

Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 31)
Scripture: Ephesians 4:29- 32
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Date: Oct. 21st, 2001

Principles for Enjoying One Another

Introduction The church is *supposed to be* a community of brothers and sisters who are linked together by their mutual experience of trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation.

It is supposed to be a place of **safety and warmth**.

It is supposed to be a place where you make and enjoy your **deepest friendships**.

It is supposed to be a place of relationships for which you would die, if it was really needed, a place of **life-giving loyalty!**

It is supposed to be the **strong fortress** on the hill into which you flee when you feel assaulted.

It is supposed to be the great "**living room**", a fire in the fireplace when you feel cold and alone.

It is supposed to be the **schoolhouse** of cosmic truth

It is supposed to be the **advanced infantry training** base where you learn spiritual warfare from mentors you admire and respect.

The Ephesian church and the Dartmouth church are supposed to be these things. But one aspect of people being together which would and has conspired to undo all those good things the church is supposed to be, is our **speech** and sometimes our fleshly and carnal feelings *about* one another. They would make us into a mere institution. They would kill our witness. They would undo the church... So today we're going to consider Paul's word TO those Ephesian Christians on some principles (not all but some) of **enjoying one another**. Because we're *supposed* to enjoy one another!

I have spoken many times how as a brand new Christian in 1972 when I was 19 years old, I discovered a little community of Christians in my college town. It was a church but it didn't *seem* like a church to me (the building didn't look at all like a church but more like a little warehouse)--about **75 people**, of all ages. I loved that place. I was **taught the Scriptures**; the **deacons spent time with me** and talked about issues and Christian living. I found girls to date there—**Christian girls**. I **preached for the first time** in that place, on a Wednesday evening (from Ephesians 6, by the way). They had Sunday School, Sunday morning worship, Sunday night worship and Wednesday night prayer meeting. **Two Bible conferences** per year. The church supported **two missionaries**. As a new Christian, I got pretty much everything I needed in that place. It was a very enjoyable time in my life.

The next negative and positive principle in the six in this part of Ephesians is **DON'T USE YOUR MOUTH FOR EVIL BUT RATHER FOR GOOD**. Instead of just saying whatever I may feel, indiscriminant of how it may affect people, I *restrain* my tongue from saying rotten things.

Eph. 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

The Greek word for ***unwholesome*** is *sapros*, and refers to that which is foul or rotten, such as spoiled fruit or putrid meat. Rotten words should never come out of our mouths, particularly in respect to each other. We need to exercise restraint—which takes *training*--and not just be like unbelievers who just give in to any need to say whatever they want, but rather to hold back on talk which is rotten. This has lots of places where it may be relevant, and I confess I sometimes fall into this too.

We should not talk about each other in any way which degrades reputation of character.

We should shun cynical talk because above all things it is rotten. I do not mean that we act intentionally naive, but that we shun negative and critical talk.

We should do what the Bible says: Let NO unwholesome word proceed from our mouths. Now here I have heard Christians say, "Well no one can be perfect." And that is supposed to be some kind of license for letter the *occasional* unwholesome word proceed from our mouths...

There is some real good wisdom in the old cliché, "if you can't say something good then do not say anything at all." And folks, I think we should try real hard to say something good about people. I think there's almost always something good you can find to say about your brother or sister. Maybe he has a ministry in the church and he doesn't do it quite the way you would like—you can appreciate and affirm the good that he DOES do! That is a mature Christian way to manage your speech.

The words we SHOULD let fly from our mouths are words of ***edification***. That means words which build up. You know what builds me up? Specific affirmation builds me up. It is something specific that I might have done which made some difference, maybe small, in your life. If I hear about something specific, I might even do it again!

- Edifying words are like we heard from Gwen Kimball at this year's CCS Banquet. She told stories about how God worked in years past. She told about how God has been faithful to her.
- Rotten words would be an older person full of complaint and bitterness and regret.
- Edifying words are when a young person publicly says that an older person's example has made a difference in their life, and they want to be like them (as a couple of you testified about Ron Gallegos recently).
- Rotten words would be when a person exaggerates a short-coming of a church leader.
- Edifying words are when a wife, married to a hard man, tells of his strengths despite his weaknesses
- Rotten words are when she says "Just be glad *you're* not married to him."
- Edifying words comes from the heart of a person tied in to the joy of the Lord, despite whatever trials he may be enduring.
- Rotten words are lectures about how bad something is, and how if YOU knew your stuff you would be cynical like me.
- Edifying words are like when a person works a hard job and thanks God to be *able* to work and how he looks for ways to use him on the job site.
- Rotten words would be like, "You know I worked hard and long and no one appreciated it."

Edifying words are timely **according to the need of the moment**. That's an interesting phrase. What do YOU need to hear this morning, right here in this place, with whatever circumstances you're going through this week? Will anyone listen to you this morning and give a word of encouragement *taylor-made* for you, today, just exactly what you needed to hear? Or will you go home empty-handed because no one sought you out, listened long enough or gave enough attention to understand what you really need to hear?

I observed this just yesterday morning at our LC's breakfast and one brother expressed a little of where he is at spiritually these days, and several other brothers shared encouragements with him. It was a good moment, the kind of thing that needs to happen often when believers are together.

There is nothing better than a single encouragement, a reminder of a promise, an offer to pray than when you need it. Edifying words BUILD UP. They strengthen and fortify and give resolve to go out there and begin the battle again this week in faith. We need to hear edifying words when we're together for this short while as we are each week. We should not waste what little time we have together on trivia or worse, on striving.

At the end of the verse, edifying words **give grace to those who hear**. What a beautiful thought! I thought grace came from God only? Well, it DOES come from Him but it also comes from each other. To receive grace is to be blessed. It is to get *something good for free*. Building-up talk and speech blesses, never curses, those who hear. When I was in London this summer at All Soul's Church, I think I have never gotten more grace in one short hour than I got from the lips of Pastor Richard Bewes who led the service and from his associate Paul Williams who preached. I was so blessed, I could hardly stand it. I know, I was on vacation, and you expect to be refreshed on a proper vacation. But those two men were so well spoken at giving grace, I was amazed. And blessed. I thought, "Man, I want to learn to be like that!" (People would think I'm wonderful if I could really give them grace when I talk.)

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

And then Paul warns that bad feelings and bad speech, rotten speech between us actually touches God Himself. I think we sometimes separate the person of God from the holiness of God. We envision His holiness as some kind of Great Computer Program, coded for tasking perfection of all those who have the password! But God's holiness is PART of His PERSON. And Paul says that God can be **grieved** in the Spirit, which is an interesting evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person along with everything else He is. He can be grieved, made to feel real bad, saddened. Nothing makes Him sadder, I suspect, than when we speak harshly or critically or slanderously about and to each other. Paul said to the Colossians that he had worked hard to engage the fact that **their hearts may be encouraged having been knit together in love (Col.2:2)**. What God has joined together let no man tear asunder! And so Paul gives the Ephesian believers a COMMAND. Do NOT grieve the Holy Spirit of God. If you do, it is sin. If you do, you need to repent of it and plead for forgiveness from God under the blood of His Son. Grieving the Spirit of God by using rotten words, unedifying words, fleshly and carnal words is just as bad a sin as stealing or adultery or blasphemy.

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Six things to blast out of our lives... six things that are poison in a church and which steal away our enjoyment of one another. Resentment, rage, hostility, conflict and talking evil about each other—these were the things that the Ephesian believers were to make a serious PROJECT to eliminate and forbid in their assembly. They are the way unbelievers talk. They are not to be present in the family and community of redeemed brothers and sisters!

32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Negative? Don't be unkind or bitter. Positive? Be kind and loving. You know, if you have a disagreement with someone you can ALWAYS still be kind. It costs nothing to be kind and loving. You do not need to exact justice from your brethren, ever. That is unchristian. To be kind is something you can do to anyone. It is something we need to teach and frankly to insist upon to our kids and teens. They would never be cynical if they saw us adults working hard and insisting on kindness and restraint and compassion. Even WITH the world out there being as it is.

Finally, those who have been forgiven so much by God should, of all people, forgive the relatively small offenses against them by others. The most graphic illustration of this truth is the parable of Matt. 18:21–35.

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus *said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26 "The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.' 27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' 29 "So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' 30 "He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31 "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. 32 "Then summoning him, his lord *said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

I still have a great vision for us to be a happy family, practicing love and patience and a great sense of pardon with each other. I think if we are like that it is a great witness in the community—we become a safe-haven for people who come to us out of a dark and bitter world. I think we will enjoy our friendships, our kinship in Christ. I think we will look forward to being together. I think we will effectively serve the King who loves us and gave Himself for us.

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 32)
Scripture: Ephesians 5:1,2
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Date: Nov. 4th, 2001



The Core of Christianity

Introduction Many of us enjoy good impersonators. We like people who can really do a good Bill Clinton, Richard Nixon, Snoop Dogg or Julia Child. We find impersonation intriguing. More deeply, we like a good actor—we consider them good if they convince us of the part. One of my favorite actors is Gregory Peck. I always believe the role he is playing: *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Twelve O'Clock High*, *MacArthur*. Although I know almost nothing about the man himself, he convinces me that he IS the role he is playing. A good actor gets the job done—you go away thinking he is the part.

In the middle of this incredible letter to the Ephesians—loved by many as their favorite letter of Paul—he drops a bombshell: ***Therefore be imitators of God...*** It is the only place in the New Testament where the command to be like God is so blunt and is put quite this way. Real Christians are to go out of their way, take it on as long-term project, make it a priority to imitate God. This is the CORE of Christianity. And if ever there was a verse or two that I think it might be OK to just rip out of context and memorized them free and clear—Ephesians 5:1 and 2 would be them. I want to just get into this passage today and really take it apart with you.

Again in this letter, he says ***Therefore***. You know that's always there to tie what he is about to say to what he already said. What did he already say? Right before he had said ***Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other as God in Christ also has forgiven you***. So right off we know he meant BE LIKE GOD—be kind and forgiving. Be a person who chooses to love, by letting go of whatever injuries you have sustained. How much have YOU been forgiven? The great two tests of whether a person has the love of God in them or not is how much they forgive and how much they have NEEDED to be forgiven.

John MacArthur makes the stunning observation that the church that Jesus and the apostles hung out with full of sordid people—former fornicators, former thieves, former murderers, former homosexuals, that like! And this is plainly evident in the New Testament. The problem was not generally in letting the riff-raff *into* the church. It was dealing with the smug and self-righteous people. It was the Pharisees who were outraged when Jesus let the woman who washed His feet with her tears even *touch* Him. It is the person who thinks he has LITTLE that needs to be forgiven that endangers the church the most. Being an imitator of God, in other words, means being a person of powerful capacity to forgive. (taped message on Ephesians 5, citing Luke 7:36-47).

To imitate or to *mimic* (μιμηταὶ, mimetai), to copy specific characteristics of another person. The whole thing about the Christian life is that I am striving, working and learning to reproduce godliness in my life, like what we see in the person of the Lord Jesus. We read about becoming like God and Jesus in other places...

Romans 8:29 ***For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren***

Matthew 5:48 ***“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.***

1 Peter 1:14-16 ***As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”***

1 John 3:2 ***Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.***

When Alexander the Great discovered a coward in his army who was *also* named Alexander, he told the soldier, “Renounce your cowardice or renounce your name” (MacArthur, *Commentary* p.194).

Now there is a logic to this expectation on real Christians: ***as beloved children***. As a child imitates his parents’ nature and basic actions and behaviors so a believer ought to imitate the Lord. Acting like Jesus is central to our doctrine, our theology, our mission, our task, our duty, our calling, our cause, our place in society, our hope of winning people to Christ, our feeling the joy of the Lord, our pleasing Him as people who worship Him not only on a Sunday but each day, each week, each year as we become more like Him. In fact the very word “Christian” means “little Christs.”

We are not the devil’s children. There ARE people around who are the devil’s children.
We are not children of the world. There ARE people around who are the children of the world.
We are not worshippers of our families although there are whole cultures around whose greatest priority is to honor their family heritage... We are ***beloved children*** of the living God, redeemed by the blood of His Son and empowered TO become like Him by the new-life power of His Spirit.

Now let me ask you...How would someone know you are a child of God?

Would they know it by how you speak? Would they say, “Hey, he must know God.”

Would they know it by your love of purity? Would they say, “Hey, she just seems to be like the Lord—pure and lovely but not stuffy and not harsh.”

Would they know it by your great willingness to put aside wrongs suffered, even multiple wrongs. Would they say, “Wow, he seems to absorb injury not flash back.”

Would they know it by your delight in the things of God? Would they say, “She prefers the things of the Lord to the things of the world?”

All my Christian life I have pondered the external expectations some people, usually other Christians have on what a real Christian is supposed to look like. I don’t struggle with it any more but even now I get confused some times. Is imitation of God a thing which goes from the outside

in? Do I dress like God somehow or wear my hair or manage my facial expressions in such a way that then it will seep down into my heart and mind and will and even deep down into my soul? I do feel that outward appearances do have some meaning. But they are not the TOOL of godliness. You cannot *make* yourself more holy, more set apart for Him, more pure or more spiritually strong by how you dress or wear your hair. No, outward appearance is not the tool of godliness but it does *reflect* what is going on inside a person. Jesus said in Matthew 15:11 **Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.** Real godliness, real imitation of God grows from the inside, out. It takes root down deep in the soul some place and then makes its way out to the surface and *that* is where you begin to see it on the outside. Deep-rooted change into the image of Christ inside a person MIGHT make itself somehow visible on the outside by how they look; it might change their general demeanor; and it definitely WILL change their mouth.

Now, in 5:2 the “prime directive” for how to imitate the Lord, how to be like and look like Jesus Christ is to **walk in love**. That means that you make love your general lifestyle. Yes, self-preservation and self-esteem and self-fulfillment have some meaning. But when it comes to imitating the Lord and living for Christ we are nowhere told to walk in self-preservation or high self-esteem. We are told to **walk in love**. I was listening for a few minutes to a radio program yesterday that is called the Rational Basis for Happiness. Their creed is that happiness comes from serving yourself and they quote and revere the writings of Ayn Rand in validation of their ideas. Interesting... The complete opposite of what the Bible says is the true basis for happiness—loving other people and what we read in the rest of vs. 2 as our model: just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. He is the model for godliness and He **gave Himself up for us**. That is self-denial not self-fulfillment. Love involves a lot of giving ourselves up for people; it is inherently godly to do that.

I think parenting is a built-in mechanism for this aspect of godliness. People who become parents and apply themselves to learn how to do it (and very, very few people intuitively know what to do to be a good parent!), automatically sign up for this part of Godliness 101. And I always struggle with people who decide even before they're married that they're not going to have any children. It is a bold statement that I will not let my self-focus get *that* disassembled by the Lord. And I struggle with that decision when it is made up-front. The natural course of things is how the Lord uses parenthood in the sanctification process in our lives. (Note: That is not to say that people who cannot have children should be guilty—and I am sure that the Lord would provide other means of giving to young people and the next generation for people like that).

Christ is always the pattern for Christians' living their lives. We will never have a time when Christ will cease to be our pattern! We never emerge in the Christian life from being eligible and needful to look to Christ. When did Christ cease loving someone? When did He give up on people? Not at all. He gave Himself up **an offering and a sacrifice to God**. That means, dear ones, that I cannot imagine any time when WE, as His beloved children, have the right to give up on each other. You may say, “But you don't appreciate the depth of injury I've endured.” To which I would reply, “You are right.” But Jesus does. He knows how much injury you have endured. He knows how long you have endured. He knows how much you have been misunderstood or even abused. And Paul tells us that HE is the model for how to live. He bluntly tells the Ephesians **be imitators of God** and that means *be imitators of Jesus Christ*.

How do I learn to forgive? How do I become more like God in this regard?

1. The first thing is to make a study of how much YOU have needed forgiveness. Like the first Christians, who needed little convincing they were vile people, YOU need to somehow get that sense of conviction. You need to realize how Bad you are in sin, and without Christ.
2. Second you need to see that the people around you who maybe have injured you need your forgiveness. If they do not see Christ in you, where will they see Him? People around us do not need more judges or Pharisees; they need mercy and grace and pardon; a cutting loose of their debts. Free of charge.
3. Maybe third would be to realize that justice is ultimately God's job to make right. He says, **vengeance is Mine...I will repay**. You and I can cut debts loose because we trust in Him to ultimately make everything right and to repay. I do not need to. And I can't do it fairly any way!

Therefore, in all aspects our lives should be filled with that love and that great willingness and capacity to forgive people. Learning about forgiving people and loving them—being a lifelong learner in the school of godly imitation—is the core of Christianity.

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
 Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 33)
 Scripture: Ephesians 5:2ff
 Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
 Date: Nov. 11th, 2001

The Pure Congregation [Pt.1]

Introduction These days we are sensitive to certain things that a good American does. Displays the flag. Votes. Serves. Gives blood. Supports. Puts aside minor differences for the greater good. I'm not sure if any other country in the world feels such a strong sense of good purpose and unity as we do right now. We are feeling-for some people--an overwhelming logic between who we say we are, and what we do. And that's exactly the thought process in the Book of Ephesians, as it relates to an even greater and deeper citizenship--being a beloved child of God in Christ.

The book of Ephesians is about living in a manner worthy of the exquisite blessings we have been given in Christ. If you are really a Christian and have genuinely found Christ, then you have become an heir of some incredible blessings. The first half of the Book of Ephesians details those blessings. The book's second half details how to live credibly as people who claim those blessings. Ephesians is that simple.

Now before we get into the next topic--which deals with a Christian's sense of purity, we need to go back and finish something in Ephesians 5:2, where we were reading **walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.** When Jesus gave up His life for you--the most supremely selfless and loving act of all time--it had an effect on God, one could say a sort of "sensory" even almost emotional effect! This last phrase is both interesting and important: a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

The first five chapters of Leviticus detail five offerings commanded by God of the Israelites. (Note: Here is why the Book of Leviticus is so critical that we appreciate it, as Christians!) The first three were the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering.

The **burnt** offering (Lev. 1:1-17) depicted Christ's total offering to God in giving His very life to obey and please the Father.

The **meal or grain** offering in Lev.2 depicted Christ's perfection.

The **peace** offering (Lev.3,4) depicted His making peace between man and God.

All of those offerings obviously spoke of what was pleasing to God. Of each, the Scripture says it providing a soothing aroma to the Lord (Lev. 1:9,13,17; 2:2,9,12; 3:5,16). Philippians 4:18 explains that the fragrant aroma meant that the sacrifice was well-pleasing to God.

But the OTHER TWO offerings--the **sin** and the **trespass** offerings (Lev.4:1-26 32-25;5:1-19)--were repulsive to God, because though they depicted Christ, they depicted Him as bearing the sin of mankind. They depicted the Father's turning His back on the Son when **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf** (2 Cor.5:21) at which time Jesus exclaimed from the cross, **My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken Me?** (MacArthur, *Commentary*)

While Christ was the sin-bearer, God could not look at Him or rejoice in Him or be pleased with Him. But when the Father raised Him from the dead. THE SACRIFICE THAT CAUSED HIM TO BECOME SIN BECAME THE SACRIFICE THAT CONQUERED SIN. The sin that put Him to

death was itself put to death, and that great act of love was to God a fragrant aroma. That fragrant aroma spreads its fragrance to everyone on earth who will place himself or herself under the grace of the sacrifice, and it will spread its fragrance throughout heaven for all eternity. Do you not see, dear ones, how silly it is to say "Well, Jesus is surely not the only way to heaven." No other sacrifice-even the most noble among men-is a sacrifice that becomes a fragrant aroma to God because no other sacrificer was so perfect, so holy, so completely acceptable to God.

If it seems strange that God might find something smelling good and pleasant, remember that it isn't that God has nostrils. But it is a picture that God paints of Himself and is done in a way that people can relate to it.

I love good smells. The smell of good food; the smell of autumn leaves or being in a pine forest after it snows; imagining all the fragrances described in the Song of Solomon; the aromas of Christmas, they all bring a sense of well being and satisfaction. God has made us with senses and having done so, relates Himself in a way we can fully appreciate.

It is that sense of well-being and satisfaction which well describes how God feels when He looks at Christ. That's why it is good to be right there alongside of Christ, under the drape of His righteous robes! His sacrifice, applied to you by your faith in it, gives God a permanent devotion and loyalty to you. You cannot lose it. You cannot undo it.

And therefore it is incumbent on you, it is necessary for you, it is powerfully logical for you to live in a manner worthy of that kind of love. That is how a congregation of believers in Christ ought to live. How we live is every bit as important as what we say we believe.

Now first, this means you are required to be a forgiving person. If you know little about the business of forgiveness and staving off bitterness, then you need to learn.

And second it means that you and I let the Spirit sanctify us in matters of purity.

This gets right down to a central area of life, sexuality. Why does this come up here in Ephesians? Because evidently it was a problem area of people who lived in ancient Ephesus. Sensuality was not invented in the American 1960s. It has been around time, immemorial! Man's basic nature and basic brokenness in this area is nothing new. And people who have been redeemed in Christ need to let the Spirit clean them up in this area, and KEEP cleaning them up.

We read in verses 3&4 **But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.** There are a bunch of very stern negative warnings here, and one positive tactic. When it comes to sexuality-and that is what Paul is talking about when he says immorality or any impurity or greed (because lust is greed)-we are to avoid it like Anthrax, and instead give thanks for God's provision of sexuality. Sexuality is not the invention of the devil or of mankind. God thought it up! God made Man both male and female and He did so deliberately and perfectly. And He gave Eve to Adam for several specific purposes and He did so ultimately to bring glory to Himself. Sexuality is about the beauty of God's plan, His provision for a man to have a wife and for a wife to have a man that they might not have to be alone. On a more practical level, it is a fun thing, a joyous thing when it is done within the boundaries that God sets. When it is done outside of God's boundaries it is not fun. It is lust. It is not joyous. It is selfish and often destructive and at least disappointing. When it is moral, it is what God wants for people. When it is immoral it is sin and that is so important to be clear on-Paul begged the Ephesians to not let it even be named among them since that is the logic of being saints. Saints by the way does not refer to super-Christians. If you are a Christian you are a saint. You are set-apart by God from the rest of the world and considered very special by Him. It is proper for saints to distance themselves from all things immoral and impure and greedy. It is proper to talk of sexuality only in the highest and most respectful

terms.

We should never tell dirty jokes. We should not poke fun at each other either to our faces or behind our backs. We should not let dirt come out of our mouths. It grieves the Lord, it degrades our brothers and sisters in Christ-with whom we shall live in eternity-and what's scarier is that it inauthenticates our claim to know Christ. Although they are 250 years old, the words from Matthew Henry's *Commentary* are still striking:

- Filthy lusts must be rooted out. These sins must be dreaded and detested. Here are not only cautions against gross acts of sin, but against what some may make light of. But these things are so far from being profitable, that they pollute and poison the hearers. Our cheerfulness should show itself as becomes Christians, in what may tend to God's glory. A covetous man makes a god of his money; places that hope, confidence, and delight, in worldly good, which should be in God only. Those who allow themselves, either in the lusts of the flesh or the love of the world, belong not to the kingdom of grace, nor shall they come to the kingdom of glory. When the vilest transgressors repent and believe the gospel, they become children of obedience, from whom God's wrath is turned away. Dare we make light of that which brings down the wrath of God? Sinners, like men in the dark, are going they know not whither, and doing they know not what. But the grace of God wrought a mighty change in the souls of many. Walk as children of light, as having knowledge and holiness. These works of darkness are unfruitful, whatever profit they may boast; for they end in the destruction of the impenitent sinner. There are many ways of abetting, or taking part in the sins of others; by commendation, counsel, consent, or concealment. And if we share with others in their sins, we must expect to share in their plagues. If we do not reprove the sins of others, we have fellowship with them. A good man will be ashamed to speak of what many wicked men are not ashamed to do. We must have not only a sight and a knowledge that sin is sin, and in some measure shameful, but see it as a breach of God's holy law. After the example of prophets and apostles, we should call on those asleep and dead in sin, to awake and arise, that Christ may give them light.

