give the rebuke are not pure. Therefore, immediately after the "surgery" infection sets in. Before we can reprove or expose someone, we must be purified, or even sterilized. We must be clean in our thought, motive, feeling, and intention. We must be pure in our heart and in our spirit. This is one aspect of the matter of reproof.

Another aspect concerns the one who receives the reproof or the rebuke. If you are being rebuked by someone, you should not try to discern whether or not the one rebuking you is pure. Simply receive the rebuke, the exposure. If you do this, you will be blessed. You will be aroused from sleep, and Christ will shine on you. Every rebuke, whether pure or impure, clean or unclean, is the shining of Christ. Whenever we are rebuked, we should say, "Lord, I worship You for Your shining. This rebuke is Your shining, and I

receive it.” To receive a rebuke is to walk in light. This means that if we are not willing to accept a rebuke, we are walking in darkness. If we are truly walking in the light, we shall be able to profit from any kind of rebuking.

[Section 3]

LIVING BY BEING FILLED IN SPIRIT

I. THE FIFTH ITEM OF THE WALK WORTHY OF GOD’S CALLING

To live by being filled in spirit is the fifth item of a walk worthy of God’s calling. The first four aspects of such a worthy walk are the keeping of the oneness, the growing up into the Head, the learning of Christ, and the living in love and light. In chapter four Paul speaks of keeping the oneness, of growing up into the Head, and of learning Christ. In chapter five he speaks of living in love and in light and of living by being filled in spirit. Thus, in chapter five there are three crucial words: love, light, and spirit. Love and light are covered in the first fourteen verses. The next section of this chapter deals with the mingled spirit.

To be filled in spirit (v. 18) is to be filled in our regenerated spirit, the human spirit indwelt by the Spirit of God. Our spirit should not be empty, but should be filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God (3:19). All the items in 5:18—6:9 are related to the one matter of being filled in spirit. Many readers of this chapter pay attention to such details as wives submitting to their own husbands or husbands loving their wives, but they fail to see the source of all these virtues, that is, being filled in spirit. When we are filled in our spirit with Christ unto all the fullness of God, then wives will be subject to their husbands, husbands will love their wives, parents will care for their children, slaves will obey their masters, and masters will treat their slaves in a proper way. All of these things are the issue of being filled in spirit.

Those from a Pentecostal or charismatic background may regard the spirit in verse 18 as the Holy Spirit. They may interpret Paul’s word to mean that we should be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. But according to the Greek text, Paul here is not saying that we should be filled with the Spirit, but that we should be filled in our spirit, that is, in our regenerated spirit. Our spirit may be empty and flat, like a flat tire. If our spirit is flat, it needs to be filled with pneuma. We need to go to the heavenly “filling station” and get our spirit filled with pneuma. In this way we shall be filled in spirit. According to chapter three, we are to be filled with the riches

of Christ unto all the fullness of God. If our spirit is filled with the riches of Christ, we shall have no problems in our Christian life.

We have pointed out that living by being filled in spirit is the fifth aspect of a walk worthy of God’s calling. The first aspect is the keeping of the oneness. This is for the Body life, the church life. The second aspect is the growing up into Christ the Head in all things. This is for the building. Following this, we learn Christ by being placed into the mold, the standard of a living according to the truth in Jesus. We Christians have a high standard with an uplifted principle to govern our daily walk. To learn Christ is to take Him as the standard and to take His life as the principle. Fourthly, a life worthy of God’s calling is a life in love and in light. We must live not only according to truth and by grace, but also in light and in love. We need to be those who live in intimacy with God and walk in His presence. Our daily life must be altogether according to God’s heart and in His presence. If we have these four aspects of a worthy walk, we shall spontaneously be filled in our spirit.

These five items are arranged in a marvelous sequence. Firstly we keep the oneness, and then we grow in Christ. After this, we learn Christ and live in love and in light. Then we are spontaneously filled in our spirit with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God. Out of this inner filling will come submission, love, obedience, care, and all the other attributes of a proper Christian life, church life, family life, and community life. Therefore, the fifth aspect of a walk worthy of God’s calling is the issue of the first four aspects; that is, it is the issue of keeping the oneness, growing in Christ, learning Christ, and living in love and in light. What a life we have when we demonstrate these five aspects of a worthy walk! If we are filled inwardly unto the fullness of God, there will be no problems at home, in the church, or in the community. This is the crucial point in this message.

II. WALKING NOT AS UNWISE, BUT AS WISE

Verse 15 says, “Look therefore carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise.” The word “therefore” in this verse indicates that verse 15 is a conclusion drawn from verses 1 through 14. If we walk in love and in light, then we shall walk, not as unwise, but as wise. The unwise are the nations, the Gentiles, in chapter four, whereas the wise are the beloved children of God.