It is a mistake to think that we can CLAIM to know Christ, and hope in His promises and yet care not at all about our inner condition.

Sexuality is the most private, deep, personal and identifying thing about us.

It is core to who we are.

It is the deepest vault of our identity.

That is why we should treat it with the greatest respect. It is one of the most important trusts we have from God.

Young people should guard their virginity with the same vigilance that our country is guarding our borders these days. Adults should guard their purity with the same determination. We should be on "high alert" that we are not invaded and compromised in this area-not just technically in how we touch a person of the opposite sex, and how we carry ourselves in dress and appearance. Yes, we should not decorate ourselves in a way that incites lust in our brothers or sisters. But more deeply in how we SPEAK and THINK about sexuality. That more deep arena is where Paul strikes in this part of Ephesians. It's not enough to just get baptized, go to church once in a while or even often, SAY we are a Christian at the right times. It is ARE we imitators of God in the secret closets of our hearts and minds? Filthiness, coarse jesting and silly talk are not fitting for believers, for people who say they know Him who gave Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice as fragrant aroma to God. You see dear ones, we are to GOVERN our whole lives-even our social lives, even our private thought lives-with the tempering and sober remembrance of what Jesus has accomplished for us. In other words, you could almost say there is no such thing as a casual Christian, who is not at least willing to be serious and open to any area the Lord may want to open up in his or her life.

Verse 5 is fearsome! It is a reality that many churches do not speak of. It is hard to teach it. **For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** I am sure Paul had taught the

Ephesian believers these things many times in the years he was with them. Taken to its inevitable conclusion, immorality becomes idolatry. We have seen this over and over. People who give in to sensuality, eventually end up worshipping it. Sooner or later it becomes the breaking of the very First Commandment!

Are you afraid of this verse? You ought to be. Not because God is some arbitrary, avenging ogre. But because He insists that His children become students of purity. And he will work in this area of your life if you let Him. It is vitally important. It is not an option. Paul says in Titus 2:11,12 these words... **For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.** Denying ungodliness is not a thing our culture knows much about these days...

Our flesh says, "My personal and immediate gratification is the most important thing. I refuse to learn to curb whatever desires I might feel at any given or random moment."

The Spirit says, "I want to make you like Jesus."

Our flesh says, "I deserve it."

The Spirit says, "Jesus who died for you, deserves your obedience and your loyalty."

Our flesh says, "Nothing's wrong so long as I want to do it and it doesn't hurt anyone."

The Spirit says, "I want to make you like the Son of God."

Our flesh says, "I want it, give it to me."

The Spirit says, "I want Jesus to be seen in you."

Our flesh says, "Everyone's doing it."

The Spirit says, "Jesus didn't and I want you to have his joy in you."

People whose lives are characterized by immorality, impurity and greed will receive nothing-no inheritance-in the kingdom of Christ and God. MacArthur says, "It is dangerously deceptive for Christians to try to give assurance of salvation to someone who has no biblical grounds for such assurance (*Commentary* p.202). That's what Paul told the Ephesian church-remember this is a letter to Christians not to unsaved people. These words are warning! We have seen people defect from the body of Christ. We have sadly, even broken-heartedly, watched people who once sought Christ, turn their backs on Him and go back into a life of greed and sensuality. It is tragic, yes, of COURSE it is tragic. And I cannot say finally whether this is merely a reference to the loss of rewards for born-again but back-slid people, or if it is a reference to a terrifying unveiling that a person who SAID they knew Christ, really didn't and their life-choices spoke the truth.

Now to close let me ask for you what is an ancient question foremost on the minds of many people... If the church is supposed to be a place of holiness and purity, is the church a place of healing or is it a place of harm?

This is where things get real practical. While all of us hopefully do not wrestle severely with the specific kinds of sin problems we read about today, all of us are still sinners. We are not told to ignore each other's struggles. And we are not told to beat each other up either. Where is that proper middle ground between discipline in the church and compassion? All churches struggle with this old question, whether they realize it or talk about it or not. Inherently we know we are in essence, a rag-tag collection of spiritually needy people who have fled to the cross of Jesus in belief that IT redeems us. But we want to grow in holiness now too. And we need to know how to govern and shepherd and model and nurture and discipline each other in the process. Pray for your elders, I ask you. It is their job to think about these things and to lead in them. Let me close with two verses that are relevant, I think:

Two verses to close with today:

Hebrews 6:9

But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
 Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 34)
 Scripture: Ephesians 5:7-10
 Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
 Date: Dec. 2nd ,2001

The Pure Congregation [Pt.2]

The Fruit of the Light

Introduction So many emotionally charged things happened this past week, it was exhausting! The New Bedford High School happenings... George Harrison's death... A visit out of the blue from a couple I was privileged to marry 14 years ago and on and on! In the midst of it all there is the "low hum in the background" of what we are all still processing and digesting: the September 11th tragedy and as part of that, the whole global interface and confrontation between Christianity and Islam. Times like these are constantly forcing within me a reality check on my faith. I am continually it seems, these days, challenged to look and see what is real in my faith and what is imaginary; what is true, and what is manufactured. And I don't know if its because I'm a pastor or just my temperament but as part of this I am frequently pondering the subject of Sunday morning worship.

And it occurs to me that worship is not just something we try to do together once a week on Sunday mornings. No, not us. We don't just "get into" a worship mode, a certain frame of mind, a geared up frenzy...GO to church, focus, say, "Lord, I love you, I love you, I love you...now bless me, bless me, bless me" and then go home, relax and forget about worshipping Him until next Sunday (if that). For us worship is a seven day per week thing. In fact, every thing I do ought to be an act of worship in one way or another: my work, my rest, my ministry--each task and activity should be done in the joy of the Lord and in the fear of the Lord. What we do here for a little while on Sundays is just a reflection of the rest of the week, which is supposed to be walking in the light as Jesus is in the light...

Sounds simple doesn't it? Well, it IS simple. If we say we are members of the "light in the Lord" club (5:8) then Paul says we are to walk as children of light. A simple logic. It means that a group of people who SAY-by their testimonies and by their voluntary association together-that they have been light-affected by the work of Christ, then their lifestyles will and should be consistent with that. And a lifestyle consistent with SAYING we're children of the light will bear a certain set of three products. This is what we read in verse 9: **for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.** Goodness and righteousness and truth. These are the tests of true faith, and I would suggest it is hard to keep them in focus. We tend to test the veracity of a person's faith by things like whether they made a "decision" for Christ, church membership, faithful attendance at church worship services, being baptized, contributing financial support to the Lord's work, going on missions trips and so forth. But all of these things can be done in the flesh and these three spiritual works that Paul mentions in verse 9 cannot.

GOODNESS is the first fruit of light. The Greek word is *agathosune* and it means moral excellence. It means being good in nature and in effectiveness. A person who is truly a Christian will produce goodness in his life, both inside of himself and it will flow out in some fashion to others. It's not in Paul's mind, it might happen. In Paul's mind it WILL happen.

It was a dramatic thing for these people to become "good" and to manifest goodness. Many were

probably first generation Jesus-followers. They were inexperienced in goodness and they had been raised in a culture and in a society of darkness. In fact, in Paul said to them back in verse 8 **You were formerly darkness**. He did not say "You were formerly around darkness or you formerly did the occasional dark thing." He told them they USED TO BE darkness. So, to become light-club members and to start seeing goodness come into their hearts and into their schedules was an incredible thing! I feel that way about some of us! I think that for some of US to do a total turn-around and BECOME good and start doing good, is wholly miraculous! And there is nothing I enjoy more in the ministry here than to SEE that.

Goodness-*agathosune*-is like another Greek word *agape* which is the highest word for love. Goodness is like love. It gives willingly and sacrificially for others. This is what Paul says WILL come out of the life of a person who really meets Jesus. Have you met Jesus? Is there a new kind of goodness happening some place in your life?

The second fruit of our walk as children of light is **righteousness**. It has to do with our fundamental relationship with God and then with whether or not we are pursuing righteousness. A person with righteousness really happening in his life has fled to Jesus for HIS righteousness. The first question I like to ask a seeking non-believer is "if you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to ask you, 'why should I let you into My heaven?' what would you say?" People often say, "well I hope my good works outweigh my bad works" or "I was sincere" and things like that. But it isn't a question of sincerity or manufacturing a few little philanthropic deeds here and there. It is a question of righteousness. The person who has really found God KNOWS they are not intrinsically righteous and they MUST somehow get Jesus' righteousness transferred into their account. Yes, that's right! It's an accounting matter! Who has enough righteousness? Muhammed and his followers? No. Krishna and his followers? No. Obiwan Kenobe and his followers? No. St. Peter? St. Mary? No. Only Jesus has enough and He offers HIS righteous standing before God to anyone who will simply cling to His cross by faith and believe in Him and trust in Him that He is not dead by alive today, risen from the dead, advocating His own righteousness before the Father on my behalf. A child of the light knows this kind of righteousness as it relates to him and his God. He never puts forth and markets his own self-righteousness.

Romans 4:5 **But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,**

Ephesians 4:24 **and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.**

Philippians 3:9 **and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith**

And, the real child of light producing righteousness will feel the effect in how he lives.

1 Timothy 6:11 **But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**

My friends the startling and perhaps upsetting reality of this is that IF a person's life is producing none of these things he or she has no biblical right to call themselves a Christian. Which is fine, as long as its not someone I care about...

The third fruit of the light is **truth**. A life that has been genuinely touched and rescued by Jesus Christ WILL manifest truth. That means honesty and integrity, and I believe it means a concern for what IS true also. A real Christian is interested in truth now, whether they were before or not. This is one of the reasons I love being around college students. They're looking for some truth. Sometimes they wear me out with questions about this teaching or that teaching, this teacher or that

teacher. This book and that book. Because they want to know what the truth is.

But let's not gloss over the being truthful part to. I think this is one of the most interesting aspects of watching a person really start to get sanctified. Almost involuntarily, they feel an inner compulsion to be truthful.

I see it when a business man comes to faith in Christ and maybe for the first time in his life he starts wanting, almost subconsciously to NOT rip people off, to tell the truth in business and maybe even to make some amends for fraudulent things he's done in the past. The child of God who is walking in light becomes a truth seeker and a truth DOER. This is what the apostle Paul says here. It is a sign that a person is really a Christian.

Do you remember what I said at the beginning of this message? Everything we do is, in one way or another, an act of worship? Read verse 10 now:

Trying the learn what is pleasing to the Lord. That is worship-doing things which are pleasing to the Lord. Everything we do IN HERE on a Sunday morning or evening should please the Lord. Everything we do OUT THERE on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday should please the Lord.

You may say, "If I buy into that I'll explode! No one can worship God seven days a week!" Well, you LEARN to do it. You try to learn to please the Lord seven days a week. The "pure congregation" is a group of people, seemingly randomly thrown together, who are stumbling through each week trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, trying to learn goodness, righteousness and truth.

What is the vision of our church? To experience Christlike goodness and righteousness and truth. What is the Christian education program of this church? To understand and model goodness and righteousness and truth.

How can we tell if our church is moving forward or is Spirit-filled? If there is any measurable goodness and righteous and truth.

Here's what true Christians are interested in: Romans 12:11,2

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The pure congregation is full of goodness and so they are not a threat. It is based on infused-righteousness and so it is never self-righteous. It is a place where righteousness is practiced and so it is not a morally confused place. And the pure congregation champions the truth-doctrinally and morally-and practices truthfulness and so it is not a shady place or a deceptive place or a stealthy place.

As we go through weeks here and there where we are just worn out by all kinds of emotionally trying things, we can rejoice that we have a community to flee to where goodness is "in the house." Goodness heals. We can be joyful because there is a club where righteousness is guarded and loved. Righteousness strengthens. We can be happy because we have a regular and frequent safe-house to go to where truth is celebrated and instructed in. Truth makes one wise.

We draw strength from Paul's words. We are glad to be Jesus-followers, to be students of the light. We are excited about what God is doing through His Spirit, for His own glory. We are amazed to be privileged to be part of it!

Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 35)
Scripture: Ephesians 5:11-14
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Date: Dec. 9th, 2001

When the Light Shines

Introduction At Christmas time there is a lot of emphasis on lights. Christmas lights on the tree or on the house. Illuminated reindeer and snowmen. Candles. In the John 1 passage that we read this morning in celebration of Advent, the apostle John said that John the Baptist's job was to **bear witness of the light**. One

thing to think reference to he was **sent** God commissioned purpose, to talk about "the light" Jesus of I'm sure it convenient or to do what He God to do. In

John 1:6-9

6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.7 He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light. 9 There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

about in him was that **from God**.

him for one to people who was Nazareth. wasn't always easy for John was sent by fact, it cost

him his head! But John the Baptist's talking to people was intended to be a blessing to people, not just condemnation of certain corrupt rulers. It was intended that through *words spoken* that people might believe in Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. And John did that. I'm not sure at what age he began but I can imagine it was fairly early. He went around saying that there was a change in era imminent! And people started to get excited. They were hungry and some were spiritually ready to "receive the light."

There is a very real and powerful way that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. He is the light because He came from a place of pure light, because He owned no darkness inside of Him whatsoever and because He, in fact, was the creator-God who spoke physical light *into existence*. As Christians we are commanded to walk in the light, to stay in the light and to have nothing at all to do with the evil ways of Satan and the world.

But the light has another component other than just giving encouragement and hope. Light tends to expose things that are in the dark. And there are a lot of things in

Ephesians 5:11-14

11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

this world which are dark. Christianity tends to illuminate them, show them to be wicked and depict them as they really are. Jesus, Light of the world, did this a lot. He depicted the Pharisees and other leaders as being something other than the wise, authoritative and noble men they liked people to think they were. He depicted the woman at the well as not married although she had been with five men and perhaps liked to think of herself as married. He depicted Judas as the traitor that he was rather than the faithful disciple that he appeared to be. The light exposes darkness.

As Christians it is our job to decide not to participate in the **unfruitful deeds of darkness** (defined by verse 5, immorality, impurity, coveting—especially in a sexual way—and idolatry) but instead we are supposed to **expose** them. One writer notes:

We cannot witness to the world if we do not go out into the world; and we cannot go far into the world before coming in contact with all sorts of wickedness. But we are never to identify with that wickedness or give it opportunity to take hold in our own life. When we compromise our standards we greatly weaken our witness.

It seems to me that Christian witnessing is in danger of losing its edge because our movement often seems more interested in winning friends than in just presenting the news of Christ. There is a lot of energy invested these days in finding ways to gain a hearing and to enhance our standing with non-Christians. Partly, I think, this is good. But when we compromise our morality or our purity in order to get more people to listen we are out of the will of God.

Now, when the light shines, it sometimes shines into the darkness. You can see what is there and you can see what it really looks like. I knew a fellow who had been engaged in significant immorality. He was a very likable person. He was funny and cheerful and had a sharp mind. He gave money to charities and he did things in the community to help some people. We shared some mutual friends and so we had this sense of commonality between us. But when we opened up a Bible one time to read a couple of verses about a question of morality that we were talking about, he became very dark. And then he grew defensive. And finally he got real sad and admitted that his lifestyle *wasn't really* happy and fruitful but that he really regretted it. The telling moment was when we read a couple of basic Bible verses together. The light shined on his actions and exposed them despite the heavy fog of friendship and joking and laughter.

Paul told the Ephesian Christians to **expose** (*elegcho*) the **unfruitful deeds of darkness** and the word for “expose” also has the idea of reproof, confront, discipline and even punish. It is a direct and blunt word Paul used. Not politically fashionable, to be sure. But it is essential to our ministry—especially internally—that we are intolerant of evil. Our witness depends on it, even if, as with John the Baptist, it costs us our heads.

Now what is Paul talking about? He evidently knew that the Ephesian believers were in danger of covering up acts of immorality, impurity, greediness and wanting what other people had, and even idolatry—which is to place such high importance on something that it in essence dethrones God. A great many activities could qualify here. What do YOU think is immoral or impure? How do you know? Well, you study the Word

of God and you make your determinations based upon what you read there. I could suggest many things, but I will suggest only one today: anything which becomes more important to us than getting *into* the Word of God on a personal basis. If you are not reading your Bible you are probably elevating something else to a higher place. You **NEED** the Word of God because it is the basis for discerning all kinds of right and wrong and it is the chief means of hearing God's voice in your own life. If you accommodate everything else but resist getting into the Word, you need to change your thinking about it. Since we **HAVE** such an abundance of God's Word and so many easy and interesting ways to get into it I think to neglect it is to participate in an unfruitful deed of darkness. We live in the twilight and shadows if we do not ***abide in the light.***

But I think Paul actually had more sordid things in mind because in verse 12 he says ***it is disgraceful even to speak of such things which are done by them in secret.*** I am sure he was thinking of sexual things. I am sure he was mainly thinking of things that were done in the "liberty of privacy" which is how our culture seems to evaluate morality today—but that are in reality so shameful that casual conversation about them is inappropriate.

There is an interesting paradox here—expose the things that shouldn't even be spoken about, so shameful they are. How do you do that? Well, it isn't that immorality should not be taught about or talked about in appropriate settings. There is a place in the church, in the home and even in the public forum where things that are basically wrong practices can and should be spoken of. But being casual or humorous about certain things or even quietly approving of them is wrong. Remember verse 4: ***there must be no filthiness and silly talk or coarse jesting which are not fitting but rather giving of thanks.*** We are living in a humor-drunk society. But we need to learn that humor can be a drug. It can put us to sleep about what is really right and wrong and it can cloud our thinking and deaden our consciences. Some things are SO wrong, as God views them, that making jokes about them or treating them so casually waters down the sense of how wrong they are.

Instead, our approach—tempered by love and kindness and patience—things which the Spirit of God produces inside of us—needs to be to hold everything up to the light of Scripture...***all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible becomes light*** (verse 13). The NIV is good here ***for it is light that makes everything visible...*** When sin is revealed it loses its hiddenness and is seen for the ugliness that it is.

Now think about this: the people who are reading these words did not have Bibles to use in exposing or confronting unfruitful deeds of darkness. Many are first-generation Christians. They did not have 1 Corinthians 6:18 ***Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.*** Or 1 Cor. 10:14 ***Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*** Or 2 Timothy 2:22 ***Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.***

They did not have the arsenal of the Letter to the Romans. They didn't own a copy of the Letters of John or of Peter, tools with which to deal with unclear or evil thinking. They had the Old Testament, helpful for the Law. But they did not have all the incredible and rich and powerful resources of the New Testament which we possess. They really had only the authority of their own testimonies. The light-source they had to shine into the darkness was their own **goodness** and **righteousness** and **truth** (vs.9). They really couldn't say to people or to each other, "Do as my Bible says, but don't pay too much attention to me..." No, the light shining in Ephesus was the light of individual lifestyles so different from what was around them that it illuminated what was around them.

The passage today ends with a cool verse, (vs.14) which is Paul's adaptation of Isaiah 60:1:

Ephesians 5:14

For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

Isaiah 60:1

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

God, through his apostle, is still inviting people—unsaved people or rebellious saved people—to rise up from being the living dead. He is always willing to shine light on us in blazing glory and grace.

Coming to Christ or coming *back* to Christ is like waking up. A life of sin is like being asleep or simply, dead. It is darkness and unproductive and unfruitful. Walking closely with Jesus Christ is life. We devote ourselves to that proposition. That is why we are here and why we seek to teach the Word of God and what the abundant life is to people.

When the light of Christ shines into a person's life, they think clearly and they understand what is good and right and true. They want to cast off the vestiges of darkness which still creep in from time to time. They even want to expose things around them that are dark because they know that darkness destroys people. They become agents of the Light and spreaders of the light. Each week is different. We never know who we might encounter from one week to the next. But God, in His grace, uses us and helps us to minister His light to each other.

Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 36)

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-21

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: Jan. 6th, 2002

A Soundbite for How We're Supposed to Be

Introduction Silliness, weirdness and stupidity. Hallmarks of a fun ministry! Christians have often been accused of taking themselves too seriously and of being sourpusses but I have always thought church life should be fun and that relationships between Christians should be fun. It is second-nature with me to look for the fun thing in people's lives! In fact, I would rather someone learn what is fun about me and *then* learn that I am a Christian! I don't know if that's right or not, but I think we're rowing against the stream these days with putting it across to unbelievers or seekers that we are normal people. And so I like to think about what makes someone unique and then I want to know how the Lord Jesus has changed their life!

I love how our brother Gene played accordion for forty years;
how Joanie likes to craft with dollhouses;
how Riche and Maggie have their band, "Magnolia";
how John and Bob get a kick out of carving things out of wood;
how Dean and Brendan like to throw horseshoes and bowl;
how Cindy likes to quilt;
how Tom likes to fish;
how Dick and Pat like to decorate for Christmas;
how Joe and Dennis and Bob love Harley's, and so forth!

I have always envisioned the church as a place where people want to come, to hang together, the enjoy some of their best friendships. And light-hearted joking and a little whimsy have always been essential ingredients for having fun. I think it's important for a church to have fun together just like it's important for a family to have fun together...

However, there is another side of Christian living which balances us off and keeps us from getting too silly or not taking each other and what we are doing together serious enough. It is what we find—in "sound bite" form—in today's passage,

Ephesians 5:15-21

15 Therefore ¹be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,
16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
17 So then ²do not be foolish, but ³understand what the will of the Lord is.
18 And ⁴do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but ⁵be filled with the Spirit,
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

21 and ⁶be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

... a fitting meditation for the beginning of the year. In this passage there are six action-points, which together form another nice *summary* of what should really mark out a genuine Christian... (There are many such nice, compact summaries of authentic Christian living in Ephesians).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that *when I was a child I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things...* (I Cor. 13:11). You can spend your whole life acting like a child, even after coming to faith in Christ you might get stuck in patterns of childish thinking and never really grow up. One of the features of being young is in being naive. A naïve person assumes

everyone is always safe—no one really poses any danger...

I myself am actually invulnerable;

we have all the time in the world;

getting drunk or stoned is just a fun thing;

I am accountable to no one except myself.

These are some of the characteristics of youthful immaturity. But sooner or later a Christian person starts to realize that in fact, life is a battle—at least spiritually. Spiritually speaking we are not living in a circus or a sitcom. A Christian knows that life is not primarily about Me Amassing My Empire. A Christian who has started to mature understands that *the days are evil*. The first three “action points” of this latest Ephesian “sound bite” tell us to

Be careful how we walk...not to be foolish...and to understand what the will of the Lord is.

A wise person is careful how he or she walks. A foolish person is not, and gives little regard for what God wants in our lives. All people are born spiritually foolish.

Romans 1:21,22

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

1 Corinthians 2:14

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Often times unwise people have the important things in life reversed: they think foolishness is wisdom and wisdom is foolishness. I was in a bookstore this week and I saw a button which said, “I live to drive the religious right nuts.” I also saw in that bookstore a large section on “spirituality.” Books and books pondering and expostulating the ins and outs of getting spiritual. Most of the principles, I am sure, were the opposite of what we would think makes up spirituality.

But some of the things the world has to offer are compelling. We need to be CAREFUL about the choices we make; the company we keep; the entertainment we allow into our heads and hearts; the things we consider important.

In Paul's day, he thought the *days were evil* and they needed to *make the most of their time*. Even more so I should think we need to make the most of our time today.

You know, I think most of us need a good talking to on this point. We spend so much time on things which are ultimately NOT kingdom-building. When you match up how much time we spend on Bible study, prayer, evangelism and caring for each other against how much time we spend on other things I think we would be embarrassed. We sometimes think that if we spend five minutes a day reading a little Bible passage we have done some great spiritual thing. And we watch an *hour* of meaningless television without even noticing it. A wise person factors in the fact that we only have a certain amount of time to do the really important stuff in this life.

Being careful how we walk means first that we are awake and aware of where we're stepping. We do not walk in places which are dangerous. I think this has implications for business connections, for entertainment, for whom you date if you're single, for whom you spend the most time with and for which Christian organizations we link up with. When Paul said "the days are evil" he was fundamentally aware that there is *EVIL* out there. We get so cynical sometimes—because "evil" has been trivialized and comicbook-ized so much in this culture that we forget that evil is THERE. Wise people are very aware of evil and foolish people let themselves minimize it or come to believe that they are somehow immune to it.

And it is not easy to RENOUNCE sin...

A wise person asks himself or herself the question, "What IS God's will for me?" Do you ask yourself that question? In the passage in front of us it primarily means God's MORAL will. *Understand what the will of the Lord is...* His will is to be pure and holy as much as you can be. It is to have a heart that is soft and compliant to Him and not hardened or crusty. It is to WANT what He wants for your life. That is a wise person. A foolish person disregards what God wants, as if all God wants is to be arbitrary of in some way rook me out of fun and pleasure.

"I think I'll smoke some weed even though God doesn't want me to, because I know what's fun." "I think I'll broker me some physical intimacy outside the boundaries of what God has said, because I know what I need and I know what's fun."

Matthew 5:4,6

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

This little sound bite tells us that a wise person mourns over his own spiritual foolishness and hungers and thirsts to be in the center of God's will, to be a righteous man or woman, to be a strong man or woman of God. That person WILL BE SATISFIED. They WILL BE COMFORTED. How should we be? We should be morally wise and

intellectually aware of what God's will is. We do not have *forever* to become this way. We only have a single life, a few short decades, to make our lives count for Jesus Christ. The time passes quickly and the days press in on us with an evil that would sap our energy and perspective.

I hope you will take this sound bite seriously and meditate on it this week. I hope you will reassess your life and how you spend your time. As followers of Jesus there is much good work and joyful work to do. May He burden each of us with a hunger to be found right in the middle of God's plan for us!

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
 Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 37)
 Scripture: Ephesians 5:18-21

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
 Date: Jan. 13 th ,2002

Getting Filled with Old Wine or New Wine?

Introduction It seems to be one of the age-old questions of philosophy... Not that I have ever heard it actually asked in a formal setting, but I think it's a philosophical question that lies in the minds of a lot of people, down through the years. It is a question that, depending on how you answer it, affects a lot of people. It is this question: Does God care about whether I, as an individual, use alcohol or some other narcotic or drug, to alter my mental or emotional or physical state? Does the God of the universe really notice whether I imbibe, smoke or swallow something which might or will modify my perception and my feelings about what is in front of me. I have a number of friends-good friends-who would say, "No, He does not care, even IF He notices." What's more, those friends would suggest to me that anyone who does think that God cares about such things has much too small a view of God..." This is maybe the number one Do or Don't Do question that Christians have a reputation for caring about. I think it doesn't get anywhere near the space in the Bible that some other questions receive, but we come upon it now in our exposition of Ephesians...

And we come upon it in the midst of Paul's admonition to the early Christians that they become a careful people-maybe they were not naturally that way before they met Christ-and that they become mindful of the time we have allotted to us to do some things for the Kingdom of God-and that we become clear in our thinking about the kinds of things that God wants for us (understand what the will of the Lord is).

My belief is that fundamentally we are supposed to be a happy people. Collected together-seemingly randomly-drawn together by the Spirit, grafted into the bigger tree, I believe that we are supposed to be a pleasant and cheerful sort of community. We are supposed to be smart and clever even with what we believe; far smarter than those around us who have no clue why people exist or what is meaningful or what is right or wrong. But even in the midst of joining this smart community we intuitively know it is through no natural wisdom or achievements that we are possessed of light and understanding. We know that we do not deserve God's light and goodness-that is the first gateway in the faith! It is all, every bit of it, by the free grace and mercy of our God. And because of that we *subject ourselves to each other in the fear of Christ...*

So here we are in this movement, in this direction-altering experience, attached to other kindred spirits here (and elsewhere) *seeking a city whose architect and builder is God Himself...* And thus, we are signed on, tattooed and invested with a new set of drives. The old drives were passions and deceitful lusts (4:22) and impurities (5:3) and greed and filthiness and silly talk and coarse jesting and futilities of the mind (4:17). And occasionally for some of us, drunkenness. We liked to get drunk. We liked to get drunk in lots of ways. Some days we liked to just get slightly tipsy. Other days we liked to get rip-snortin' knock-down slobberin' blasted. We liked to get wrecked, stoned, stupid. We liked to trip and fly. We spent good cash money on it, sometimes ran up insurance bills into high orbit, sometimes killed other people in the process. We called the drinks "stimulants" when in fact we knew they were

really depressants. We thought coolness with a beer in our hands or a joint between our fingers or a bong on the table was the best!

But it didn't last. And it left a hollowness. And we felt a shallowness in all that. We got tired of smelling the spilt beer the next morning and looking out through squint-eyes and mind-numbing headaches. Before we met Christ we didn't know any better (4:18); some mornings we remembered back to the evening that we were more like animals than men—we were *darkened in our understanding...hardened in our hearts*. We said, on more lucid days, "Hey everyone's doing the same thing; I'm no different than anyone else. In fact SINCE I haven't made MADD's Top Ten list yet I'm not even as bad as some others." But underneath the excuse-making and rationalizations we knew there must be a better wine than this old wine of partying.

And then for those of us who have, we stumbled into Jesus. We looked into His eyes, eyes which pierced our souls. He saw right through us; He knew us. He had made us! And we looked at the nail prints and the spear wound and the head wounds. And without adequate words, we KNEW they were for us. And we signed ON to Him. We joined His troop. Little did we know we would be next to people quit unlike ourselves some days. Little did we understand all the new vocabulary or all the new theology. We just knew we loved HIM. We knew He went the distance for us. We knew now were *light in the Lord* (5:7). He gave us a strange, wild, pure and clean NEW WINE. I used to party with Pete and Joe Paul. Man, we had fun. They were cool guys. But they hadn't looked into Jesus' eyes yet. They looked at me and said, "Hey Neil, what's wrong?" I could hardly explain but the old wine just had no attraction now. It seemed pointless. The new wine was fabulous!

I learned to sing. I never sang before I met Jesus. I started hanging with a new set of guys and we sang songs. The freaky thing was I found I LIKED it. It seemed right. It was fresh. The songs were about Jesus and about what He did for us. They weren't propaganda. They were tributes. This was the New Party! And these were partying songs. They were happy and cool. Sometimes they were new tunes with really old words—I didn't know they were old Psalms at first... Like this one:

"Don't you wonder why, the stars are in the sky? They're telling you and I of the glory of God. Every towering tree is there for folks to see so there no doubt can be of the glory of God. So let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart do the same thing for thee, and a witness be, to the glory of God. Comes the morning sun, to make the darkness run, and say that day's begun to the glory of God. But when the shadows fall, and the nightwinds call they're telling one and all of the glory of God." This was a cool song but it was from the Nineteenth Psalm. Far out!

And after getting together with "the brothers," for that was what we called each other now—I went home and felt good. It wasn't some kind of drunken excess (*for that is dissipation*, 5:18). It was a clean, fresh time spent with my brothers. Man! I couldn't get over that. Here I was attached to a whole new set of friends. We sang together, ate together, hung out together. I looked across the hall or across the common at my old friends and I still liked them and all. I certainly didn't look down on them. But they just didn't get it. They were still swilling the old wine of the flesh, still talking the same stuff, nothing new. They had not yet sung and made melody with their hearts to the Lord. They had not yet felt that great sense of gratitude to the Lord even for ALL THINGS (not just the Christmas presents).

Now, I knew Who was the source of all goodness in the universe. It wasn't some stupid impersonal "Force" or energy and it wasn't some dreadful God who was full of power and might but no love or frankly anything interesting. I found myself specifically *giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus*

Christ to God even the Father. (5:20) That is a kind of standard phrase in the Bible but in 1972 it was brand new to me. And I also found I wanted to be connected to the other guys in a new kind of fellowship that wasn't controlled by ego or who had the most powerful personalities and drives like that. It seemed like it was controlled by a mutual humility and subjection to one another all under something new to me, something they called *the fear of Christ*. The guys seemed to know that the Lord Jesus was near by, close at hand. You didn't go around running your life like before-"It's all about me." We all knew we were accountable to the Redeemer who had bought us.

We partied. But we lived soberly. We had lots of joy and laughter. But we knew we were at war. We rejoiced and celebrated and enjoyed one another and shared new songs and old songs with new hearts. But we knew Jesus as the Lord as well as our Savior and so we wanted to learn more about obeying Him. So we studied His Word together and we made new choices and changed some directions. We established new priorities together. We were a new community with a new covenant. We were getting filled with new wine now and weren't too interested any more in the old wine. We didn't want to become nerds; but we had no use for getting drunk or stoned or wrecked or wired any more. It just wasn't part of what the Spirit of God was doing. He was replacing the old drives and passions with new ones.

He can do the same for you today as He did for me twenty-nine years ago. He can fill you up with new wine and drain out the need for the old ways. All you have to do is mean business with Him. Go to Him. Seek the filling up of His Spirit in your life. Make it your number one priority in this new year.

Dartmouth

Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 38)
Scripture: Ephesians 5:18-21
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Date: Jan. 20th, 2002

Drunk with Wine or Filled with the Spirit

Introduction The Christian life is such an excellent life! When you think about all the benefits of deciding to follow Jesus and to trust in Him, they are almost innumerable. It always amazes me when I see or hear of someone becoming introduced to Jesus Christ, getting acquainted with the facts of who He is, what He offers, what's going to happen in the future and so forth—and then that person says, “No, I don't think so.” It is an incredible thing to turn it down! Walking with Jesus Christ in this life, being indwelt by His precious Spirit, finding ourselves in a redeemed relationship with the Father because of what Jesus has accomplished is the most wonderful decision a person can ever make. And after having decided to follow Jesus, and if the seed of faith takes root and begins to grow, you will never regret it.

And yet, we find ourselves faced with questions that bug us. For instance, whether a Christian should abstain from alcohol or not may not be the biggest philosophical challenge we face today... But it seems to be a question which many Christians struggle with. Several of you said you enjoyed last week's message and found it helpful—I am glad for that. Today we want to use the same passage take a direct look at the question, **“What does the Bible say about drinking?”** For some of you this is no issue at all. For me it is not an issue and that has little to do with my being a pastor. I do not drink primarily because I believe I have the genetic components to like it too much and to become an alcoholic. Being raised in an alcoholic home, I have no desire to become one. So, I do not drink. For others of us it is not an issue because we simply are not ever in an environment where drinking is being done and for others we simply have no desire to drink liquids which taste, at first try, somewhere between kerosene and nuclear coolant. But for a good many others among us, there are many opinions—even as Bible-believing Christians—it is a pressing question and therefore it deserves a careful consideration.

Since we are Bible-believing Christians we would therefore, one would presume, be interested in anything the Bible has to say about a subject and we would be interested in a responsible interpretation of the Bible's sayings on that subject. In the midst of Paul's admonition to the readers of this letter, ***do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit***, we wonder a number of questions:

What is ***drunk***?

What did Paul mean by ***wine***?

What is ***dissipation***?

Why is the alternative of being *filled with the Spirit* compelling?

We tried to answer the last question last week. Ephesians 5:18 does not just have a negative clause, it also has the positive and really more important clause **but be filled with the Spirit**. And beyond it being a better way to go in your life, we want to try to define what the filling of the Spirit IS.

Paul says **do not get drunk with wine**. (καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω *kai me methuskesthe oino*) It is a plain enough command except that we wonder, what does it mean to “get drunk?” The Greek word (*methuskesthe*) simply means to become drunk, to get intoxicated. It isn’t a complicated subject although sometimes I think we want to find out *if* the obvious definition can somehow be obscured by a Greek definition. We want the Greek word to say at how many beers do I stop? In this case, we might like to imagine that **drunk** doesn’t mean “drunk.” But I am afraid it does. We are not supposed to be get drunk. Ever? Never. Why not ever?

Why not at a wedding at least?

Why not on New Year’s Eve, at least?

Why not if I get fired from my job; surely it would be OK THEN, wouldn’t it?

How about if I GET a new job, it’d be OK to celebrate a little and get just a little cranked, wouldn’t it?

How about if I’m under stress because it’s exam week or I’m not getting along real great with my spouse or my kid got arrested or my Mom died? THEN, it would be OK, right?

How about at a Super Bowl party because hey, they’re only once a year. It’s not so bad THEN, right?

Many reasons are given for drinking, in general. One of the most common is the **DESIRE TO BE HAPPY**, or at least to “forget” a sorrow or a problem.¹ Now, there’s nothing inappropriate for a Christian about wanting to be happy. “There are times when exhilaration of heart and mind are entirely proper.”² The Bible gives lots of endorsements for happiness (Eccl. 3:4; Psalm 16:11; Prov. 17:22; Matthew 5:3-11; Luke 2:10; Philippians 3:1; 4:4).

The problem with drinking in order to get happy is not the motive but the means. It brings only an **artificial happiness** at best and is **counterproductive to spiritual sensitivity**. It is a **temporary escape**—and those of you who have done this know usually an **ineffective escape**—that often leads to worse problems. Getting drunk “is *never* a REMEDY for the cares of life but it has few equals in its ability to multiply them.”³ I found that statistics vary somewhat depending on where you look but beyond statistics drinking has caused the **loss of many battles, the downfall of too many governments, moral corruption in too many lives**. From a statistical standpoint in the U.S. alone there are no less than **thirteen million alcoholics** (1 in every 13 adults; almost 3½ million of these are teenagers), another several million who are near-alcoholics and **53% of ALL Americans** report that one or more close relatives have “a drinking problem.” And, alcohol is a killer too—placing a person at risk for certain cancers, especially those of the liver, esophagus, throat, and

¹ John MacArthur, *Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 230

² William Hendricksen, *Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 238

³ MacArthur, *Ibid.*

larynx (voice box); heavy drinking can also cause liver cirrhosis, immune system problems, brain damage, and harm to the fetus during pregnancy. Deaths by alcohol-impaired drivers is a whole other issue which we won't document today... And finally, alcohol-related problems cost society approximately \$246 billion per year, (October 2,000).⁴

So what does Paul mean by *drunkenness*? It is the **clouding or disruption by alcohol of any part of a person's mind so that it affects his faculties or restricts or changes his thinking or acting or any of the normal functions of the body and mind**. The Bible, in both Testaments, unequivocally condemns drunkenness. It is always described in the Bible as a picture of sin and disaster.

Shortly after the Flood Noah became drunk and acted shamelessly. (Genesis 9:21).

Lot's daughters caused him to become drunk and to commit incest with them as a foolish and perverted means of having children.

Ben-hadad and his allied kings became drunk and were all slaughtered except Ben-hadad, who was spared only by the disobedience of Israel's King Ahab (I Kings 20:16-34).

Belshazzar held a drunken feast in which he and his guests praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone and during the very midst of the drunken brawl the kingdom was taken from him (Daniel 5).

Some of the Corinthian Christians became drunk while at the Lord's table and God caused some of them to become weak and sick and others to actually die because of their wicked desecration (I Cor. 11:27-30)

The book of Proverbs has many warnings against drinking (Proverbs 23:19-21;29-33; 20:1; 23:35; vss.27,28 make a connection between drunkenness and other kinds of immorality.

Isaiah 5:11 warns bluntly against what sounds very much like alcoholism and he also warns against drinking in 28:7,8.

Galatians 5:19-23 includes drunkenness simply AS A SIN.

I Peter 4:3 told believers to forsake the way of Gentiles who pursue drunkenness as one of their featured activities.

Paul admonished the Thessalonian believers similarly (I Thess. 5:6-8 and Romans 13:13 too).

Paul also even told the Corinthians that they should shun a *so-called brother* among other things, if he is a drunkard. And in I Cor. 6:9,10 being a characteristic drunkard actually disqualifies one from *inheriting the kingdom*.

But for Paul—back in Ephesians—his primary concern was something else: As Christians they found themselves competing with a certain long-established *religious* backdrop in their city and culture. Drunkenness was closely associated with the idolatrous rites and practices that were an integral part of pagan temple worship. It is a long and involved history (John MacArthur's Commentary details this) but at the most basic level it meant that drunkenness was closely associated with all kinds of sanctioned immorality of the worst kinds. The point is, it was completely acceptable in most of the Roman cities of the ancient world. Paul was making a moral AND a theological contrast by how Christians are to abstain from drunkenness. A true believer in Jesus Christ has no need for any **artificial, counterfeit, degrading , destructive fantasies** which in essence amount to the same kind of idolatries as were practiced in the ancient world. Now for some of you this is all completely irrelevant because it's just not an issue. But for others of us this is *completely an issue!* Because you feel the pull of your peers; you feel the need for fun; you have pain which you would LIKE to anesthetize in the quickest way possible.

⁴ web site for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1/18/02 cf. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/alcoholism.html>

It would be a little easier for us if we could just say the Bible says to never drink any alcohol at all... But when we're investigating what DOES the Bible say about drinking we must also be honest and acknowledge that there are times when Scripture does commend wine. Scripture does not totally forbid consuming wine.

Drink offerings of wine accompanied many O.T. sacrifices (Ex.29:40; Num.15:5; 28:7).

The Psalmist spoke of *wine which makes man's heart glad* (Psalm 104:15), which at least implies something good about it.

Proverbs 31:6 advises dispensing wine in some circumstances.

Isaiah 55:1 uses wine as a metaphor for the goodness and grace which God offered to His people.

Jesus' first miracle involved turning water INTO wine at the wedding of Cana (John 2).

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus said the man poured oil and wine into the wounds of the assaulted man (Luke 10:34).

Paul advised Timothy to *use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments*. (1 Tim. 5:23).

So, like many things, wine seems in Scripture to be thought of as a thing which has potential for good or for evil. So what SHOULD BE our practice regarding drinking if **the Bible on the one hand does not strictly forbid it but on the other hand gives many warnings about it?** (And that is the honest answer of **what does the Bible say?...**)

I think we resolve this question for Christian living with the same approach as we do many other issues—you fire a series of questions AT the issue. And in this case there are EIGHT QUESTIONS⁵ to ask yourself:

1 **Is today's wine the same as that in Bible times?**

In short, the answer is no. There are several words in the Greek which refer to wine: *sikera, gleukos, yayin, oinos*. The short story is that the wine of Bible times was not the same as the unmixed wine or strong drink of our own day. It was generally much weaker. As MacArthur notes, even the more civilized pagans of Bible times would have considered the modern drinks of today to be barbaric and irresponsible.

2 **Is it necessary?**

In ancient times good drinking water or other safe beverages were scarce and often impossible to find. Such is far from the case today. In fact, today at least in this country, you have to go out of your way to consume alcohol. I think a good number of Christians imagine that drinking IS necessary in order to prevent embarrassing or offending friends, acquaintances or business associates. We think, "Oh I had better have a drink or I will look out-of-touch or self-righteous or something else bad." But you know what? A Christian's witness in general is often resented or costly. I think *most* people are inclined to respect your abstinence when it is done out of honest conviction and is not flaunted self-righteously or judgmentally. More often Christians are perhaps more concerned for their popularity or image. Others sometimes feel that they need to drink to establish a relationship with an unsaved person with a view to bringing him or her to saving faith. But,

⁵ These points come from John MacArthur's *Commentary on Ephesians* where the discussion is very thorough.

as MacArthur puts it so well, such a view of evangelism fails miserably in understanding the sovereign work of God and the power of the Gospel apart from human devices or compromises.⁶ Therefore I would suggest to you that drinking is never necessary in this culture in which we are living today, unless we find ourselves with an impure water supply...

Is it the best choice?

For all Christians in all decisions, we are to be controlled by the question, "Is this the best thing for me to do in this situation?" In other words we are to have high standards, not low standards. One of the things the Lord does in people is to rejuvenate their sense of achievement and drive. Before we knew Christ, we might have contented ourselves with mediocrity. But now, in all things, we should ask, "If I do this thing, is it the best decision for me, does it play consistently with *presenting my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God who is my spiritual service of worship?*"

Is it habit-forming?

You know, a Christian is not only supposed to avoid sin but also the potential for sin. Anything which might lead us away from the things of God ought to be avoided. Alcohol has great potential to addict us. Why mess with it? Of course you do not become addicted to something by just dabbling in it but if that thing is highly addictive why would we toy with it? Ephesians 5:15,16 *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

Is it potentially destructive?

Few arguments are easier to make than the argument of the potential destructiveness of drinking. When a person started following Jesus Christ and really meant business they signed on to a lifestyle of LIFE, not death. ANYTHING which has such great potential for destruction and sin, how can a Christian be casual or careless about it? Consider Joel 1:5; 3:3; Habakkuk 2:15,16...

By the way, Paul gives a reason for the negative command, *for that is dissipation*. The word *asotia* is translated *debauchery* (NIV, RSV), "excess" (KJV), "riot" (ASV), and "dissipation" (NASB). All these give the idea of profligate or licentious living that is wasteful. In this verse the literal sense of incorrigibility seems best, for a drunken man acts abnormally. Rather than controlling himself, the wine controls him.⁷ *Asotia* literally means "that which is unable to be saved," and it was used sometimes of a person who was hopelessly and incurably sick, and also of loose living (as in the case of the prodigal son). Consider also Proverbs 4:17; 20:1 for the connection of drinking with violence.

⁶ MacArthur, Ibid.

⁷ Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

Will it offend other Christians?

You can never guarantee that even if you think *you* can drink in moderation that your example may not cause a weaker fellow Christian to try drinking and become addicted. I heard a Christian say recently, "Well if anyone is looking at me, they need to get a life." We do not exist in a vacuum as Christians. Our "rights" to do as we please are not the most important thing for us. Love is the most important thing and Paul was a good example of someone willing to alter his very lifestyle if it meant the edification of a younger Christian, including giving up certain liberties. 1st Cor. 8:4,7-9,11 deal with this plainly. Put simply, I need to be careful how my choices affect other people.

Will it harm my Christian testimony?

It is very hard for me to imagine my arrival in heaven, undergoing an evaluation of my life here on Planet Earth and hearing the Lord tell me, "You know, Neil, if you just had drunk a few more beers you would have won more people to Christ." My testimony is hard enough to maintain before the non-Christians I know and have known without compromising myself in the area of beverages and entertainment. We need to be serious with guarding our testimonies and not always be looking for ways to cut ourselves slack. Paul wrote to the Galatians, ***Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.***

Is it right?

Each Christian needs to ask himself or herself this question on any questionable practice—not just drinking. My own feeling is that drinking contributes nothing to an abundant life. I cannot imagine any scenario where I would be happier if I could just have a beer, a glass of wine, a snifter of brandy, a cocktail or a highball. My life is just not impoverished for lack of these things. On the other hand, in those moments when I feel really close to the Lord Jesus Himself, His Spirit really meets all my needs. His Spirit, at different times, fills me up with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. These are the ingredients of true happiness and Jesus Christ offers them freely as a by-product of trusting in Him and walking with Him. They are not trivial benefits!

Dartmouth

Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 39)

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18ff

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: Jan. 27th, 2002



Thriving by Filling

Introduction We are a week away from Day 1 of this year's "50-Day Spiritual Adventure" a thing invented by David and Karen Mains. It is a time when as many as want to, seek the Lord together in a little more deliberate and focused way than normal, for 50 days. The subject this year is becoming "more than survivors," or simply put, "thriving spiritually." When I think of the word "thriving," I think of a plant like perhaps a tomato plant. Now, I have tried to get tomato plants to do well and let me say it is not my gift. Seems like whenever I have grown them I get these scrawny, spindly stalks with a little red or green blob or two on them. But when I think of a thriving tomato plant I think of my grandfather's tomato plants in Nashville, Tennessee. I remember visiting there in the summer time and in his little garden he had the most healthy, fruit-laden plants you can imagine. And a thing he did every morning in the summer, was to go out before breakfast and pick him a couple of big ol' tomatoes and bring them in a slice them up to serve the family with eggs and bacon. Yow! I can taste them! But those plants thrived in the hot sun and humidity of my grandfather's backyard. Thriving... For a Christian to thrive, it means to be like his tomato plants, not mine!