III. REDEEMING THE TIME

Verse 16 is related to the walk presented in verse 15. In verse 16 Paul says, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” To redeem the time is to seize every available opportunity. This is to be wise in our walk.

We must redeem the time because the days are evil. In this evil age (Gal. 1:4, Gk.), every day is an evil day, full of pernicious things which destroy, injure, and spoil our time. Therefore, we must walk wisely that we may redeem the time, seizing every available opportunity. If we do not seize every opportunity, our time will be wasted. Many evil things will come in to distract us and frustrate us. We may be distracted by telephone calls, letters, or visitors. We may be enjoying the presence of the Lord and suddenly be attacked through a negative telephone call. Because the days are evil, we must be on the alert to take advantage of every opportunity.

[Section 4]

IV. NOT BEING FOOLISH, BUT UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF THE LORD

Verse 17 continues, “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” To understand the will of the Lord is the best way to redeem our time. Not knowing the will of the Lord is the main cause of our time being wasted.

V. NOT DRUNKEN WITH WINE, BUT FILLED IN SPIRIT

In verse 18 Paul says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled in spirit.” To be drunk with wine is to be filled in the body, whereas to be filled in our regenerated spirit is to be filled with Christ (1:23) unto the fullness of God (3:19). To be drunk with wine in the body causes us to be dissipated, but to be filled with Christ unto the fullness of God causes us to overflow with Him in speaking, singing, psalming, giving thanks to God, and subjecting ourselves one to another. Day by day we need to be filled in our spirit with the riches of Christ.

A. Speaking, Singing, and Psalming

Verses 19 through 21 are related to “be filled in spirit” in verse 18. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are not only for singing and psalming, but also for speaking to one another. Such speaking, singing, and psalming are not only the outflow of being filled in spirit, but also the way to be filled in spirit. Psalms are long poems, hymns are shorter ones, and spiritual songs are the shortest. All are needed in order for us to be filled with the

Lord and to overflow with Him in our Christian life.

According to the New Testament, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are good not only for singing but also for speaking. Sometimes we are inspired by singing. But on other occasions, speaking that is filled with pneuma may be more inspiring than singing. If we are flat, short of pneuma, then our speaking will afford no inspiration. But if we are full of pneuma, then our speaking will have impact and will inspire others. This is not eloquence; it is utterance with impact.

Sometimes we need to practice this in the meetings, without making it a legality. Before we sing a hymn, we may speak it to one another. The brothers may speak the first line and the sisters may respond by speaking the second. However, in doing this we should not fall into an unwritten form. I must admit that some of our meetings are not as living as they should be. Hence, we need to experience the indwelling Spirit in a living way in our singing and speaking.

Verse 19 also speaks of psalming. Singing may be short. Psalming is always long. Sometimes just by singing we cannot express what is within us to praise the Lord; we need psalming to pour out our praise to the Lord adequately.

B. Giving Thanks

Verse 20 goes on to say, “Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God and the Father.” We should give thanks to God the Father, not only at good times, but at all times, and not only for good things, but for all things. Even at the worst times, we should give thanks for all things to God our Father.

This verse tells us to give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The reality of the name of the Lord is His Person. To be in His name is to be in His Person, in the Lord Himself. This implies that we should be one with the Lord in giving thanks to God.

C. Subject to One Another in the Fear of Christ

In verse 21 Paul speaks of being “subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” Being subject to one another is also the way to be filled in spirit with the Lord and also the overflow of being filled. Our subjection should be one to another, not only the younger ones to the older ones, but also the older ones to the younger ones (1 Pet. 5:5).

According to the context of the following verses, to be in the fear of Christ is to fear offending Him as the Head. This is related to Christ's headship (v. 23) and involves our subjection one to another. Christ is the Head of the Body. If we mistreat any member of the Body, we offend the Head of the Body. We need to keep the relationship with the members of the Body in the fear of the Head.

The life of speaking, singing, psalming, and thanking is a life of subjection. When we speak, sing, psalm, and give thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are willing to submit ourselves to one another. We all submit to Christ the Head and also to the Body. But this submitting comes from the speaking, the singing, the psalming, and the giving of thanks, which in

turn come from the infilling. When we are filled in our spirit, we sing, we psalm, we speak, and we thank. Spontaneously, we also submit. However, if we are not filled, there will be no speaking, singing, psalming, or thanking God, and consequently there will be no submitting. The proper church people are those who are submissive by speaking, singing, psalming, and giving thanks to God from their inner being. They live in the way of being filled in spirit with all the riches of Christ unto the fullness of God.

References:

Life-Study of Ephesians msg. 50 & 51