Thriving in your spiritual life means you are ALIVE. It means you look forward to walking with Jesus Christ each and what each day may bring. It means you are awake, spiritually, and that you interpret what goes on around you from a spiritual perspective before anything else. It means you get joy out of your walk with Christ. It means you are not only aware you are in a battle, but you DO battle. Thriving means you hunger for the Word of God and that you thirst for His righteousness to somehow flow through you!

And I want to set you up for this 50 day spiritual adventure by taking a stab at that other phrase in Ephesians 5 that we have been lingering upon for a couple of weeks...

Ephesians 5:18 *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit...*

I refer you to the last two messages on the first and second phrases of this message. But equally important if not more so is this THIRD phrase, ***but be filled with the Spirit...*** Gordon Fee calls this command the key to all others in the Bible. John Calvin said that since God promises to give us all we need through His very Spirit, to try to make ourselves otherwise happy with wine and stimulants is a great offense to God as if He cannot deliver on what He has promised!

I am humbled at the prospect of trying to say a thing or two about the filling of the Spirit. I feel that in the thirty years now that I have been walking with the Lord Jesus by faith that I hardly KNOW anything of it. I have been confused and distracted and too fascinated by the *counterfeit* teachings of this. I am too ill-acquainted with the genuine article and feel I am only a babe in being filled up with His Spirit.

But what we need to notice first is that Paul wrote these words to his readers in verse 18 in the *present, passive imperative*. An “imperative” is a command. An “imperative” means YOU DO THIS, and so whatever is meant by the words ***be filled with the Spirit*** it is something they (and we) are supposed to do. In this Greek usage of the present tense, it is a continuing present—like saying ***be being kept filled***. Now as awkward as that sounds, it is pretty much the best way to render the Greek. It’s supposed to keep happening.

And the “passive voice” (***be filled***) indicates that the person is ACTED UPON, not acting alone. The Christian does not fill himself up nor others with the Spirit of God, he opens himself to BEING filled by God with the Spirit of God. Now if these seem like nitpicking, hair-splitting observations understand that whatever Paul meant exactly, there is great confusion about this today. Being filled with the Spirit is given every interpretation from falling down and barking on the floor like a dog to dropping whatever you’re doing and dashing off on some mission to speaking in unintelligible languages to singing songs over and over and over. It almost seems that the definition changes depending on what preacher you’re listening to.

But do you know what? I WANT to know what it really is. I always have. And it has seemed that every time I have admitted that there is immediately someone right there to tell me what it is. But I think I’ve got to find out for myself.

Now, I do not think the filling is the same thing as being baptized by the Spirit for that is the event that put me INTO the body of Christ when I was saved. 1 Corinthians 12:13 ***For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.***

And I do not think filling is the same thing as indwelling for that is Romans 8:9 ***However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*** Rather this, I think, is to live continually under the influence of the Spirit by letting the Word of God control me. Rather something more like Colossians 3:16 ***Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*** It means that I would be interested and actively pursuing a pure life, in confessing all known sin, in dying to self, in surrendering to God’s will, and in depending on His power in all things. Being filled with the Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking in the Spirit. It is daily, increasing

more and more with each year and I think it overflows in a number of ways to those around us. Jesus Himself exemplified the Spirit-filled life and Paul wrote of it to the Galatians (5:16-23) 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

I am not a very good mystic, I find. Maybe there's still too much "engineer" in me or in my blood. I WANT to be mystical, but I keep ending up back at the idea that being Spirit-filled is more a daily, routine, character issue (a HARD thing to change and rearrange and rebuild inside of my head and heart and will). It is more a thing about producing fruits that in about producing strange phenomena around me.

If I am Spirit-filled, I am not a drinking kind of guy I think. If I am Spirit-filled then the evidence is what Paul wrote in 5:19-21: **19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.**

Paul clearly COULD have listed a whole bunch of cool, mystical stuff here since he told them to be filled with the Spirit. And he DID list some stuff!

- 1) First is a kind of conversational thing. **Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.** That's strange, don't you think? How do we speak in songs to one another? I'm not sure. Unless it's something like when we're really having a close conversation and the word comes up, someone quotes a verse or something, and it is sweet between us, like a song or something. Maybe something FROM the psalms. Or maybe when one of our singers shares a personal song that they really like and they attempt to bless me with it. In that passing moment, and we are SUPPOSED to do this, remember—the Spirit is filling us up.
- 2) In that fellowship, there is a joint singing and melody of heart TO the Lord. It's about worship and pouring out some MELODY to Him. The melody of a song is the main tune. My Dad always liked to say that music is mathematics. He meant that music is the arrangement of frequencies—PLEASANT frequencies—in logical sequences and combinations which taken together produce a mathematical symphony. The melody is the driving force of the song and we are told to make melody in our hearts to the Lord, to send Him a tune.
- 3) The tune is captivated by gratitude (verse 20). How thankful are you this morning for the things the Lord has done, is doing in your life right now and WILL do in time to come? When you're Spirit-filled, there is a feeling even a passion for giving thanks and gratitude to Him. And it is a COMPREHENSIVE giving of thanks, **for all things...**

Whoa! He doesn't want me to thank him for hardships, does He? Even for those? Sure, why not? When you're filled up with the Spirit, and that means you have His presence right, close beside you—you can see beyond your present comfort or convenience or wishes or preferences.

- 4) And fourth, being Spirit-filled includes a willingness and a voluntary ***being subject to one another in the fear of Christ***. Who's in charge in this church? Who cares? Who wins the latest argument or dispute? Who cares? If I am Spirit-filled that will evidence itself in my willing to SUBORDINATE myself to you.

Now if we're going to thrive spiritually, we are going to be Spirit-filled. I don't know if we'll get all mystical and supernatural and all that cool stuff. But we will be filled up with His Spirit. Who doesn't want this? Who doesn't care? Who doesn't need it. Join us in the 50 days beginning next Sunday. Purchase a journal and a book—they're just tools, not magic pills. But do EVERYTHING you can to thrive and grow and stretch your walk with Christ. I cannot but believe He will meet you there and He will do some good things in your life, because He loves us and wants to make us more than just survivors. He wants us to thrive in Christ and really have an abundant life, full of joy and love and peace!

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 40)

Scripture: Ephesians 5:22-24

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: Apr. 7th 2002



The Wife in the Fear of Christ

Introduction One aspect of spiritually *thriving* that was NOT considered specifically during our “50-Day Adventure” was how to keep thriving and growing spiritually from within a family. The Bible speaks much to this subject and it is TO this subject that we turn now as we come back to our exposition of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians... In fact just to give one last tie-in to the “50 Day Adventure,” we might say that being more than a survivor and spiritually *thriving* means *making a soul-conscious decision to defend the sacred walls of your family and to guard against self-diminishing compromises that undermine Christ’s presence...*

If you are married, were married or might become married, do a little imagining with me.

You and your spouse invite Jesus into your home for a week’s stay. After the first day or so you relax and sort of settle in to being how you normally are. At the end of that week, what would Jesus have seen in your marriage? What might He say to you as He moved on? Would He say, “I would like to visit with you again and really be a part of this family?” And if that were possible, how would it impact your marriage? If Jesus were really IN your home, living with you, among you, working His way into your day-to-day relationship with your spouse, how would it impact your life? We believe that this is exactly what Jesus wants to do—live in your home with you. We believe that IF He does, it will make a significant difference in how we view our roles and how we treat each other in our families. Just as He affects how we treat each other in the wider body of Christ, just as He affects how we treat our children, just as He affects how we relate to our bosses or employees in the workplace, Jesus affects my attitude and my deepest beliefs about who I am as a husband. No one gets let off the hook!

The apostle Paul turns to how a Christian displays Jesus Christ in his life through his relationships. You will remember that he is addressing Asian believers in and around Ephesus, many of whom had come out of paganism with all its twisted concepts of family and morals.

PP 2

Before we get to where we exactly are in the text (5:22) we have got to go back a bit and grab the wider context. In Ephesians 5:1,2 we read

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

And then he expends six verses detailing and listing the kinds of behavior and attitudes which characterize how people USED TO BE before they came to Christ—at least a good

PP 1

many of his readers. Then down in vss. 17-21 he talks about what it means to **walk wisely**, to imitate God...

PP 3

Now before we read vs.22 be sure and let vs. 21 sink in...

Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. That is the real mark of a Spirit-filled Christian. In his or her relationships, and there may be many in which he or she is involved, is there a general humility and willingness to flex and give in on things? Real Christians are marked and known by a *mutual submission* to one another, not a self-willed obstinacy which insists on having one's own way and one's own agenda. Christ-in-me is not interested in self-promotion. Christ-in-me is interested in looking like Him, in imitating Him. It says as did John the Baptist ***I must decrease and He must increase.***

The community of Christians should be a place that is pleasant to be in. It should not be filled with the tension of competing egos and power-grabbing. When you walk in there should be an atmosphere of sharing and give and take. In meetings there should be a general sense of the presence of the Lord Jesus Himself and every meeting should begin in prayer. Let's not gloss over the phrase that describes the quality of our mutual submission ***in the fear of Christ.*** That perhaps is not the usual way we like to think of relating to Christ. I think this is the only place where that phrase is used in the NT but it is powerful. We are to walk in the fear of the Lord. That means an awe of His presence and a deference to His will. It means that He isn't just the "Big Guy Up There" or a buddy or pal. It means we bow to Him who is our sovereign Redeemer, the Creator God, the Lord and Master of the whole universe. Yes we know Him and are even called friends by Him but we live in awareness of His presence among us. And He wants us to emanate a sense of humility between us. And in this sense vs.21 controls vs.22.

PP 4

Note that this is the context as we arrive at another area—the family—where we need to reflect Christ, and Paul is not vague about this. **Against the backdrop of mutual submissions throughout the Body**, wives have a certain role and should have certain priorities in their lives. They also are to be controlled by the ***fear of Christ.*** (Husbands of course too, have a certain role and should have certain priorities in their lives too and Paul will deal with them following his addressing Christian wives.)

Nothing is more important for the Christian—hey! Nothing is more important for a *society*— than the health of the family. If Christ is not visible in the family—with each family member seeking to be filled with His Spirit—one wonders if there is much hope at all for the family as an institution. We are living in a time of more divorce, more abuse, more anger and acting out of anger because of poor family relationships, than our young country has ever seen. In this time in which we live, the very definition of a "family" has come under serious assault. But here in Ephesians, Paul begins with an address to wives. ***Wives (be subject) to your own husbands as to the Lord (vs. 22).***

As indicated by italics in most translations ***be subject*** is not in the text [of most manuscripts] but the meaning is carried over from vs.21. The idea is ***Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ*** [and as a first example] ***wives, to your own husbands.*** The Greek word *hypotasso*

means TO RELINQUISH ONE'S RIGHTS, and in the Greek middle voice (used in vs. 21 and carried over by implication to vs. 22) emphasizes the WILLING SUBMITTING OF ONESELF... Submission is to be a voluntary response to God's will in giving up one's independent rights to other believers in general and to ordained authority in particular, in this case, the wife's own husband. The wife is NOT commanded to *obey* her husband (*hupakouo*) as children are to obey their parents and slaves their masters. A husband is not to treat his wife as a child or as a servant but as an equal for whom God has given him care and responsibility for provision and protection, to be exercised in love (John MacArthur *Commentary on Ephesians*).

Submission by Christian wives to their husbands is a matter of function not essence or being... A wife is in no way, according to the Bible, inferior to her husband. Indeed a lot of misunderstanding about what the Bible teaches about women in general is misconstrued by a sloppy or careless reading of the actual things said by Paul and Peter and so forth. In essence and being a Christian wife is equal to her husband before the Lord and is described all through Scripture as a precious and valuable and very, very high calling. Marriage should never be entered into carelessly. When a woman consents to become the wife of a man, he had better be the kind of man whom she CAN submit to and follow and respect. Once she is married God expects her to do that. The reputation of Christ is on the line. But she is in no way inferior. In fact, one commentator I read suggests that Paul's description of marital submission is in fact a "drastic restriction of women's subordination" against the backdrop of that age. The Ephesian Christian wives were to subordinate themselves to *their own husbands* not to every man that comes down the street. That was in fact an elevation of women's standing in society (*Ephesians* by Markus Barth, 1960). And while Ephesus with its cult of the "Great Mother" and the Artemis Temple was perhaps a lone bastion for some women's rights, the whole of the first century world was a dark background against which Paul's teaching shines.

William Barclay (quoted in *The Message of Ephesians* by John R. W. Stott) says, The Jews had a low view of women. In the Jewish form of morning prayer there was sentence in which a Jewish man every morning gave thanks that God had not made him "a Gentile, a slave or a woman." In Jewish law a woman was not a person but a thing. She had no legal rights whatsoever; she was absolutely in her husband's possession to do with as he willed...the position was worse in the Greek world...the whole Greek way of life made companionship between a man and wife next to impossible. The Greek expected his wife to run his home, to care for his legitimate children, but he found pleasure and companionship elsewhere...In Greece, home and family life were next to being extinct, and fidelity was non-existent...In Rome in Paul's day the matter was still worse...the degeneracy of Rome was tragic and it is not too much to say that the whole atmosphere of the ancient world was adulterous...the marriage bond was on its way to complete breakdown.

At the end of the verse we see the *manner* of submission, *as to the Lord*. This is in essence a spiritual matter. Whether a woman chooses to adopt an attitude of submission with all the many ramifications and applications that may involve, is ultimately between herself and the Lord. That is important to understand because it is so easy to rationalize rebellion or becoming independent minded. A Christian wife sees her relationship with her husband as tied into her relationship with her Savior. Because Jesus Christ calls her to be

in general, a humble and submissive disciple, she chooses to apply that to her most important human relationship.

Paul goes on in vs. 23a: ***For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church.*** Now I am certainly aware of how politically incorrect this sounds in the present culture in which we live. Many women would cry out, "There is NO ONE who is going to be my head, except me!" Nevertheless, we do not apologize for being out of step with the culture. We read this and we believe that the family unit is a creation by God Himself, especially when it is a Christian family. Christ is the head of the church, not the church members and not the pastors or elders. Jesus is the boss and the head in every sense. And in the family, the husband is the one where the "buck stops," who is ultimately responsible for the family. Every organization needs a head and I know of no healthy organization which does not have one. In Colossians 3:18 Paul says something similar to those Christians, ***Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.*** I am afraid that Peter wrote: 1 Peter 3:1-4

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Whew! If anything will solve our seating problem, this might! But I really believe that if Christians would consider what it is exactly that God wants from us we will see that a certain timeless order in families, in principles that we accept and apply from generation to generation will result in a society-wide sense of blessing. The alternative, is what we're experimenting with in this country today. And I cannot say as it has bred much of a sense of joy and blessing.

I know that these verses give rise to many questions and many deliberations about how they apply in hard situations. You may BE in a hard situation and if so we need to be a help to you and a support. Somehow the Lord will show up for you, as you seek to obey Him even at sacrifice. But ultimately, the will of God is clear and it remains for us to simply cling to it, teach it to our children and model it in defiance of a culture which does not approve and might even ridicule us. But HEY! Since when do we feed our self-esteem with the applause of our culture? It is the voice of the Lord Jesus, some time off in the future perhaps, but clearly it will happen for us when He says, ***Well done, thou good and faithful servant.***

To follow God's plan for the family is not only pleasing to Him but it is the only way to godlier, happier and more secure homes. His plan is neither for the exaltation of males and suppression of females, nor for the exaltation of females and the suppression of males. It is for the exaltation of the name of Christ, and His glory and it is for the visibility of Him in His self-humbled and Spirit-filled disciples as they hammer out His will for their own lives on a day to day basis!

Dartmouth

Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 41)

Scripture: Ephesians 5:25ff

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: Apr. 21st 2002



Husbands Who Look Like Christ

Introduction If you are a married man here this morning, I would like to ask you to gaze around the room at someone *else's* wife *for just a moment*. Let me ask you, would you cut back on your work hours for her? Would you pick up your socks for her? Would you take her mother's car to the garage on a Saturday morning when you can perhaps think of a whole lot of other things you would rather be doing? On all of these, with whomever you're looking at, probably not. But for your own wife, I am sure you would do these things and much more.

PP 1

There was a song written in the 1930s by a fellow named Al Dubin entitled *I Only Have Eyes For You*. Here are three sound clips of that song, one from the 30s, a part of another one from the 1950s and the third by Art Garfunkel from the 1970s. I have always loved this last recording...

PP 2

The song is a secular song but I think it expresses a kind of love between a man and his wife that ought to be! Today this message is about **husbands who look like Christ** and I see in Scripture a kind of love expressed between the Savior and His people that is singularly focused on them! The passage before us once again today in Ephesians is a passage that can really be taken **in one bite** for Paul is really making a single large argument in the last of chapter 5 and down into chapter 6, about the home and the family. He has said that all of us who say we are followers of Jesus should look and act like Him. This will be visible in how we treat each other and other people. A real follower of Jesus will emanate a certain general submissiveness rather than an assertive self-will. Paul isn't saying that genuine Jesus-followers are spineless wimps who just let everyone walk all over them, but he is saying that the real followers of Jesus Christ will replicate Him in His general character and the way He was.

PP 3

Christ is not hungrily greedy Ephesians 4:19-21.

Christ was not rebellious and self-willed; He humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death Philippians 2:8.

Christ was not whiny, even while in great pain, He thought of others' future; Luke 23:28-31.

I am always interested in what it must have been like to be a Christian in the first century. I am sure it was difficult, particularly in an area like where Ephesus was... To be an Ephesian Christian—to try to be like Jesus in that city—involved some interesting things:

PP 4

1. There were **few sympathetic people around**. There was no "Vision New Ephesus" to draw support from, nor any "Ewana" or "Ephesian Baptist Conference." The Jews, from a common theological heritage often turned on the Christians and resented them. It must have been a lonely place to try to emulate Christ and spread the Gospel.
2. Perhaps of some consolation however—we are not absolutely sure about this but there is strong tradition that **the apostle John settled there along with Mary**, the mother of Jesus. In Ephesus today are a very ancient church (6th century) and a stone house which is also very old, said to be the house in which Mary lived out her life.
3. A third distinctive of being a Christian in Greater Ephesus was that it was by no means "out in the boonies." It was a **commercial and political hub** and if you were living there as a Christian there were many opportunities to share Christ. In fact, Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I Cor. 16:8,9) ***But I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.***

This is some of the setting in which Ephesian Christians lived as they grappled to understand the will of God and how to live for Jesus Christ. They learned that they were supposed to live in a general sense of *surrender* to each other. The married Christian women were not to contend with their husbands but to voluntarily live in submission to them. And the way Christian husbands were supposed to "submit" to their wives was to ***love them just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (5:25)***. Here is the great Christian rule for husbands, and we appreciate what our brother Paul Souza shared last week. I want to share some more about this section of Scripture today, and as we said the whole rest of the chapter is really this simple idea.

PP 5

There is a **GREAT COSMIC LOGIC** to Christian husbands treating their wives in the love of Christ! Jesus Christ has loved the church and He has done it supremely! The quality of love is what we see in the very word that Paul used, ***agapate*** (αγαπατε) which is a 2nd person plural active imperative for the Greek verb ***agapao*** (αγαπαω) which is the highest kind of love! That is how Jesus loves His Church. He "only has eyes for us!" And that is how a Christian husband is to love His wife. It may involve some sacrifice and as such it is in a way his submitting to her because he is submitted to Christ!

PP 6

I see this passage as laying out a supreme logic. Paul was no small-minded fellow. His thinking here is that it is only logical for a Christian man to place his wife first in his life and to love her sacrificially. The logic goes something like this:

- **"She" needed His love, He gave Himself up for her (verse 25)** So desperate was the church's need that Jesus had to forfeit His own life in order to redeem her. Her need was terribly real. The logic was that His love compelled Him to sacrifice Himself. Christian wives also need the love of their husbands.
- **"She" benefited from it, (verse 26)**. Christ demonstrated His love for the church by setting her apart and by washing her. The church greatly benefited by His love. She comes into the highest status among all God's creatures. She is not looked at as just the "lucky" group; but the Beloved. She is ***sanctified***. Here is where I'm "hearing" *I Only Have Eyes for You!* And being washed means all her sins are

taken away by the loving sacrifice of the Lamb, the Bridegroom. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

- **He benefited from it, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory (verse 27).** He gets something out of His love for the church. It isn't Stoicism. Our Savior enjoys His Bride immensely. Having set her apart and chosen her, and having washed her and prepared her, He presents her to Himself, as in a wedding scene.
- **He BENEFITS from His love for the church (vss. 28,29)** So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church
- Christ's love for the church **reflects the ancient purpose**, and so should ours, husbands, to our wives. Paul uses Genesis 2:24 where God commanded Adam to *cleave* to his wife as the two mystically and wonderfully become as one. Adam and Eve, the very first man and woman were one; Christ and His church are one; therefore it is utterly logical that a Christian husband should join with his wife, his ONE wife and carry on the ancient purpose that God intended. That is the love-logic of Ephesians chapter five!

I think there are some basic principles for "Husband Love" imbedded in this section and I want to suggest four for you today. They may *seem* simple but they are important to know, to practice and to recommit yourselves to on a regular basis: **PP 7**

- 1) **How would Jesus treat your wife?** We have a fair amount of data about how Jesus spoke to people, provided for them, sometimes confronted them, taught them, gave to them. He was utterly loyal to his own, even after they betrayed Him. How would HE treat your wife, men? If you can imagine that, can you imagine YOU doing the same?
- 2) **Give to her from yourself.** This can mean many things and there are many opportunities to give of yourself to your wife. It might mean giving her time. Your time is a precious commodity to you, I know. She needs some of that. She needs your attention and your focus. To give from what you have, is to love even when it is sacrificial and something else that you want to invest yourself in may lose out a little.
- 3) **She is first priority.** Does your wife feel that way? Does she know her needs are number one on your distribution list from the storehouse of energy, gifts and concentration? As important as your kids are husbands, they should not take precedence over your wife. They should KNOW that SHE is #1 in your life
- 4) **Protect her.** Do not place her, or LET her get placed in any situation which would diminish her spiritual health or her place in God's plan. Loving like Christ loves means standing in front to protect. It means taking some leadership from time to time and watching out for her best interests. Now I know some women might take this as condescending, or a sort of outdated patriarchy. But it is nothing more than biblical and trying to emulate how Christ loves the church. He does not say, "Go, be free, do what you want. Expose yourself to anything at all!" No, as we watch out for our own bodies, loving and cherishing and nourishing them, so the husbands need to watch out for their wives—just as Jesus does all of us.

More and more we are going to see the very IDEA of Christian husbands focusing and devoting their love to one woman, for life, under assault. But it is a timeless testimony to the reality of Christ among us. May He help us husbands be men who look like Christ.

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 42)
Scripture: Ephesians 5:31-6:4
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Date: Apr. 28th, 2002



PP1

For This Is Right...

Introduction There is so much religion in the news these days one can hardly keep track of it all! And it is hard to know what is right. If it isn't Muslims blowing something or someone up to make a point, it's the "cover-ups, blame-shifting and arrogance emanating from [Christian] church leaders" (Frank Rich, *New York Times* 27 Apr02). If it isn't the Jews and their perpetual quest to keep from being pushed into the Mediterranean Sea, it's Billy and Franklin Graham and what Billy *did or didn't* mean by what he said to President Nixon *about the Jews* (or someone else) in 1971. It seems like in recent months religion has increasingly shoved its way on to the front page but the average person is even *more* confused about whether we need any religion AT ALL and about what IS right in all the things that religion is saying? I am comforted in this quagmire of religious news when I just turn back to reading my Bible and *just read it* again.

The Bible doesn't tell me to blow anybody up.

It doesn't tell me to forcibly Christianize any place on earth or to wrangle for political position to protect the church.

It doesn't tell me to evolve or to get more enlightened or to get more organized and mobilized with my fellow Christians...

The Bible paints a much more subtle picture of the Church. When I'm reading the Letter by Paul to the Ephesians I see there the wonderful and mysterious story of **Christ and the church** (vs.32) which is a love story, like that of a bride and groom. Their relationship is what this letter is about!

PP2

Christ is the beloved Son, the Church is the chosen people, God's children. EPH. 1:4-6

Christ is the administrator, the Church are the heirs. EPH. 1:21,22; 3:6

Christ is risen; the Church is those who are raised with and in Him. EPH. 1:20; 2:5,6

Christ is the savior, they are the saved. EPH. 5:23; 2:5,8

Christ is the Head, the Church is the body parts. EPH. 1:22,23; 4:16

Christ is the peace-maker; the people are the reconciled, with God and each other EPH. 2:14-18

Christ is the priest and the sacrifice; they the worshippers of God the Father. EPH. 2:13-18; 3:12; 4:11,12; 5:2

Christ is the keystone, they are the growing structure of God's temple. EPH. 2:20-22

Christ inhabits human hearts, the Church is filled with strength, knowledge and love. EPH. 3:16-19

Christ is the giver of spiritual gifts, the Church is his public agent in the world. EPH. 2:6,7; 3:10; 4:7-12

Christ is the groom, the elect, the church, the saved, are His bride. EPH. 5:32

Ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church) depends upon and is interwoven with Christology (the doctrine of Jesus Christ)!

MARKUS BARTH'S COMMENTARY [1960], P.668

This is the great meaning of life! It first grabbed me thirty years ago in 1972 and I haven't gotten "ungrabbed" yet. Despite all the confusion and disappointments of religion that are in the news these days, this is the great news that does not fade. Christ is in the world today, changing lives, rescuing those who really seek Him, changing them, giving them new purpose and mission, strangely almost randomly intermingling them together into a force of salt and light. The Letter to the Ephesians is about all that. It is exciting to me. And it tells us how Christian families should demonstrate by their lifestyle and how the family members relate to one another.

- ♦Husbands will love their wives just like they do themselves(which is significantly), in fact better: like Christ does us all.
- ♦Wives will fit themselves into God's ancient and timeless plan for them which is to complement and supplement their husbands by helping them and being "co-regents" alongside of them and they will voluntarily subject themselves and not try to promote themselves over top of their own husbands.
- ♦And children will live in compliance with their parents rather in competition with them.

There are **four verbs** in the passage today—**obey, honor, provoke** (as in avoiding it), and **nourish**. If you think about it, we had a few verbs in this section already: **be filled, love, be subject, respect**. These verbs are key in Paul's mind to the church really demonstrating Christ and key really (I believe) to the fabric of American life. These principles are fighting for their lives right now, in the very months and years in which we are living. And before we say something about each of these four today, just let their mere presence sink in.

While you're letting them sink in, understand something which is embedded deep in the ethical core of the Bible—**each of us is responsible for our own choices**. We cannot say—even kids—"I was forced or compelled to neglect the will of God." We make choices, all of us, and all people about how we are going to live and what we're going to pursue. I believe this is really important because we live in a powerfully pervasive and infectious culture which every day is telling us and our children that "you are not responsible" for what you think, say and do... But we know that

No Christian husband can ever say, "I was not *able* to love my wife."

No Christian wife can ever say, "I was not *able* to submit to my husband."

No child can say, "I was unable to obey and honor my parents." And kids DO HAVE some responsibility. Paul actually addresses them. He has not exempted them from personally listening to God's voice TO THEM.

The fathers own a pre-eminent responsibility in the tone and success of the home.

Moms are not given primary responsibility for the kids' spiritual health; Dads are. Moms: do not take that as an insult. Your role is vital and critical,

but the Dads are given a special warning and the "prime directive" as spiritual leaders of the home. Much could be said about the abdication of Dads to Moms in the culture in which we live. I would rather just concentrate on the four verbs today. Let them sink in to your thinking. Kids: obey and honor. Dads: avoid provocation and nurture your kids in the Lord.

Now first in verse 1 of Ephesians 6 Paul turns to give a word to the children, to the *tekna* (τέκνα), which is not particularly referring to young children but a general term for all offspring still under their parents' roof. (He did not use the word *paidia*, young children) **Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right...** Then we read (vs.2) **Honor your father and your mother (which is the first commandment with a promise)** taken from the Fifth Commandment in Exodus 20:12 and Deut.5:16. It's given twice, which is what "Deuteronomy" means). And to fathers, who in vs.4 **fathers do not provoke your children but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?**

PP4

We read a parallel passage in Col.3:20,21 **Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.** The differences are subtle but interesting— together the two passages tell how a *father* is submitting himself to the Lord and to his children's real needs. They do not need a tyrant or an arbitrary agitator. They need a consistent, loving husband of their Mom who watches out for them all and seeks to bring the Lord into family life.

PP5

Now the first verb is **obey**. As the word appears in Greek it is *hupakouo* [ὑπακούετε] and it means to "hear under", to listen attentively & respond positively, also to fear someone as in to give them great respect or deference. Children are to give heed to their parents' commands. How long? As long as they are living under their parents' roof. They not only give the action of obedience but they also commit themselves to the attitude of **honoring** their parents. This is the Fifth Commandment and it is not an option. **Tima** [Τιμα] **your father and mother.** **Tima** means **to fix the value; to price out something.** It is to communicate VALUE to your parents. Nothing is sadder than when a kid, who supposedly received Christ as their Lord and Savior, goes out of their way to Devalue their Dad or Mom. **Honoring** is a thing that a child never outgrows. It extends right down to when the parent can no longer provide for themselves. We have seen numerous examples of people here, honoring their aged and sometimes weakened parents. It silently testifies that Christ is in you when you work to honor your Dad or Mom when they need you most.

PP6

When some Pharisees and scribes reprimanded Jesus for allowing His disciples to eat without first ceremonially cleansing washing their hands, He countered, **And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'he who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'whosoever may say to his father or mother, 'Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God,' he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. (Matt. 15:3-6)** Jesus made it clear that honor of parents includes financial support of them when it is needed.

John MacArthur, *Commentary on Ephesians*

PP7

Equally important to Paul is the need for Dads to **not provoke** [μη προργίζετε] their children to anger, or to exasperate them and cause them to lose heart—to give up, to become cynical and to despair. The Dad who works on this and is careful to back off

when he needs to, does his child a service for their future. He preserves their zest for life and their sense of hopefulness. It was true in the first century and it is true now.

When I was growing up our neighborhood was filled with military Dads. In fact almost everyone it seemed had a Dad who was "Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines." And I distinctly remember how hard many of those Dads were. They were coming out of World War II and Korea and they were in the midst of Viet Nam. It was a hard neighborhood from one angle. And I remember many of my friends who struggled with harsh and militaristic Dads. I love the military but somehow it bred some hard Dads. As Christian Dads we're not wimps but we guard against pushing our kids too hard, too often and with any unfairness.

PEP

The last verb is *ektrephete* [ἐκτρέφετε] It means to bring up a child to maturity, to nurture or give nourishment to in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This is the task of Christian fathering. We don't badger our kids; we bring them up over the long haul in the Lord. We teach them how to walk with the Lord and then HE teaches them how to make decisions and He teaches them how to set priorities.

All of this is characterized by the title of this message which is what Paul said, ***for this is right***. People want to know what is right. They may be unwilling to *follow* what is right but they desperately want to know.

I hope that you can see how a real Christian family-system feeds upon itself. Each member sees himself or herself first of all, as going through life in the ***fear of Christ***. They do NOT see themselves as autonomous or independent and they are not interested in promoting self-focus. The husband loves his wife and his children. He gives himself for her and he works at the on-going task of instilling the things of the Lord into his kids' experience. Sometimes this is a discipline; sometimes it is instruction in thinking matters—doctrine, law and ethics. Meanwhile, the wife is doing her thing and the kids are hammering out obedience to these two loving parents. Overall, the Lord is the King and you can see it in how this family lives. And you can see it in how families together, in the church, live. Christ is real. He is not a picture on a wall or a Christmas carol once a year. He is alive and living in and among the members of this family.

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 43)
Scripture: Ephesians 6:2
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Date: May 4th, 2002



Helping Our Kids Keep the Fifth Commandment

Introduction Before someone told you what was right and what was wrong, did you have any idea what is right and what is wrong?

There is an interesting couple of verses in the Book of Romans, 5:20,21:

PP 1

• ***And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Now it is a bit of a challenge to understand what Paul means here, but I think he is saying that when God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses, there became available to mankind, or, there prevailed *upon* mankind, a new and sharper awareness of his basic sinfulness. Without the Ten Commandments people sort of had to go by their general conscience or by the word-of-mouth rules that had been handed down among God's people before Moses' time. But when the Ten Commandments became available (and all the others that comprise Exodus through Deuteronomy), people now knew morally what was what and up from down. And ultimately the Law (Paul's shorthand for "The Ten Commandments") is our "tutor" about how we need a savior and it drives—or should drive us—to the cross of Jesus Christ. The Law shows us that even our best acts, up against God's blazing holiness, are as filthy rags. Once there, we heave a great sigh of relief because Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow... without the precious blood of the Son of God there simply is no hope for us.

PP 2

Once I AM a Christian though, what do I do about the Law now? And what about what we tell our kids? "Don't do as I did, do as I say?" I think it is hard to get a handle on this "rules and regulations" part of our faith. The Ten Commandments—and all the others too—are imposing and hard to keep.

But sometimes we *use* the Law to try to *prove* that *someone else* is filthy rags.

Sometimes I think we use the Ten Commandments as a means of whacking people in the head, a thing I do not imagine God intends, in general.

Sometimes I think we forget about *grace abounding* and get stalled out on the Law.

Sometimes I think we take the approach of whacking our kids in the head with the Law and in so doing, we sterilize our kids from any sense of the potent joy of the Lord...

Imagine this conversation:

Son with hat backwards and headphones on...comes ambling by... Dad, wearing "Dad" hat
Dad: So, son, how are you doing with keeping the ol' Fifth Commandment?

Dad: SON!
 Son: What? I wasn't listening to you.
 Dad: Yeah, DUH! I said, "how are you doing with keeping the ol' Fifth Commandment?"
 Son: Um... which one was that, Dad?
 Dad: You know, the one about "honoring your father and mother."
 Son: O yeah. Pretty good, I guess. How are you doing with the ol' 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th and 9th commandments?
 Dad: That doesn't concern you, and by the way, don't get smart with me!
 Son: Sorry.....
 Dad: So anyways, have you memorized that section from Deuteronomy yet like I told you?
 Son: You mean "Deuteronomy" don't you?
 Dad: Yeah, whateva...
 Son: Uh, you mean *Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not murder?* That one?
 Dad: Yeah that one. Have you memorized it yet?
 Son: No.
 Dad: (pauses) Wait a minute, you added that *you shall not murder* line.
 Son: O yeah...whateva. That's the *next* commandment.
 Dad: NOT "whateva!" This is important! It's gotta make sense!
 Son: O yea? Why?
 Dad: uh.... *Because*. Because it's like Awana man, and Awana stands for whatever... Approved WannaBe's Are Not Lame...or something like that.
 Son: Yeah, riiiiiiiiight.
 Dad: Listen—you memorize the commandments perfectly. Then you do 'em perfectly.
 Son: Yeah?
 Dad: Yeah.
 Son: Why?
 Dad: *WHY?* Wuddya mean "WHY?" You just DO, that's all. Geez...
 Son: Geez?
 Dad: What?
 Son: You said, "Geez."
 Dad: It's just an expression! Son, you're really starting to torque me off.
 Son: (laughs) I'm starting to what?
 Dad: You heard me. Now go to your room and practice saying the rest of those commandments.

In Ephesians 6:1,2 Paul reiterates the ancient 5th Commandment and if there had been any doubt about Christians needing to still heed the Ten Commandments there could no longer be any. He wrote, ***Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.*** It is just "right" to do so. The "rightness" hadn't evaporated because it was the first century A.D. instead of the twelfth century B.C. Whatever cloudiness there is about how to live, how to speak, what to do this is one thing which doesn't change. Obedience to parents is ALWAYS a spiritual issue between children and yes, teenagers, and God, ultimately. Then Paul reiterates the original 5th Commandment: ***Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise) that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.*** Do you get the idea from this that it is in the kid's BEST INTEREST, long-term, to make a habit of granting honor and deference to his or her parents' commands?

Today I want to talk about **ten ways** we can HELP our kids keep the 5th Commandment for there *are* ways we can do so. In a sense, this is paradoxical because we know we can't live the Christian life for each other. But on the other hand, **helping each other** is part of what we have called "body life" isn't it? Isn't it part of being together in the body of Christ to HELP each other live obedient lives and to help each other find

ways to live for Christ more easily? I don't know: maybe this is a revelation! Maybe we thought "body life" was just meant

for making each other feel accepted, and providing a place to find friends and

having a group to eat meals with at restaurants and things like that?

PP 3

Now I'm certainly all for those things (especially the restaurant part ☺) but I think the main part of "body life" is meant to be **assisting and aiding each other in the most "core-level" quest: to become more like Christ.** I know that for some of you, to hear that reiterated once again is almost a taunt because you feel like the church has failed you I this. For a few of us, we scrape and scratch for small nuggets of spiritual help, which all too often have been outnumbered by pieces of "fool's gold." I am sorry that for some, the church hasn't been all its supposed to be. And I am also sorry that for *some* of our kids, they have not received much real encouragement on how to put His Law into our hearts and really love a moral life. So, parents and grand-parents: I want to offer TEN THINGS out of my head, for what they're worth, to engage this body-life "**prime directive**," right with our own kids and grandkids. Specifically, how can we help them keep #5?

PP 4

1. Help them to know the commandment

This does not go without saying. If they do not learn it from you or from their being around the church, almost certainly they will not learn it. It *used to* be they might see the Ten Commandments in school or around government buildings. No longer. We, it seems, have evolved beyond that. Now, NOT knowing the Ten Commandments (the **Law**) does not let someone young or old off the hook. But learning exactly, and being able to repeat it, is a good thing!

This is where Awana and Sunday School can be a real help. Parents and grand-parents, if you do not do it now I suggest you work with your kids every week to help them, in a relaxed and routine way, the learn their materials. Awana "sections" are excellent. The Sunday School papers that the teachers give your kids can be used at home too.

2. Interpret for them what the Commandments mean for a born-again Christian

Talk about the commandments and make it clear that for Christians the commandments flow out of a heart secretly and individually consecrated to God, not by keeping the commandments do we earn or maintain God's love. I think there is great confusion about this in Christian families today. I think that we *talk* the grace-life but we practice the lives of Pharisees. We treat the do's and don't's like they are the driving force in the Christian life. "Today I did a couple of things I'm supposed to, and I managed to NOT do a thing or two that I'm *not* supposed to. I must have pleased God today."

One of the most important tasks parents and grandparents have is to **INTERPRET** the SEAM between law and grace for our kids! There is a weaving together between do's and don't's and that non-forfeitable status we possess as redeemed children of God, the kind of love-status that we sing about over and over again. Our kids all too often see the one side of the cloth without seeing the other side.

3. Be honorable – don't make yourself hard to honor

Your child is held by God as personally responsible for honoring you, parent and grandparent. That is between he or she and the Lord, individually. But parents have the leverage of making it easy or making it hard. First, how we speak to each other is not a meaningless subject! As a parent your vocabulary to your child, your tone of voice, attitude, assumptions and how you meter out discipline are all choices YOU make. You can be a pleasant person to live with or you can be a difficult person.

If you are respectful to them, if you honor *their* boundaries and dignity that will make it much easier for them to look up to you, to mimic how you treat people and learn to do the same—especially with you, and even *through* the tumultuous teen years.

4. Demonstrate the commandment by doing it ourselves to our parents

I appreciate my wife so much in how she treats her mother. Renée truly honors her and I know that our girls have watched that all their lives. Kids learn mostly by what they SEE day in and day out, and sometimes regardless of what we SAY. If they see us speaking respectfully, watching out for our parents' needs, making choices which honor them, they will maybe think, "Hey, that's the right way to do it."

5. Practice Ephesians 6:4

PP 5

This verse is aimed at Dads, but I think the principle can be practiced by both Dads and Moms. It is a real good thing, as a parent, to understand when you're stepping across a line with some discipline issue and doing damage. You may get your way because you're bigger, you own the car keys, you have the money, etc. But you might pay a price by instilling a deep-seated frustration or anger in that child. Here are some things I have been thinking about:

- a. Not too many rules
- b. Don't expect them to do something you are not willing to do
- c. Avoid "hating" the youth culture
- d. Do not badger
- e. Do not lecture
- f. Do not over-punish
- g. Do not mis-punish

PP 6

6. Distinguish between non-compromisables and secondary issues—don't make everything a primary issue

I think this is more an art than a science. I know as Christians we are tempted to think that EVERYTHING is a non-compromisable and that is simply because there are so many rules and regulations in the Scripture, and we are such broken people. But I think it is wise to see that some things can be bent a little and others cannot.

20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Entertainment and social life seem to be the big Departments for kids today. And it seems way too often that those of us parents and grandparents who no longer care much about entertainment or whose social juices no longer percolate, it's easy for us to suffocate our kids with EVERY LITTLE THING is a big deal. A shorter way to say this is, know where to fight your battles. You can't have a Gettysburg every day!

Conversely, if your kid sees that you have some grace in your system, this helps him to honor you. If he sees that you have nothing but law and NO, NO, NO in your system you are NO JOY to honor!

7. Become a deliberate mentor to someone who lacks honorable parents (an increasing number in this culture).

If you're a grandparent, if you're a Christian Education or youth worker, if you know a family that could use your contribution, if you're simply available, you can help some kid build the Fifth Commandment into their lives. It is a great tragedy of this "enlightened" and sophisticated society in which we live that so many kids have only one or NO parents around who love them and take care of them. The need will only grow, I am afraid.

8. Big bag of "yesses"; little bag of "no's"

I think this principle is rooted in the desire to avoid being arbitrary. Lots of the time I need to say "Yes" to my kid when they ask me if they can do or have something. "No's" should be reserved for the most important failings on their part to really see the big picture (which of course, kids rarely do). BUT UNDERSTAND you need to not have an empty bag of "no's." Here is another failing on some parents' part, the fear of declining a request. "Oh my, if I say 'No', Johnny will hate me!"

PP 7

9. Have an open home where your kids can bring their friends and not feel threatened or embarrassed

If your kid doesn't want to bring his friends to your house, why not? That is a haunting question! But if they DO, that in itself, is a display of honor to you as the parent. There are lots of things you can do to "grease these skids" and make it easy to bring a friend home. Keep snacks around in good supply. Provide a space that is somewhat set apart, (although not completely private.) Do not badger or criticize your child's friend when they're there.

10. Pray for your kids specifically to find/develop/stumble upon, learn a heart for pleasing God by keeping His commandments

Do I even need to mention this one? Yes, I do. You should pray every day for your child or grandchild to develop a deep love of God. How do you know if you or they love God? What did Jesus say?

PP 8

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." John 14:21

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: An Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 44)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:5-9

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: May 19th, 2002



Christ Permeating the Workforce

PP 1

Introduction I think I pretty much believe this: you can tell if a person is really an authentic follower of Jesus or not by whether they have a tender heart in the most *difficult* areas of life; by whether they are *agitated* in those areas. It isn't a hard-and-fast "litmus test," but in general let's say ❶ a lady has a hard time being married—it's tough. She finds herself struggling with her husband, often. She prays, reads, gets counsel, works at it but still it's just hard. She prays some more...and some more... I think the fact that she invites the Lord *into* the process, and has a tender heart towards the subject even though she struggles with it, testifies that she really knows the Lord Jesus Christ. ❷ A kid has parents who aren't fair all the time; he struggles with his own sense of independency and wanting to bust out of what he feels are the constricting limitations of his parents' rules and expectations. He prays. He says, "Lord, this stinks! Why am I so unhappy? I want to honor you and them but it is so hard..." I think the fact that he's struggling with it and *does* seek the Lord testifies, in part, to the fact that he has really met the Lord. He invites the Lord into what is a central area of his life... ❸ Or it might be that a fellow has a job at which he imagines himself to be pretty skillful but there is some aspect to the job where he is are really tempted to be less than ethical. He knows this. He is not insensitive to it; in fact he thinks about it fairly often. He prays, "Lord somehow You have *got* to help me in this area. The sin is too easy." He's struggling—but He *wants* to experience the power of the Lord and victory. That demonstrates, at least in part, that he has the Lord in his life.

When a person becomes a Christian the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life begins to affect him. Where does it affect him? In the critical areas, in the important departments, in the key places where his thoughts and attention are most active. Conversely, if there is NO sensitivity in a person to the Lord in those departments, and they just register no struggle at all; no concern, no battle for holiness—you just have to wonder if they've really met the Lord Jesus at all yet... When He saves us He wants possession of **the best** places in the heart; the key departments; the strategic locations. Those are often the most difficult for us to surrender and they often involve the inter-personal relationships in our lives. What are the main ones? **Marriage**, **parenting** and **employment**. At least they were in Ephesus... PP 2

If you work at a job and work forty hours per week and if you work an average of fifty weeks per year that would be two thousand hours per year. And if you work for forty years (from say 22 to

62) then that would be around eighty thousand working hours you put in, hopefully in a line of work that you enjoy. That's a significant part of your whole life!

When I was eighteen I thought for sure I wanted to be an aerospace engineer. When I was twenty my aspirations changed to architect, which lasted a half of a summer, followed by the second half of the summer where I imagined becoming a civil engineer. At twenty one my job fantasy changed to human factors engineer, which was a sub-category of industrial engineer. When I graduated from college, I got a job as a management engineering consultant in which I worked for about two years. Then I became a pastoral ministry intern and after eight months

of that, a youth pastor. Two years went by, I went to seminary, became a landscaper and then swimming pool serviceman and then finally, I figured out what I wanted to be when I grew up (I was then thirty years old) and that was a pastor. I've been here ever since. I have worked at nine jobs and before coming here to DBC and have had about a dozen bosses. I have had some excellent bosses who have taught me a great deal. And technically, I have been a boss to five people—although I cannot say how good a boss I am! The real “green houses” for my spiritual growth have been marriage and parenting, and the work place. I have hammered out and forged my walk with the Lord while investing the best hours of my week in my working life. I became a Christian at nineteen years old and was already a working guy at that time; my growth has come while I have been “on the job.”

40 hrs./week x 50 weeks/yr. 2,000 hrs./yr. X 40 yrs. 80,000 workplace hours in your career

Today we come to the final scene in Paul's letter to the Ephesian Christians about human relationships—he spoke of husbands and wives and then of Dads towards their kids and then of kids towards their parents. All of these relationships should evidence of the presence of Jesus Christ. Then we're going to consider “Christ, permeating the workplace” by means his last focus: **slaves and masters**, in an ancient society where the general population in urban areas was maybe 50% free and 50% slaves. Paul wrote, ***Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ (Ephesians 6:4).***

It is of interest to some—an agitation actually—that Paul does not come right out, with the mindset of a modern American, and bluntly condemn slavery as an institution. They would say. “How can he even *mention* slavery and not ‘rage against the machine?’” It is conservatively estimated that in Paul's time the Roman empire contained some sixty million slaves and it is clear that their whole economy and civilization depended upon and assumed the institution of slavery, as had many cultures before it. Indeed, some are even skeptical of the very authority of Paul because he does not seem to criticize slavery itself. This is a huge subject (a whole American war was fought over the question) and I am only going to devote a single paragraph to it. But let us simply observe three quick things. 1) He speaks plainly enough to Christians living within a culture where slavery was questioned by no one—in other words, Paul does address the problem of slavery. He seems to accept the fact that slavery was a fact but instead of attacking it he speaks to his readers as people living *within* a slavery-based culture. 2) There are a number of other poignant social issues of great interest to us today which the Bible does not specifically condemn. Nowhere in the books of the New Testament is there specific condemnation of war, drugs, abortion, corporate corruption in the business world or educational disparity between the classes. As inflamed as we may individually become in our rejection of them we look in vain for a specific verse or teaching which identifies them for refusal. 3) It is likely that a large number of early Christians *were* slaves. If Paul had attacked the empire-wide institution of slavery and issued some sort of apostolic emancipation proclamation would that not have caused such an uproar that the whole fledgling Christian movement might have become distracted and seriously

PP
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damaged? The apostles knew, if they knew anything, that they needed to keep all the new churches focused on the pure Gospel of grace. Anything else which might distract needed to be at least placed on the back burner.

However, he speaks very directly to both sides of the employment picture—then, (masters and slaves) and now (bosses and employees). The real Christian should have some sensitivity in this area, since we spend 80,000 hours of our lives there! Christ wants to permeate the workplace just as He does the home and the church. If there is a Christian in a store, He wants to be seen IN the store somehow through the life of the Christian. If there is a Christian in the school, He wants to be seen IN the school somehow through the life of the Christian. And He wants to demonstrate His own power to transform us, TO US, right “in the trenches” where we live, where we spend most of our time. Now, what does he SAY to slaves or we might apply it, to employees?

He says first that they were to ***be obedient to their masters according to the flesh***. The term “obedient” refers to continuous, uninterrupted submission to one’s earthly master or employer, the only exception being in regard to a command that involves clear disobedience of God’s Word as illustrated in Acts 4:19, 20. Slaves, mind you, not just employees were to honor their masters by living out their lives in obedience to them. There were no labor unions in those days. There were no collective bargaining agreements. There were no organizations or mechanisms for labor assistance AT ALL. A slave was completely at the mercy of his master. In THAT situation Christ wants to be visible! Let alone, in us in our relative comfort and convenience in the workplace in modern Western society. Anytime someone says to me, “Well, you don’t know my boss; or you don’t know the kind of employees I have to manage,” I will respond by saying, “You don’t know what it’s like to be a slave in the ancient Roman empire. It was far worse than anything we are experiencing today.”

I think that last little phrase ***according to the flesh*** is a boost to the Christian slaves’ self-esteem. You might have a lowly employee-status and you might feel like you’re treated less than human sometimes—more like a commodity than a person (slaves were ALWAYS considered property and possessing of NO rights whatsoever).

All through college I worked construction jobs whenever I was on vacation. It was hard work. One day I got home from my masonry laborer job, toting brick and block for ten hours for some masons. My body was so sore I just cried—it was the most exhausted I have ever been. Another construction job I was a laborer on, over Christmas vacation—which for us was a month—on my last day on the job, a Friday, they happened to be giving turkey baskets to all the employees. I was reeling in hose and when I finished I started walking over to the company truck—the foreman headed me off and said I didn’t get one because I was only a college student and a temporary worker. I don’t remember what I told him...

In graduate school I worked three of my four years as a swimming pool serviceman. One day I got to my last pool and someone had dumped the cigarette urns full of gravel and sand and butts into the deep end of the pool. It was normally a pretty clean pool so I was surprised. I groused at the manager of the apartment complex but she just said, “Clean it—that’s what you’re here for.” I don’t remember what I told her either...

But your masters in the long run, are only that in this life, *in the flesh*. Now that you're a Christian you know that this world is not all there is! This isn't even really your home. The day is coming when Jesus comes back and all these working relationships, even if you're owned in this life by the company—will be done away with. The king is coming. He is going to burn down this old world and rebuild it with Himself as righteous, ruling King! Hang in there while you are living *in the flesh*.

The slave was to give his master the look, an attitude and service out of *fear and trembling* in a sincere way *as to Christ*. This is like what Paul said to the Colossian believers, Colossians 3:22-25

PPA

Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.²⁵ For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

The real Christian views himself first and foremost as a slave to Christ (vs. 6). He says to himself, "I work for Jesus—and pleasing Him is more important than anything else." He wants to be visible in this workplace of mine and so I need to do a good job and do it all the time. I need to not cut corners or work well only when the boss is looking. I need to be as pleasant and peace-loving an employee as I can be because I serve the Lord of peace who bought me and paid for me."

Are we thought of as "good-will workers" in the place where we work? Do our fellow-workers AND OUR BOSSES look forward to working with us? This is the kind of worker Jesus Christ wants you and me to be. Verse 8 has a blessing in it! knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. There is an economy and a justice system higher than what we live with here in the flesh. Rewards will be given to Christian workers later, from the Lord Jesus Himself if we commend ourselves well here while we are His ambassadors.

Now it used to be that all this was something most people took for granted because it was all sort of laid down and passed from generation to generation through what was called "the Protestant work ethic." I think people in the World War II generation, and earlier sort of instinctively DID some of this without even being able to quote chapter and verse. I think that is no longer the case. I think we need to carefully teach this to our kids today and re-teach it and re-re-teach it. If you are a Christian young person heading into the workplace, your Lord and Savior wants to *permeate* that workplace with His presence THROUGH YOU. Are you a complainer? Are you hard to work with and self-willed and cantankerous. Do you change jobs and companies right and left because you can't get along with fellow-workers or bosses for longer than a month or two or three at a time. And then come to church and sing the songs and nod at the sermons? Jesus wants to invade your life WHERE YOU WORK. He wants people to come to you, sooner or later, and ask, "what's different about you?"

The phrase **whether slave or free** takes the whole discussion beyond the particular circumstances of any one person. Jesus expects the same of ALL of His disciples. Bosses too, managers, supervisors, small-business owners with one or two employees, also need to realize that if they are Christians they are first and foremost answerable to Jesus Christ. He wants them to be fair, not threatening their employees all the time. With Jesus in heaven there is no partiality with Him. He will not side with one person or another. He will evaluate and judge in perfect, blazing, indisputable righteousness. There will be no arena of life into which He does not come. Home, church or business. He is there. He wants to be there NOW, while He is visible only through us or not...



To sum up, how is Jesus visible through us in the workplace?

By honesty. You are not a cheater.



By hard-work. By working with focus and attention.



By consistency. By doing both of the above indefinitely.

By the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance).

Finally, we go all the way back to what began this whole section of Ephesians, 5:1-21... Let's close by slowly re-reading that. Ask the Lord in these last couple of minutes to speak to you, to show you Himself and what His will is for you...

PP 6

Ephesians 5:1-21

1 THEREFORE be imitators of God, as beloved children;2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. 3 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints;4 and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light9 (for the fruit of the light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth),10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Dartmouth

Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 45)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: June 2nd, 2002



Clothe Yourselves in His Power

Introduction In the days after September 11th, 2001 Americans braced themselves for more attacks. Pretty much everyone waited nervously as our government collected itself and we listened intently as various officials began to speak to us. We will not quickly forget the **resolve** we felt—even the most cynical among us—as our President exuded courage to us with his words, his manner and his pledge. I felt that we all, nationally, **took in a large draught** of strength as we listened to him remind us that we are the most powerful nation on earth and that we are in fact, the most noble nation on earth. He said to us, “We will prevail.”

I get that same feeling, but much deeper down inside of me, from the apostle Paul as he finally gets to the concluding section of his epistle to the Ephesians, 6:10, where he said ***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*** He is going to talk about the spiritual “war on terror” in which we are engaged. He is going to talk about “spiritual warfare.” In every letter of the New Testament only the most *serious* picture is painted of what it means to be an authentic Jesus-follower. Many could not stomach the insistence of the apostles that only the most serious soldiers for Christ would endure. They were criticized, ostracized and even crucified for being so narrow and unopen-minded as to pluralism. They were utterly humorless and deadly serious about Christian discipleship. All through this letter Paul has laid out a razor sharp, crystal clear picture of what a real Christian looks like (you’re probably tired of hearing me say that at one point or another in the previous 4 messages in this series!) But even in his day there were false and wrong concepts of what a genuine spiritual person was. In the chapters up to chapter 6 of Ephesians, Paul makes the blueprint plain: **PP1 PP2 PP3 PP4**

The real Christ-follower has **already been blessed** with every spiritual blessing because he has been **previously chosen** by God, without apology and without tentativeness. (1:3-6)

If you are a Christian, you were marked out beforehand, long ago, long before you or your parents were ever born. This is the most fundamental fact about being a real Christian.

Secondly we have a **great hope** and we have **great power** at our disposal because our Jesus is not just sitting around in heaven waiting out this dispensation; He wields great might and strength in His lordship of this world and He intends to fill us up with that might and strength (1:18-23; 3:14-19).

When we pray to Jesus we are not praying to someone in some tentative, maybe, might-be-able-to-help position. His coronation is not a maybe. He us already Regent. And we **pray** to someone, **love** someone, **serve** someone, **wait upon** someone who possesses great might and strength and who never grows tired or weary.

Third, as if to rub the point in, he reminds them that a Christian's status is **to no credit** of his own doing because before the sovereign Spirit comes into a person and saves him he is dead in his tracks (chapter 2).

If you are a Christian and you know that, you also are keenly aware that it is to no doing of your own that you hold that amazing status. Some of us, perhaps many of us remember all too well what it is to walk with NO faith in our hearts, no interest in the things of God in our heads and no will, whatsoever, to seek the invisible God or His kingdom.

Next, he lays out how he, himself, **Paul, is amazed** and the least likely of all in his own view, but has found himself spliced into the great plan of God, the **administration of the mystery** (chapter 3, esp. vs.9).

He would say, "Yo—you know the most incredible thing about all this? I am right in the middle of it?" Have you ever felt like Paul? It is healthy!

In chapter 4 Paul talks about how **God wants us to grow up**. God's wants us to ALL become spiritually mature, fully grown, and to make use of the people-resources He provides us with.

It is not God's will for even ONE among us to become retarded in our growth. He wants EVERY one of us to grow in grace and to reach full maturity in the Christian life, and He has provided every resource for that to happen.

Growing up means actually becoming LIKE God (5:1) and really learning to say "No" to the old ways, for some of us which seemed so natural once upon a time... **Becoming like God means** to be full of a peaceful kind of submissiveness and of course, to be primarily motivated by love. Please indulge one more reviewing couple of moments and see what John Stott masterfully says this about Ephesians... **PP5 PP6 PP7 PP8**

[Paul] began by unfolding God's purpose, conceived in a past eternity before the foundation of the world, to create a single new human race through the death and resurrection of Christ, and ultimately to unite the whole church and the whole creation under Christ's headship. He has emphasized that a distinctive shape has been given to this divine plan by the inclusion in God's new society, on an entirely equal footing, Jews and Gentiles. The old days of division and discrimination have gone. A brand new oneness has emerged, in which through union with Christ Jews and Gentiles are equal members of the same body and equal sharers in the same promise. So now the one Father has one family, the one Messiah-Savior one people, and the one Spirit one body. These sure facts of what God has done through Christ and by the Spirit form the basis on which Paul went on to issue his eloquent appeal. His readers must live a life "worthy" of their calling and "fitting" to the status as God's new and reconciled society. They must demonstrate their unity in the Christian fellowship, while at the same time rejoicing in the diversity of their gifts and so of their ministries. They must put away all the uncleanness of their pre-conversion behavior and live a life of "true righteousness and holiness." And they must learn to submit to one another in every kind of domestic relationship and so promote harmony in their homes. Unity, diversity, purity and harmony—these the apostle has stressed as major characteristics of the new life and the new society in Christ. It has seemed a beautiful ideal, an obviously desirable goal, and not so difficult to attain. But now Paul brings us down to earth, and to realities harsher than dreams. He reminds us of the opposition... (*God's New Society*, John R.W. Stott, 1979)

Now, if there is one thing a pastor wants for his people it is that they would each, every single one, **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might**.

A pastor may want his people to come to church. He may want them to do stuff around the church and find their gifts and develop great ministries and tithe and sing cool songs and make

really interesting casseroles and share Christ with people and be good mentors to the teenagers and serve on committees and plant flowers and all kinds of things...

But basically, the heartbeat of a good pastor is that he longs for the people who attach themselves to his congregation to **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might**, EVERY SINGLE PERSON; it is an ancient longing. It goes back to Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, 6:10.

PP9
The command **be strong in the Lord** is the present tense (now), second person (you), plural ("youse"), imperative mood (do it!), but passive voice of *endunamao*. *Endunamao* actually and literally means "to clothe oneself with power." In the passive voice the *subject is acted upon*. In some translations you might get the idea that it refers to self-effort—*make an effort to be strong in the Lord*. But the passive voice means the subject is **ACTED UPON**. We are to be **STRENGTHENED IN THE LORD**. Paul experienced it in Arabia where somehow the power of the Lord came upon him (Acts 9:19). *Endunamao*. It is used of Abraham in Romans 4:19

And without becoming weak in faith he [Abraham] contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith [ENDUNAMA], giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

Endunamao is to BE strengthened. It is something God does for us, something that the human nature itself cannot do. And the Ephesians were told to be strengthened **in the strength of His might**, in the *kratos* of His *exousia*. O man, this is so cool! We are to be enveloped, empowered in the manifest power of His inherent power.

PP10,11,12
If you have ever been overflown by the Navy Blue Angels F-18s you go, "Whoa, that's powerful. I can see it, feel it in my ribcage, hear it with my ears. THAT'S impressive." That's *kratos*, the power that is manifest, that I see right now. But behind that formation is the powerful economy, the years of years of R&D and training, the whole magnificent country which is the inherent power, the *exousia* from which the *kratos* is what we see at the moment. You can just stand and see that power and let it fly over you and protect you and represent you. It is a wonderful feeling.

You and I can stand like that, spiritually speaking, and allow the Lord to strengthen us with the manifest power that is inherent in Who He is. He WANTS to strengthen you, do you believe that? The Ephesians are told to let that happen because they were going to need it. They were going to need armor. They were going to need weapons because their battle—despite the wonderful plan in which they had been caught up by God's matchless grace—their battle would be deadly. Their adversary, the devil, stalked about like a lion looking for people to eat. He is humorless about the struggle to. He is deadly serious and the servants of Jesus Christ need to be serious about their walk of faith. It is no game. It is not a comedy skit. It is not a light-hearted, casual endeavor, to be a spiritual Christian. It is a battle. It is warfare. It is not always easy.

How do we do this? I think it involves **a lot of standing and waiting** for Him to strengthen you.

Sometimes I think some of us get a little annoyed at others among us who like to stand and maybe lift our hands to the Lord. The annoyed faction wonders, "What are they doing? What do they think is going to happen?" But I think the standing faction just wants, maybe feels a need to

stand and raise their open hands to the Lord in a faith-gesture to receive His power. It isn't some kind of magical power for the moment in worship so that they'll feel groovy. They want and need power for the battle, out there, on Tuesday and Thursday and Friday. And they wonderfully stand and yes, visually, raise their arms upward. They think God WILL empower them. They think that because He promises to do so...

I think you need to be **in the Word of God and in prayer and in fellowship**. But it isn't so much what we do that Paul is talking about. **It is about Who He is**. Do you sense His power in your daily life? Can you identify power-points where your success, your victory or even your very survival is clearly only by HIS doing?

It takes some time and some focus and some attention in your schedule to be empowered. If I know ANYTHING about the power of God it is that it comes more subtly than we perhaps imagine. It is there. For many of you I could point out ways you have already and often been empowered. If you take the time to concentrate a little bit and really bring Him into your thinking, you will see that it isn't some kind of secret formula. He wants you and I to be empowered with the ***strength of His might*** more than we want it!

Note one more verse, also from Paul:

2nd Tim. 2:1 ***You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*** The Christian life runs on God's grace. It is His willingness to bless us freely, to empower us freely to continue the battle that enables us to be strong. I love God's grace. I resist any force which diminishes it or devalues it. You and I need to be strong. Everyone of us here needs to become strong in the Lord, great people of the Word, powerful in the Scriptures, wise in decision making, keen senses for knowing right and wrong and true and false. I am excited about the resources we have right now. And for some marvelous reason, which I cannot fathom yet, He keeps on bringing us more resources. What does He want to do with us? How will His power be poured out in the coming year?

Dartmouth

Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 46)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:11ff

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: June 9th, 2002

The Militarized Zone of the Spirit-filled Christian

Introduction When I think about it (and I try not to think too much about it), the privilege to preach each week is a significant responsibility. To be granted by you, thirty or forty minutes of your undivided attention each week is a thing which I do not take lightly!

Each week I pray, "Lord what do you want me to say to them this week? What is *Your* message that you want me to prepare and give?"

It is a daunting but exciting task. And if ever there was a passage that begged to be preached, it is the passage before us today in God's Word. This is a passage with a military mindset to it. But if I say one thing with which you might be impressed about this passage--that might stick with you--I hope that it is not so much the exact exegesis of it as it is the **urgency** of it. Yours and my need only begins at understanding precisely what Paul was talking about to the Ephesians; it is important ALWAYS to understand what the Bible says. But the real value of this passage in the Bible goes beyond just intellectually understanding it. Paul's intent was to impress them and motivate them (and us) to DO IT. It is "Red Alert" or we might say, "DefCon 2." It is a passage about getting ready for battle.

It is not a passage to merely study technically.

It is not a warm passage with the kind of sleepy state of peace/tranquility where we like to live.

It isn't a comfort-passage.

It isn't a passage for people who imagine that their duty towards God ends with checking off "went to church" one more week.

It is a call to wake up and realize that there is much going on around us that we do not see with our eyes. This passage is about **the MILITARIZED ZONE of the Spirit-filled Christian**. As he got to this final portion of writing or dictating his letter to the Ephesians, his mind "went military." Some scholars have speculated that as he sat in Rome in jail, perhaps actually tethered or chained to a Roman soldier, he looks at the soldier's armor and clothing, he imagines a striking parallel.

For me there is very familiar feeling here in this picture of the Christian life and mission. All of my life I have had the military on my mind. My father was a soldier, the only one in either his or my mother's family. He entered the service just before Pearl Harbor in 1941 and retired from civil service with the Army in 1973. Although I have not served in the armed forces myself (and neither did Paul, by the way) I grew up with military talk, stress, stories, family friends and almost every neighbor around us back in Annandale, Virginia in one way or another attached to the military, and an indelible and inescapable sense of heritage. (Renée's father also held me in some awe, as a career Navy pilot.)

The passage before us in Ephesians 6 has got to be one of the most preached-on sections of the New Testament. That may be because it is basically easy to understand and immediately relevant. We Christians *know* we're in a battle. A real Christian *knows* the enemy is real and is there. A real Christian *knows* that without certain defensive measures his spiritual walk will not prosper and he will suffer spiritual discouragement and defeat. And so having said so many grand and wonderful things to these Ephesian Christians, he now begins his wrap-up of the letter. He had said to them to

Be strengthened by Him Who is strong and willing to empower you... (6:10).

Now in vs. 11 he exhorts them to arm themselves and "suit up" for battle.

In vs. 12 he says that the battle is actually against Satan and all his forces.

And in vs. 13 he encourages them that good weaponry will serve them well and that ultimately, resistance is NOT futile but that they will stand firm and hold on.

PP 1

The *armor of God* is to be the Christian's lifelong companion, put on at new birth and kept on at all times thereafter. We exist all day, every day in a state of readiness and alertness. Anything that would cause us to lay down our weaponry, spiritually, also gives invitation to attack by the devil and I cannot help but think that if more hasty converts to Christ realized this it would sadly pare down our American church membership roles. (We will consider the armor itself in vss.14-19).

You will note the most obvious lesson in this (and so many other passages) is that **there really is a devil**. And he really has many servants working his destructive purposes. I think it is absurd, frightening and utterly foolish when I hear scholars and media people debate whether there really is a devil. I think many people today do not think that he exists or even if he does, that he is all that bad. How many comic strips, cartoons, parodies and comedy skits make light of him. Indeed, even some churches and seminaries openly deny that he is real. How many are misled and how he must just laugh. In fact, we have lost people who have visited in our church for a while and then found out that we actually are convinced that there is a personal devil around and leave us because they cannot tolerate such a belief. But he does exist as do his forces. This world is his dominion and his realm. He has much freedom and influence and Paul says that he is has **stealthy and clever schemes**. "Schemes" to do what?

What do you think the devil is interested in, in this world?

I think he is interested in anything which denies glory to the one, Triune God.

I think he is interested in any and all movements, trends, changes in laws, conflicts, confusions and atrocities which divert attention of people away from the revealed will of God and on to something else, anything else, which ultimately means to him.

1st Timothy 4:1 says **But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons**. "The proliferation of pagan and apostate cults and religious/philosophical isms experienced by no other age in history [as it is now] reflects the work of those **deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons**."

I think he is ultimately interested in one thing: to destroy as many people as possible whether loudly or quietly, whether publicly or secretly.

He is interested and fascinated and utterly committed to the destruction of mankind. He will not rest about it. He does not give up on it. He is excited at the prospects of deceiving more and more people and taking them with him to the fiery pit which he knows is his ultimate destiny.

But Paul tells us that by allowing the Lord Himself to infuse us with His strength and by dressing in the armor which God Himself gives (it is not *our* armor and plans) we can **stand firm against the schemes of the devil**. The word to “stand firm,” στήναι (aorist active infinitive of ἵστημι *to make a stand or to stand*) in a military sense had the idea of holding a critical position while under attack. In Rev.2:25 the Lord said to the Thyatiran Christians, **hold fast until I come**.

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During the Battle of the Bulge in World War II in Belgium, the German army punched a huge hole, a “bulge,” through the American lines in December 1944. Hitler’s goal was to race his army through the Allied rear, splitting the American and British armies and re-capture the port of Antwerp. The surprise attack completely caught the American army off guard and the twenty six German divisions swept mile after mile past stunned American units under a winter cloud cover. Except for the town of Bastogne. In that town the 82nd and the 101st Airborne divisions were holed up. They would not give up. When invited to surrender and told that they were surrounded, the American commander sent back a note with the single word, “Nuts” on it. They stood firm. They held out. This is like the word **stand firm** in Ephesians 6:11.

PP 3

Now as we say, our enemy is formidable. He has been around a long time as have his troops and subcommanders. PP 4

Imagine an Army unit made up of seasoned and wise commanders. Let’s say there was a special division and its various commanders—all in one unit—included George Washington, Robert E. Lee, Alvin York and George Patton. Let’s say, fantastically, that each of these men **was still alive** and collected into a single operational unit. With all their determination, brilliance, vigilance and tenacity, how imposing a force would that be to oppose in battle? But that IS a vague analogy—perhaps an underestimate—of the kind of determination, brilliance, vigilance and tenacity against which we stand TODAY. As MacArthur notes, “Like the unfallen holy angels, demons do not procreate and their number is fixed. But they are a great and ancient multitude and constitute a formidable and highly experienced supernatural enemy” (John MacArthur’s *Commentary on Ephesians*). That is why Paul urges the Ephesians to arm themselves and suit up well!

It is a **struggle** or as the KJV says, a **wrestling**, like hand-to-hand combat. It is very personal and up-close. It is Christians against Satan but not only against him. Sometimes we are in fact in battle with various of his minions, and there are four general groups mentioned and whatever the particular details, they are highly organized and structured for the most destructive warfare possible. They are not explained the way we might like but at least they are categorized. (Cf. MacArthur’s *Commentary*): PP 5

•αρχας , archas **rulers**

A high order of demons, connected with **authorities** in Col.2:15.

•εξουσιαις , exousias **powers**

Another rank, mentioned also in 1 Peter 3:22.

•κοσμοκρατορας , kosmokratoras **world forces** of σκοτους , skotous **darkness**

Perhaps a reference to demons who have infiltrated various political systems of the world attempting to pattern them after Satan’s realm of darkness.

•πνευματικά της πονηριας , pneumatika teis poneirias-**spiritual forces of wickedness**

Perhaps those demons involved with the most vile wickedness like extremely perverse sexual practices, the occult, Satan worship, etc. Where these are in the evil pecking order we cannot tell but they are there and they are tirelessly working at destroying people.

Now, what do we DO with this “vision” of what’s really going on around us all the time? We are to say, “Nuts” to the devil when we detect his schemes. His schemes are many. They go on seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year and every year. But with the armaments of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact of His resurrection is in our hearts we **STAND FIRM**. We do simply as James wrote, *Resist the devil and he will flee from you* (James 4:7). It is no more sophisticated than that.

I am not convinced we are supposed to be going around trying to exorcise demons from everyone—especially not Christians—as is popular in some churches. Nowhere are we told in the New Testament epistles that that is supposed to be a ministry of the church. We hear sometimes about big, sophisticated “spiritual warfare” conferences. I have seen Christians sometimes get so fascinated with demonology so as almost to give more attention to them than to their Savior!

But I think our strategy should be powerfully simple: Colossians 1:11-13, *For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son*

“DEFCON2” for the Christian

PP 6

- **Keen awareness** We are to remain watchful and alert and spiritually sober at all times, whatever implications that may have for our entertainment choices, our choices of partners, our use of time.
- **Prayerfulness, at all times** How much time do we give to prayer for each other and with each other?
- **Consistent faithfulness** The Lord loves to respond to our gestures of faith and turning things over to Him, no matter how small they may be or no matter how huge they may seem to us. The devil flees the honest and simple faith of a believer when he trusts His God!

This passage begs the application that we have no business at all dabbling in anything which demotes Satan from who he actually is and what he actually does. Movies, songs, t-shirts, anything at all that makes light of the *schemes of the devil* are playing right into his hands. It is amazing to me how naively cynical our entertainment and youth culture has become about spiritual things, thinking that just by being cynical that somehow changes reality in the spirit realm. What is going on there has been going on since time immemorial. It is evil; it is destructive and it is completely doomed because Jesus Christ is over all and has won the victory.

Now I don’t really want you to think of this as a grim message. We have great spiritual resources at our disposal if we will clothe ourselves in them and if we will EXPECT the Lord to provide the strength and power He has promised to give. We have the gifts of the Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit. But standing firm is a sober and serious part of what our faith is about. It is the MILITARIZED ZONE of the Christian life. We rejoice in His joy; we celebrate and enjoy worship; we go about the wonderful task of spreading the news that Christ is alive; we minister happily to our kids; we undertake conferences and trips and building projects and all kinds of other events. But all the while we keep a guard posted, an armed guard. We dare not lighten up on prayer and we dare not let events or anything diminish our attention to the Word of God.

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 47)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:13,14ff

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: June 16th, 2002



The Full Armor of God

Introduction As this is Father's Day I was thinking again about my Dad, who was a soldier for a time and who spoke to me often of his experiences as such. As we come to that place in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians where he speaks of **the armor of God**, I was thinking of my Dad's one-time armaments that he would talk about when I was a kid: his steel helmet, his web belt, his leggings (which I used to put on myself as a kid), his winter coveralls given to the soldiers during the "Bulge," his carbine and pistol.

Combat is not the only metaphor for the Christian life used by the apostles (building construction is used, various agricultural pictures like seed-sowing and vine-dressing, ideas drawn from business like the "pearl of great price," managers and laborers, and many other metaphors.) Although not a particularly light-hearted metaphor of the Christian life, combat was something never far from the apostle Paul's thinking either, chained as he was to a Roman soldier for so long.

But as Paul would sit in one jail or another and see close at hand the armaments of the soldier next to him, it reminded him of the great supernatural warfare raging throughout the universe between God and His angels and the forces of Satan. Whether we are aware of it every day or not we are in a non-stop battle. Peter wrote (1 Pet. 5:8,9):

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

I think this is one of the harder things for us to keep in the front of our minds in our Christian lives—the fact that there is a battle going on around us. I think it is not so hard for believers in other places, where they were not so comfortable. But this is the same supernatural enemy who rebelled against God in His own heavens, who succeeded in luring man from innocence to sin in the Garden of Eden, who repeatedly has tried to destroy Israel, and who tried to stop the birth, ministry and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who exerts unequalled wickedness here and now and who will oppose Christ with unprecedented fierceness when He returns (MacArthur, *Commentary*). He opposes all Christians in many ways, some direct and obvious in other ways more indirect and subtle. If you sometimes fear that we spend too much time emphasizing his wiles and his devices understand that he is running a complicated and sophisticated insurrection, aided by an elaborate and powerful infrastructure in this world. A Christian cannot come to grasp it in one or two simple lessons. And while it is true that too much attention given to spiritual warfare issues distracts from the main and joyful goal of worship and service to Christ, we



need to have some appreciation for what we're up against in order to understand the importance of the armory we have been given access to, in order to resist, to combat the enemy and to *stand firm*.

PP 5

Dr. John R. W. Stott informs us (*God's New Society*, p.276) of the English Puritan William Gurnall who was "pastor of the church of Christ at Lavenham in Suffolk who published his 1,472 page, 261 chapter exposition of just 11 verses in Ephesians, *The Christian in Complete Armour* in 1655. The sub-title (which Stott warns the reader to take a deep breath) is:

The saints' war against the Devil wherein a discovery is made of that grand enemy of God and his people, in his policy, power, seat of his empire, wickedness and chief design he hath against the saints; a magazine opened, from which the Christian is furnished with spiritual arms for the battle, helped on with his armour, and taught the use of his weapon; together with the happy issue of the whole war

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in our day also wrote an exposition of these eleven verses in two volumes, entitled *The Christian Warfare* and *The Christian Soldier*. But these two volumes only total 736 pages... In Vol. 1 he wrote 21 chapters on "the wiles of the devil" which describe some of Satan's most subtle assaults on the people of God in three areas: the mind, the experience and in practice or conduct...

For some of us I know this is review because you have been doing battle for some years. But it is always good to DO a review (we can be forgetful) and if you are a new Christian then this is vitally important for you! Dr. John MacArthur gives a good summary of some of the **tactics** that Satan uses in his war on the church and on Christ:



1. He attempts to impugn God's character and credibility. (Gen.3:1,5; 1 Jn.5:10; John 8:44)



2. He undermines present victory by generating trouble, i.e. persecution, peer pressure, criticism, or by reversing his tactics and cleverly injecting too much ease into Christians' lives, disabling that needed element of our growth, trial.



3. He introduces doctrinal confusion and falsehood about the things of God.

4. He hinders our service to the Lord. (1 Cor.16:9; 2 Cor.12:7; 1 Thess.2:18).

5. By causing divisions *between* believers in Christ (John 17:11, 21-23; Matt.5:24; 1 Cor.1-3; Eph.4:3). The enemy knows a body of believers cannot work effectively if they will not work lovingly with each other.

6. By persuading and enticing believers to trust their own resources (1 Chron.21:1-8; Proverbs 3:5,6).

7. By leading believers into hypocrisy. For instance, he loves to ADD TO church roles by populating churches with people who are really unbelievers or with believers who are living disobediently. As MacArthur notes, "to be satisfied with covering our sins and spiritual weaknesses with a mask of piety, rather than bringing them to the Lord for cleansing and strengthening, is to play Satan's game."

8. By leading them into worldliness. (Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15,16).
9. By leading them to simply disobey God's Word and not to repent of that.

Now, our defense against these devices (and others, I am sure) is not just to KNOW about them but to **put on** and **take up the full armor of God**. It is to consciously, deliberately and repeatedly dress out for battle, as Paul viewed it. And having dressed out properly and adequately, we are to **resist** the devil and we are to **stand firm**. There is to be a determination about us. We do not have to be afraid of him, although anyone without Christ should be terrified at him. We can and need to intentionally and purposefully do battle with him.

Now, dressing out involves an ensemble of six (or seven) pieces, which we are going to consider singly. First let's look at all of them in Ephesians 6:14-18.



1. The belt – truth. **Having girded your loins with truth**

2. The breastplate - righteousness **having put on the breastplate of righteousness**



3. The boots – good news of peace **having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace**



4. The shield – faith **taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one**



5. The helmet – salvation **taking up the helmet of salvation**

6. The sword of the Spirit **which is the Word of God**

7. (Prayer and Petition) – the seventh piece of “armor”

The Belt **PP 9**

The first item in the ensemble of armor is the girdle or belt of truth. Usually made of leather the soldier's belt belonged more to his underwear than to his actual armor. But it was essential because it held his tunic tucked in so he could move better in battle and not become entangled. See Ex.12:11 for an interesting similar command from God to Israel... The Roman soldier's belt also held his sword sometimes or his dagger. It was the “holding-together” part of his equipment and I doubt whether any would have been caught without it.

As Paul sat in jail, chained to that guard he thinks about the belt the soldier has. He thinks to himself—“he needs that thing. Just like we Christians need the wonderful **truth** we have been shown. It holds is together and everything depends on it.” In Ephesians 4:14,15 Paul wrote: **As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.** Strong, well-armed Christians get and endeavor to keep, a keen sense of what is correct and what is not, the **truth**. In addition, we value **truthfulness**. We are not deceivers, cover-uppers, crafty and looking for ways to hoodwink others. We **speak the truth in love**.

I really believe the simple idea that there IS a body of ideas at all which is absolutely true is becoming more and more of a radical belief. Our culture is picking up a steam of relativism very rapidly now and when we as Christians say, "Certain ideas are true, they are always true and they are totally true," it is going to be harder and harder to maintain such a stance. But we are held-together by the truth and by being forthrightly truthful in all that we do. It protects us from Satan and is the first thing Paul thought of when pondering how to encourage the Ephesians about dealing with the schemes of the devil. Truth needs to be learned in



Bible interpretation (hermeneutics)

Theology

How the Christian life works

How to deal with people truthfully based upon the truths we have come to learn

Helping people learn the truth of the Word of God and how to apply the truth in a balanced and mature way is probably my greatest burden in this life and deepest call to me by God.

It has been said that the best way to detect a counterfeit is to become so intimately acquainted with the real thing that ANYTHING false will be immediately detected. That is what the study of the Word of God does for us. You and I should be expecting to spend the rest of our lives in studying it, and refining and improving our understanding of the truth. We should also be working to burn out, blast away, starve out and sterilize any germs and viruses of falsehood that may exist in our own hearts. We should pray about this and ask the Lord to grow within us, in our young people, in our new converts and even still in our most mature leaders, a great love for telling the truth and honoring the truth.

We have only dealt with the first piece of armament today and I do not know how long it will take to deal with the others. But we shall take as long as we need for this is the core of reality! We are in a battle and we need to dwell on the dress-out and equipping part. May God bless our church and all our sister churches with a strong sense of our need to resist, stand firm and take up the armor!

Dartmouth

Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 48)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:14b-18

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: July 7th, 2002



The Armor of God (continued) and Why We Need It

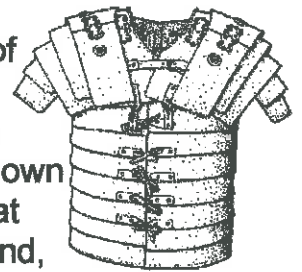
Introduction It is a wonderful thing to realize that Christians are given a great many things to go along with their salvation. We are given, according to the Bible, the Holy Spirit. You and I, living in this time and place, are blessed with a Bible. There being other Christians around you, is supposed to be a blessing and a help—we are given this kinship when we are saved and non-Christians cannot understand its value or its importance. Now, if this sounds like so much “yada, yada, yada” because you have heard it so many times before, it does not diminish the truths of the gifts of a loving Savior, attached to our cancelled “certificates of death” which were ours before coming to Christ. His graces are priceless, unendingly practical and memorial to us of His love for us. None the least of these also is the “panoply” (panoplian πανοπλιαν), *the whole armor* of God which includes several specific “pieces of armor.”

- 1) There is the soldier's belt (Eph.6:14a), which holds all else together and that is the truth. If there is no truth, there is no holding together. If there IS truth as Paul says, then that is the first thing which protects us in the battle ***against the schemes of the devil... against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.***



A PRACTICAL NOTE: If you think you might sometimes be susceptible to falling into some trap that the devil has set, pick one particularly relevant Scripture verse each week to mediate upon.

- 2) There is ***the breastplate of righteousness*** (14b), usually a tough, sleeveless piece of leather or heavy material with animal horn or hoof pieces sewn on, covering the soldier's full torso, protecting his heart and other vital organs.¹ Also called “segmented armor.” As believers faithfully live in obedience to and communion with Jesus Christ, His own righteousness produces in them the practical, daily righteousness that becomes their spiritual breastplate. Lack of holiness, on the other hand, leaves them vulnerable to the great enemy of their souls (cf. Is. 59:17; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 5:8).² **A PRACTICAL NOTE:** I am sure the breastplate was not always the most comfortable piece of armor even if it fit well, it looks to be like it could be heavy and hot. But in battle it was indispensable. You may not find yourself in hand-to-hand spiritual combat every moment of every day, but if you are left upon



¹MacArthur, J. J. (1997, c1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Eph 6:14). Nashville: Word Pub.

²MacArthur, J. J. (1997, c1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Eph 6:14). Nashville: Word Pub.

in an unsuspecting moment, it is good to be protected. If you have a general habit of trying to be pure and good (righteous), the momentum can carry you through an unexpected attack even if the discipline of BEING and LIVING purely sometimes seems a little *constricted*. On the other hand, the joy of the Lord strengthens us too and His laws for goodness are not supposed to make us feel constricted if we are enjoying the pleasure of walking with Him daily.

- 3) There is the soldier's footwear, **having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace** (vs. 15). Roman soldiers wore boots with nails in them to grip the ground in combat. The gospel of peace pertains to the good news that through Christ, believers are at peace with God and He is on their side (Rom. 5:6–10). It is that confidence of divine support which allows the believer to stand firm, knowing that since he is at peace with God, and God is his strength (see Rom. 8:31, 37–39).³ **A PRACTICAL NOTE:**



If a soldier is barefoot or his shoes are damaged in some way, he is unprepared for battle. You are I *walk* on the Gospel. It is the secure “lace-up” for each step of dealing with spiritual battles. I believe this is one reason why the idea of “eternal security” is so important—or Reformed people would call it “the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.” The fact that I am secure in the good news of Jesus Christ, that the Gospel does not change, that IT is the basis for my status of peace with God, makes me prepared for the accusations, flaming darts and “buffeting” of the devil.

- 4) There is his **shield of faith** (vs. 16). In some ways this may be a Roman soldier's most important piece of protection. Made of wood, it was about 2 1/2' wide and 4' long, overlaid with linen and leather it was able to absorb fiery arrows. Thus it also protected the other pieces of the armor; hence Paul used the phrase, **in addition to all this**.⁴ The shield not only protected the warrior in the short distance but also in the long distance. Our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the veracity of the Bible, in the promises of God

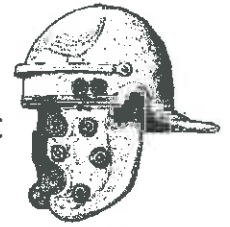


IN Christ, is the most vital part of our personal defense system. By believing in what the Lord says, the fiery dart of temptation can be withstood. By believing in what the Lord says, the fiery dart of discouragement which Satan loves to launch at us, can be withstood.

By believing in what the Lord says, the fiery darts of criticism or persecution can be withstood. As can any other flaming missiles that he might shoot at us. **A PRACTICAL NOTE:** Some issues are just going to be a matter of faith for you. Some times we try and try and try and think and think and try some more to make the victory happen, and we just see such slow if any progress. I and then we realize that, “Hey, I have got to just wait on the Lord right now, and that isn't easy. But as you then DO decide to deliberately wait on the Lord, and refuse discouragement or cynicism, then you are holding up your shield. At least on the day, at that moment...

³MacArthur, J. J. (1997, c1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Eph 6:15). Nashville: Word Pub.

⁴Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eph 6:16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



5) There is also the soldier's helmet, which Paul calls for the Christian the **helmet of salvation** (vs.17a). Satan tries to assault a Christian's sense of assurance with regularity. The helmet protected the head, a first target any battle. And it is in our heads that we fight many spiritual battles. It seems for most of us, rare is the spiritual battle that does NOT begin, wage and terminate in the mind. Doubt and discouragement are perhaps some of Satan's best tools for getting at us. Do you remember after Elijah's (1 Kings 18,19) great victory at Mount Carmel when he called fire down and won "the bet", big-time and then executed the 450 prophets of Baal, right after that Jezebel threatens him and he scrams all the way to Beersheba, the southernmost town in Judah. Victory, doubt. The Lord shows up there and reminds him that He has been saving Elijah left and right for the past three and a half years. "No need to doubt, Elijah, I'm the saving God, remember?" **A PRACTICAL NOTE:** Yes, our OWN sins can get the best of us sometimes and put a crack in our confidence. But "saved" means "saved," it doesn't mean "maybe saved" or "conditionally saved." We protect our thinking with that fact, often.



6) Then there is the **sword of the Spirit which is the Word** (vs. 17b) which is the only part of the *panoply* of God which is a weapon. I find it interesting that Paul had no problem using this metaphor. He did not think of the Christian soldier as a passive pacifist in the spiritual warfare. He did not view us as merely sitting back and "letting go and letting God." No, he says, we need to have a sword. For us the most potent weapon there is would be the simple Word of God. Much is done WITH the Word of God and there is much Scripture-twisting in this complicated world in which we live. But the Scripture is given to us as a way of defending ourselves, tactically. Make no mistake about it, **the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart** (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible is not only a book, as we hear more often than not in this culture in which we are now living (it was not so, only forty years ago). Marvelously, as the Holy Spirit superintended the writing of the writings, and their gathering together, a wonderful thing took shape which "vibrates" with power from the Lord. Paul would use the Scripture publicly and privately. He would "say" the Scripture to people he might be disputing with, or trying to convince about Christ, and he would quote it to himself, from memory, to quiet discouragement, doubt or loneliness. **A PRACTICAL NOTE:** You and I do not have use of this weapon if we do not read our Bibles. A weapon locked up in a cabinet or stored away some other place is not useful when an attack comes. We need to be reading our Bibles, daily. **SECOND PRACTICAL NOTE:** God did not give us the Word to equip us to slice each other up with it. There is nothing sadder than when Christians, redeemed by grace, turn their swords on each other.



7) And finally I like to include Verse 18 as a part of the *panoply* although it does not actually have an armor-metaphor but the "standing-guard/alertness" idea is there: **With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.**

What greater way do we have to defend ourselves from Satan, or to move the troops forward than by prayer. It comes to Paul's mind in these last words of this epistle. Prayer is to me, like the fighting man's *spirit*. I don't know, perhaps Paul deliberately did not attach a soldiering metaphor to prayer but I think of it as the spirit of vigilance and purpose and mission which keeps a soldier going. You see it in the famous picture of General Eisenhower talking to the paratroopers on June 5th, 1944... I see prayer as the thing inside of us which keeps us going. It is indispensable to warfare and perhaps the most IMPORTANT part of our armor. Please note that Paul told them to pray with *petition for all the saints*. Even then, that must have been a lot of people. Prayer on behalf of our brothers and sisters go across geographic lines, denominational lines and even across the lines of people you like. They need our prayer support and we need theirs.

Why We Need The *Panopoly* of God

1. **Because spiritual assaults are real.** They are not imaginary, although sometimes I think some Christians see every trial and difficulty and even inconvenience as Satanic and that is not necessarily so. However, God arms us for battle because every Christian must endure battle at one time or another.
2. **Because God offers it.** The Lord does not offer what is not needed or what is not useful. It is His goodness and His wisdom which sees we will need His armor and so He makes it available.
3. **Because we are weak.** Even redeemed in Christ, we often feel weak. We feel vulnerable, and we feel ill-equipped in our own wisdom and strength to battle the flaming missiles of the evil one. But the Lord knows what we need and why we need it.
4. **Because it is effective.** Good armor was the soldier's most valuable possession. He did not loan it out. He did not neglect it or just forget where he had put it. He knew that in battle, his armor was his life. And that is because it WORKED. The first pitch-covered, blazing dart that screamed at him and hit his shield instead of his stomach, he thanked his lucky stars that he HAD a shield. God's armor is effective in protecting us too.

How do you get the *Panopoly* of God?

By receiving Jesus Christ as your own savior, and being saved and rescued from your sin, you then become very precious to God. He wants you to be protected and He gives you the truth, the very righteousness of Christ and then your own experience and string of victories IN His righteousness, the Gospel of peace, faith, a mental sense of salvation, the Word of God and the powerful spirit of prayer. He also gives you your fellow soldiers, all redeemed by grace and all outfitted for battle just as you.

Dartmouth

Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 49)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:18ff

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: July 14th , 2002



The Four “Alls” of Ephesians 6:18

Introduction I once knew these two sisters who had a really strange relationship. On the one hand, they hardly ever said anything to each other beyond one or two words at a time. Whenever they would start a conversation, one or the other would bristle and tense up and it would end up in an argument. They lived near each other, had never lived in any other city their entire lives, and shared all the same background. They would get together fairly frequently and shop or go out to eat; they would go visit other siblings and they attended the same church. But they hardly spoke. On the other hand, they loved each other deeply. When one was ill, the other would quickly be by her side, bringing a meal, driving to the doctor, cleaning each other's home. When a sibling was ill, they would both pitch in to help. They sent each other birthday cards each year and they gave each other Christmas gifts each year. They loved each other but they could not talk together. It was a great paradox.

One of the interesting and wonderful paradoxes of the Christian life is this: Prayer is on the one hand the easiest thing a Christian does. On the other hand, it is the hardest thing we do. Prayer is like breathing for us since we are adopted children of God and completely freed of the guilt and despair of sin. It is natural for us to pray, right? We know we can pray at any time, for as long as we want about whatever we want and we know that as long as we are in His will, He hears us. We know we do not earn this privilege; it is a birth-right, a *new* birth-right. Prayer is our greatest tool, our most powerful weapon and our warmest comfort. It's easy for us, right? Bu it is also very hard. For one thing it is invisible and with regularity (for *some* of us) it seems almost foolish or even a little embarrassing. We talk to people in person, and on the phone, or by Instant Message and so forth and we know it's real but when we pray, we're talking into the air... And we would love to get instant messages BACK from the Lord but we do not. We have to *learn* how the hear. And we get discouraged too when we don't get immediate response. And to top it off, the most evil being in the universe works hard and relentlessly to discourage and defeat our communication with God. To the devil it is high priority. So we have enemies when it comes to our prayer lives. The paradox is, prayer is easy and prayer is hard.

Luke tells us that Jesus told His disciples the parable of the unjust judge *to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart* (Luke 18:1). And after telling the story [the defenseless widow bothering the uncaring judge] Jesus said, *Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect who cry*

to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily...(vss.6,7). The problem is that He knew His disciples could and might lose heart.

PP1,2

In the Book of Ephesians Paul has been talking about a great "New Society." He started off by taking his readers to the heavenlies and he ends up by putting them on their knees. In Ephesians 6:18 Paul said to them, **With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.** There are four alls in this one verse. At the very least, you get the impression that Paul thinks prayer is real important. It is at the top of the list for activities, for scheduling, for use of our limited energies and for scope of kinship and ministry. Here are the "four alls" of this verse:

PP 3,4

With ALL prayer and petition, "prayer" referring to a general sense of calling out to the Lord and "petition" referring to the specific things things, a great many, which we are to ask Him for. It's like saying, "with all haste, get over to the bank before it closes." Or, "with all intentions of being a help, the off-duty police officer rushed to the scene." With ALL prayer, pray to the Lord for people and for yourselves. With an urgency and a strong focus, pray for him, the apostle Paul, for boldness and opportunity to share the Gospel. There isn't any reason why we cannot pray. Pray strategically and pray with every sense of strong necessity, give all prayer the greatest place in your daily life. Don't just dabble in prayer, or do it at special times.

And petition is also modified, at least by implication, with the first **all**. Ask of the Lord what you want. Ask Him for many things. Expect Him to grant many things. **Petition**, if nothing else, means to have a specific prayer list in hand. Ask Him to grant specific movements of His power and grace and sovereign intervention. How does it all work? How does He use prayer, when so many things are already preordained. I don't know! But we are to engage **all prayer and petition**. Prayer can accomplish great things. It can change the hearts of leaders and redirect the course of a country. It can reap a great harvest of souls who come to Christ for the first time. It can give wisdom in our young people where wisdom and discernment are so greatly needed. It can bring together what was torn apart and it can heal deep hurts.

PP 5,6

And the second **all** talks about how often and when should the Ephesian Christians seek the Lord in prayer? **At ALL times in the Spirit.** Now, that might sound impossible or even boring. "You mean, I'm supposed to spend all my time praying?" No, that is not what the apostle meant but he meant at ANY and ALL times, walking in the Holy Spirit as only a true Christian can do, we are to give all prayer and petition. **In the Spirit** simply means 1) in the power and sphere of the Holy Spirit, like Jude wrote in vs. 20,21 of his little letter: **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.** When we're really living in the Spirit and generally controlled by Him, we are planted in a place where we are real aware of His love and where nothing else is more pressing than the fullest experience of His mercy. Those

are times—and they are supposed to be often and usual—when we just pray and tell Him how we feel and ask Him to do things! When we're "in the Spirit" there is NO time when we will be sent away. We can always come before Him to pray and ask. 2) I think Paul also might have meant for them to allow themselves, when they were *in the Spirit*, to be prompted and guided by Him in prayer. The Spirit will lead us what to pray for and when, if we are walking closely with the Lord.

PP 7,8

Then since we are in this place of being Spirit-filled, and praying a fair amount, we are encouraged to ***be on the alert with all perseverance...*** Again, with the alertness, Paul! What did you think? Did you think Satan was hovering above the hills surrounding Ephesus, waiting to pounce on the Christians there? Did you think these Christians should post a prayer-guard all the time? Did you think they should dig down deep and determine to never cease praying? This is the only place this exact word for ***perseverance*** or ***persistence*** is used in the New Testament. But it is powerful because they were told to really be persistent in prayer for each other. Christians need the consistent, faithful prayer support of each other. Around here, we need to pray for our sister congregations and ministries.

PP 9,10

The last ***all*** is to be persistent in praying for ***all the saints***. To the Lord, the unity of His body is important, even if to us sometimes, it is not. We are to pray for a single-mindedness and a singleness of purpose for the body of Christ. Today, the mission of the overall body of Christ might seem complicated and multi-faceted. Each denomination seems to have its particular agenda. For some Christian social issues are the front-line issues and for others theological distinctions are most important. As we watch our culture implode morally, many of us become activist to try and arrest its decay. What IS the main mission of the Church of Jesus Christ? Well, we need to pray that the Spirit will lead us and get us focused and keep us focused. I think it is evangelism, edification and education, the "three E's." But we need to pray for our sister ministries for the same, instead of using all our prayer time praying for strictly personal needs. ***All the saints*** is much broader than I am accustomed to praying for but I am commanded to be on the alert and do prayer work for every believer around, as the Spirit leads me. We need to pray for Community Chaplain Service and U.Mass.Dartmouth Christian Fellowship and the Salvation Army and Awana and Gordon College and the Northeast Baptist Conference and Hixville Church and Hope Evangelical Community Church and Pacific Union Congregational Church and so forth! We need to do it and not get tired of doing it.

My friends, we need to think through on what prayer is about. We are a praying congregation to be sure but the THINGS we pray about need to be better aligned with Scripture. Personal needs are meaningful and Jesus said ***Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:31-33)***. God knows what we need and He is in control of meeting our needs. Paul wrote the Philippians (4:6,7), ***Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and***

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Our job is to seek first His kingdom, and that means having a wide prayer ministry for ***all the saints.***

In vs. 19 Paul earnestly asks for prayer for himself. What he asks prayer for, is for his speaking ministry. He was in Rome, incarcerated, defrauded of *some* of his civil liberties, but at the same time aware of great opportunity. It all hinged on his ability to speak well and boldly, with confidence. This is what he asks for prayer support about, as he winds down this great letter. When you think of people we know who are really on the front lines in evangelism, this is where a great prayer effort out from our church should focus. Who is on the front lines of evangelism? I could tell you, but I would rather you think about it. Who do you know who is really having great opportunity to make the same of Jesus Christ known, and the Gospel known? You and I need to focus prayer for them.

I would like you to notice finally, that the Gospel is something which we *proclaim*. We are simply to tell people about Jesus. That is all. It is not our job to inject them with conviction or to even dispel all their doubts. Sometimes we may not be ABLE to answer every question a person has. We try to persuade people but ultimately our job is to make the news known! We proclaim the good news that Jesus Christ offers eternal life and permanent forgiveness of sins by His atonement on the tree! Anyone can embrace it. Anyone at all. Our job is to simply tell that to people. Paul loved to do it. It was his very food! And he wanted prayer support in the process because somehow, wonderfully, the Lord is pleased to use prayer support.

Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Exposition of Ephesians (Lesson 50)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:18ff

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: August 4th, 2002

The End of Ephesians

Introduction I have a lifelong fascination with the miracle of the production of Scripture! It amazes me for here you've got a man writing or even dictating a letter in the normal way, and underneath and behind it all is the very Spirit of God, superintending the process. Paul was a regular guy. He didn't wear a special hat and in his own day he didn't even enjoy universal acceptance. Nonetheless, the Spirit used him and produced through him a wonderful writing which reflects the great plan of God Himself! When Paul comes in this letter that we have been considering to the end of his thoughts, he puts down the pen (or does his secretary), seals up the letter and "mails" it (prepares it for the courier.) I do not know if he actually *knew* that what he had written (or dictated) would within 30 years of his death be suspected as inspired (AD 95, *Clement of Rome*), then circulated widely in a collection of others of his letters (AD 140, *Marcion's Canon*) and by finally almost universally acknowledged as authoritative (AD 180, *Muratorian Canon*).

So now we are now at the conclusion of one of the greatest books of the Bible. We have invested fifty sermons from this book covering these 155 verses and we have considered about 3,354 words of biblical text (in English). We have spent about 35 minutes per week thinking about some of the deepest things there are for man to think about.

PP 1

1. We saw ideas revealed by God about His plan for getting people to heaven and what He feels about those people. What an absolutely incredible, fantastic and fabulous thing it is to be redeemed by God.

2. We learned that it was really unlikely, improbable, in fact quite impossible to drag ourselves out of the deep corrupted slime-pit we were in, making being redeemed even more amazing. We saw that people need to be made alive by the Lord—they cannot do it themselves.

PP 2

3. We read how Paul was amazed at his own role in God's plan. But he saw that the Lord, in His goodness, decided to use him. And we draw the strong connection from that, that God might even be pleased to use us too!

PP 3

4. Then we could see how Paul really prayed for the people of God and wanted them to mature, become well-grounded and stable and how Paul saw that God had sent some gifted people to help the church become strong.

PP 4

5. Finally in light of this great plan of redemption which is available to any one, we considered how to live; how to live in families and in an increasingly degenerating and corrupt culture. **PP 5**

Now at the end of Paul's thoughts, there are basically two things—the mention of a man named Tychicus (Τυχικός), and his final bottom-line wishes for them. You will remember perhaps the very touching scene in Acts 20:17-38, especially vss.36-38,

36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, 38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

For all the new believers all over ancient Asia Minor Paul had deep feelings. He wanted them to discover and hold on to the blessings of the new life. He wanted them to seek Jesus, to keep seeking Him and to experience God's best for them. That's really ALL He wanted. Paul had a circle of associates around him that worked with him and sometimes for him. Timothy, Luke, Apollos, Silas. And Tychicus.

21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

22 And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. Ephesians 6:21-24 (NASB)

PP 6

TYCHICUS tik'ekes (Τυχικός, *fortuitous*), a close friend and valued helper of the Apostle Paul. He and Trophimus were the two Asian Christians chosen to bear the collection to Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:19ff.) along with six other delegates who accompanied Paul on this mission (Acts 20:4-6). Tychicus was with Paul during his first Rom imprisonment and was entrusted with the important mission of delivering the letters to the Ephesians (Eph 6:21) and the Colossians (Col 4:7-9) with instructions to inform them of Paul's welfare and to encourage them. Traveling with Tychicus was Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, whom Paul was returning to his master in Colossae. The presence of Tychicus would reduce the possibility of harsh treatment to Onesimus and give Tychicus opportunity as Paul's representative to mediate personally between the slave and his owner. Paul purposed to send either Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus in the oversight of the churches on the island of Crete, that Titus might be free to join the apostle at Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Tychicus is thus seen laboring again with Paul after the latter's release from his first imprisonment. Loyal and useful to the end, Tychicus was dispatched during the second Rom. imprisonment to Ephesus (2 Tim 4:12) to care for the churches in and around what was prob. his native home (Western text has "Ephesians" for "Asians," Acts 20: 4). This would free Timothy to rejoin Paul who desperately wanted to see him before the apostle met his fate as a martyr for the Gospel (2 Tim 4:9, 21). The NT portrays Tychicus as a man whose ability and experience commanded respect and authority as an apostolic delegate. He justifies Paul's high regard for him as "a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord" (Col. 4:7). A. M. Ross in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*

Of course they had no e-mail, faxing, Instant Messaging, telephone. They had to rely on letters and personal message delivery. Paul calls him *the beloved brother and faithful minister* (diakonos, δίακονος) *in the Lord*... He sent a close associate from Rome, where you will remember he was in jail, all the way back to eastern Turkey to encourage those believers and to give them an accurate and exact report of how he was.

Sometimes I think we get (or I get) super-saturated and deluged with news of people. It is hard to imagine how hungry these people would have been, or how hungry Paul would have been to hear some accurate news. But hungry they were and so he sends someone that I am sure he was loathe to lose... Specifically he dispatches Tychicus so that they may be comforted, which of course implies some stress and anxiety they must have been feeling for Paul. They were worried about him. But Tychicus shows up, with this letter in hand, and ministers to these people and comforts them. They had no Christian CDs or Christian tapes or conferences or internet web sites to go to for encouragement. They didn't even have Bibles. They had the words of Paul and maybe a couple of other apostles who were there at one time or another. We should not minimize their *need* for encouragement and comfort. And Tychicus, close friend of Paul, comes to them and ministers to them.

6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible

PP

Now Paul finishes with those words so basic and fundamental to our faith... He wishes them peace, faith mingled with love—a gift from the Lord, and the grace of God to all believers in Christ.

7

Peace is that state of mind and heart which says, "I am not in conflict with God. I do not owe Him payment for all the ways I've failed Him—I can rest." It is a feeling—Paul wishes it for them—not to worry, not to worry. Paul will lose his head soon, but even that is OK in God's great plan. He wishes them not to worry about Him or anything else. They are on the Lord's side now, and if God is for them who can be against them?

And he wishes their lives to be filled with the *love* of God. We cannot hear too much about that. It is biblical and it is the last thing Paul says to the Ephesian Christians. Real love always comes from God. It cannot come from any created thing, unless it is planted by the Lord. God is love and in Him there is no darkness at all.

PP 8,9

And it is a love *with faith* which God gives us. Did you know that the very faith with which you believe is a gift of a loving God? He knew I couldn't dredge up saving faith on my own. He had to bless me with it, out of His love for me. All Christians need *love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*—don't miss that the next to last sentence of this epistle affirms again Who is the only Savior and Who is the Dispenser of love with faith from God the Father. It isn't the apostles themselves. It surely isn't Allah; it isn't Buddha; it isn't the Jedi. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

PP 10

And finally he wishes grace—that feature of God that we need so badly—he wishes it to ALL those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and whose love for Him is strong and *incorruptible*. The words *love incorruptible* or *with an undying love* are literally, "in incorruption, incorruptibility, immortality" (*en aphtharsia*; cf. Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:42, 50, 53-54; 2 Tim. 1:10). It has the idea that believers' love for the **Lord Jesus Christ** is to be

pure, not corrupted with wrong motives or secret disloyalties. Unfortunately some Ephesian believers later did lose the fervency of their love for Christ (Rev. 2:4).¹

Let me ask you today, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Is there anything that might be more important to you than Him? Is there anything that might make you think, "His sacrifice for me is just ONE part of my life." Is there anything that might lead you to love someone ELSE more than Him? Is there anyone who might distract you from loving Him completely? I hope not. I hope you love the Lord Jesus more than anything. There is no one better. There is no feeling of satisfaction or no pleasure more fulfilling than to sense His sovereign grace in your life. It is truly excellent and Paul wished more and more for that old, ancient congregation, among whom he lived the longest time in his ministry.

I hope also that you have come to love, a little more, the Letter to the Ephesians. I do not know if I will preach through it again in this life but I must say I have loved doing so at least once. It is a great book and here we have found some of the highest ideas that any man, woman or child can ever think. May His Spirit bless the written Word to our hearts and may we be people of the Book!

¹Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eph 6:24). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Five things that if you see them being practiced ***WITHIN*** the church, people might just think that those within the church have really met Jesus!

- ◆ **Humility**
- ◆ **Gentleness**
- ◆ **Patience**
- ◆ **Showing forbearance in love**
- ◆ **Being diligent to preserve
the unity of the Spirit**

**“Kindheartedness is the mother
of patience and continually
produces that fruit, and if we are
too stern there is cruelty in us
and we are like wild beasts...”**

John Calvin
from a *sermon on Ephesians, 1559*

ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων

showing forbearance to one another

ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ³σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα

in love being eager to keep the unity

τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς

of the Spirit in the bond

εἰρήνης· ⁴Ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἐν πνεῦμα

of peace, one body and one Spirit...

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

August 19, 2001

To Whom It May Concern:

Be it understood that from this day forth, Neil Damgaard has been fully and completely pardoned of all crimes committed and receives this letter as certificate of debts paid-in-full. He is free to continue his life with all privileges restored as well as being eligible as a full beneficiary for all and any additional gifts which he might receive from this office.

The President

Ephesians 4:7-10

7 Each believer has experienced the grace of Christ

**8 Old Testament saints did too
(like Psalm 68:18 written by David, celebrating God's conquest of the Jebusite city)**

**9 Christ went down to Sheol
Proclaimed His victory!**

10 He also went up to the very throne of God!

There is nowhere Christ does not go.

There is no limit to His goodness.

There are no constrictions on His love.

All of our gifts and blessings are reflections of HIS gracious heart!

SERVICE GIFTS

Scripture

Administration/leading/government	> Romans 12:8; Titus 1:5
encouragement	1 Thessalonians 5:11
evangelism/missions	Ephesians 4:11
exhortation	Romans 12:8
faith	1 Corinthians 12:9
giving	2 Corinthians 8:1-5
helps/serving	Acts 6:1-7
mercy	Romans 12:8
pastor-teacher	Romans 12:7
teaching	1 Peter 4:11

SERVICE GIFTS

**Administration/
leading/government
encouragement
evangelism/missions
exhortation
faith
giving
helps/serving
mercy
pastor-teacher
teaching**

SIGN GIFTS

**discerning of spirits
healing
miracles
prophecy
tongues
interpretation of tongues
word of wisdom
word of knowledge**

Our Gifts Awareness

Taught
Assisted
Provided
Affirmed

The Power of our Testimony

Before Non-Christians

**Before spiritually young
Christians**

**Before our family members—
especially the young ones**

**Before our peers in the body
of Christ**

καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας
αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν **κεφαλὴν** ὑπὲρ
πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἣτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα
αὐτοῦ, τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν
πᾶσιν πληρουμένου.

EPHESIANS 1:

22 And He put all things in subjection
under His feet,
and gave Him as head over all
things to the church, *kephalēn*

23 which is His body,
the fulness of Him
who fills all in all.

In Ephesians 2:5

God...made us alive

sunzō-opoieo

συνζωοποίηο

together with Christ

toi Christoi

τοι Χριστοι

- **Doing good things for people is a safeguard to growing introverted or too somber.**
- **True good works never engage “situation ethics.”**
- **Every Christian cannot and will not do the same good works.**
- **If we look and pay attention, we can see what the Lord is setting us up to do.**
- **You can never run out of good works opportunities.**
- **We should not demand good works from each other.**
- **The best “good works” direct the beneficiary’s attention to God.**

OBSERVABLE ALIENATION

the "System"

the "Establishment"

the "technocrats"

the young

this race

the working class

the individual

the disenfranchised

the underprivileged

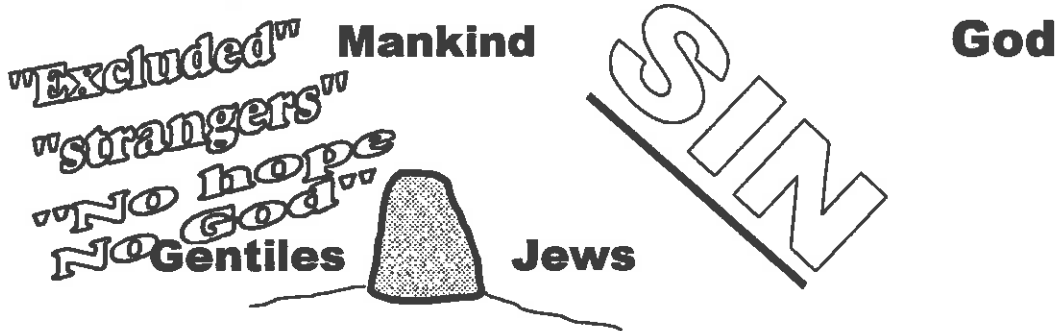
the old

that race

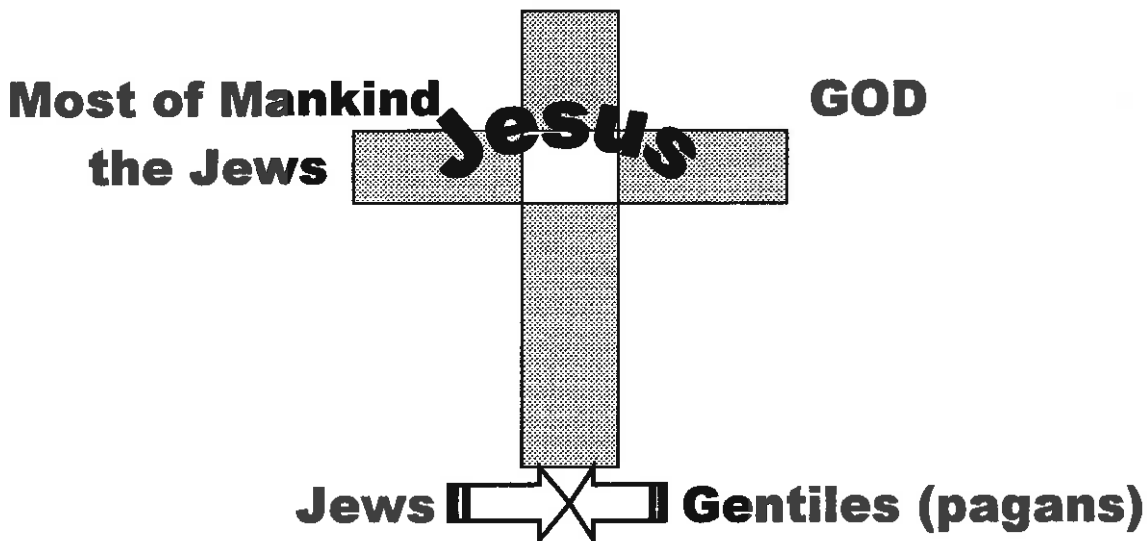
the ownership class

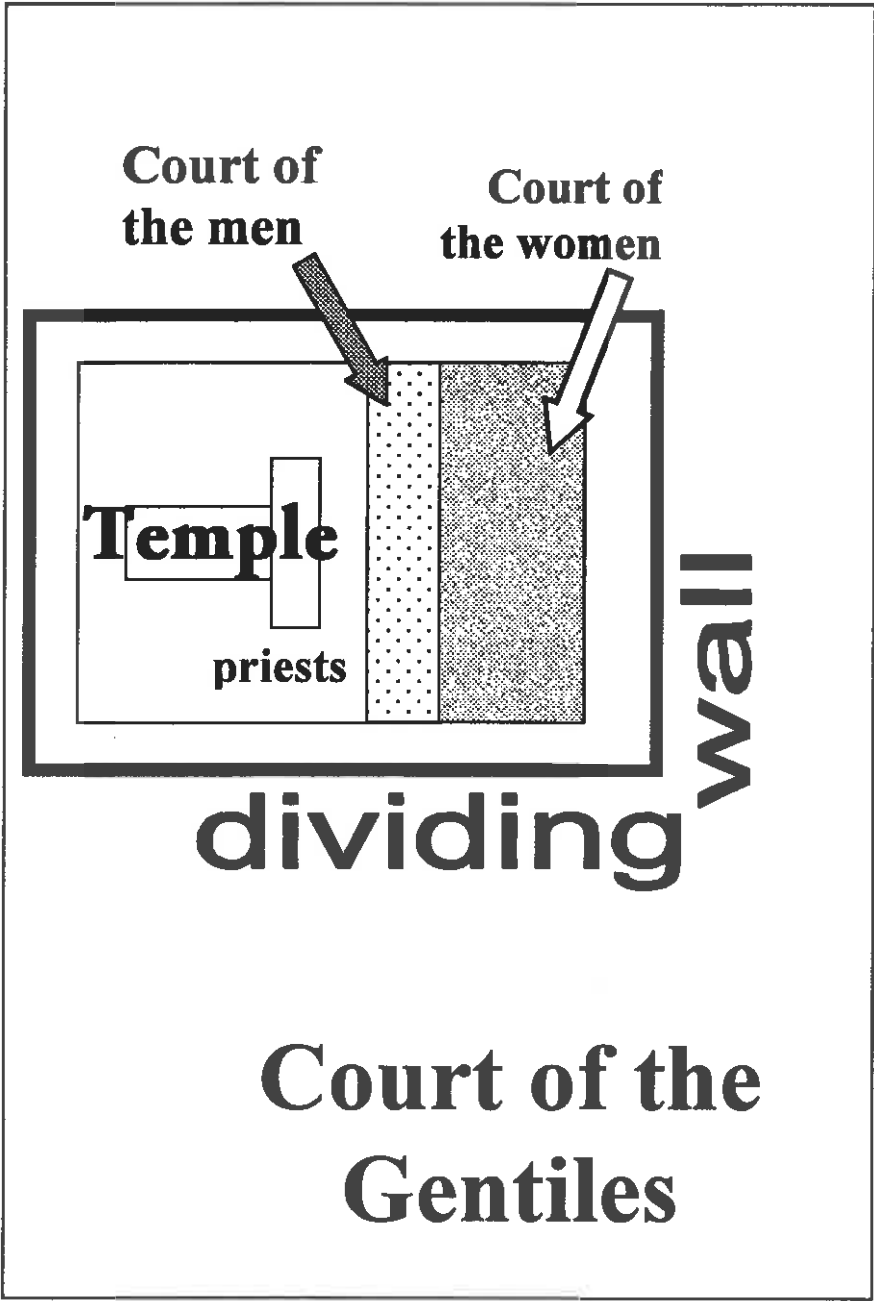
(Feuerbach,
Marx)

The BIBLE: THE MAIN ALIENATION PROBLEM



BASIC RECONCILIATION





Christian S. Damgaard 1869-1941

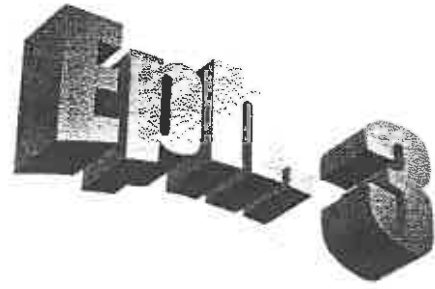


In 1926



c. 1936

Because Paul was blown away by his own feeling of privilege...



Paul prays

To the Father

Every family in heaven

**His
Glory!
(very rich!)**

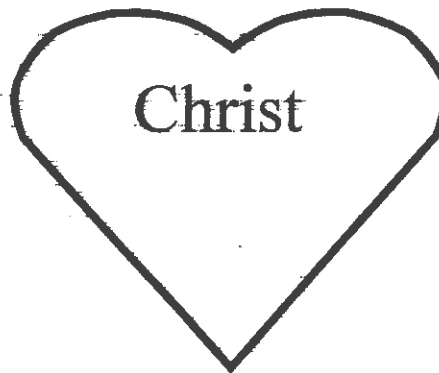
Every family on earth

That the Ephesian Christians would get

The Holy Spirit

New power, inside of themselves

So that...



**... And
life-
changing
things
happen**