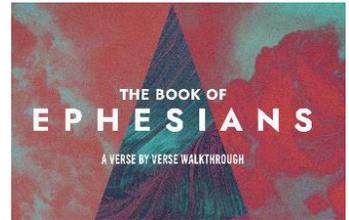


Title: Ephesians, Week 11, Avoid Darkness and Expose it with Light
Speaker: Corey Brown
Passage: Ephesians 5.15-21
Big idea: Becoming What You Are: Life in the Church



Positionally Christians are right, holy, consecrated, set apart and different from the sinful nature of our past - the word we use for this is Redeemed - why? How has this taken place? Because Jesus as imputed his righteousness to us. We have gone from being "utter darkness" and Jesus has welcomed us into His Light.

Imputed means that Jesus has directly injected us with righteousness - when God sees the Christian - he sees the perfection of Jesus' perfect obedience, another way to say this is Become in action, what you are in position.

Positional Reality: - IN Christ *** What does this mean ***? united in him, equipped with every spiritual blessing.

Ephesians 1 adopted to sonship, heirship, and family. Given a new heart, opposed to sin and death, and alive to God and life. Sealed with the Holy Spirit. Progressing Action: New life - New Self, Light, Wise.

In the last few weeks of our Ephesians study, there have been 2 sets of contrasting thoughts

First being the Putting Off the Old Self - the Old Ways and putting on the New Self.

Then Last week talking about exposing darkness and moving into light.

And now this week a simple connection between wisdom and foolishness

Today's Big Idea:

BIG IDEA

Ephesians 5:15-21 commands 2
Attributes essential for every Christian

Ephesians 5:15–21 (ESV)

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.

The Meaning of this is literally, Be Strictly Careful how you be(live), purchasing the time, because the Devil is at work now.

Paul gives this command, to be cautious about our living (not timid) not hindered by fear of the world - but different, the qualification here is that now we are in Christ vs 1-14 and are out of darkness and into light - we are to live differently.

¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil

Making the best use of time - lit: Greek *exagorazo* "redeem".

In affect - go about your life redeeming your time - for God's purposes, because the days are evil.

What is interesting about vs 16, is that the way we are to see time, is not about time being long, or short, but instead as good or evil. We are supposed to make every opportunity we can to bring good into the time of Evil - because Christians are the ones holding back/pushing back against the gates of hell.

This command comes right off the responses of vs 1-14, about how we are to live lives in light, different from our former way of living, different from the darkness, and by putting off the old self, and taking on the newness of our identity in Jesus.

look at how wisdom is termed here - it is termed as walking. its an action - wisdom is not only the response of knowledge to a situation, but knowledge at work - looking to be the person who does what Knowledge suggests.

be wise - because they days are evil. Meaning - these days in which we find ourselves, are not continuing to go in a direction that Christians in the west would prefer, and that's because the Devil is losing - he's losing ground, he thinks he's taking it, but the Lord is winning. The church will not fail to push against the gates of hell. We are pushing back Hell - right now - in being here with our church worshipping Jesus, growing in being equipped to do ministry, this all is part of the Devil losing ground.

The Days are evil

These days being evil - is not an issue of a lack of Good - but a lack of reconciliation to God. The Devil here is still at work - he is the "ruler of the air" and the prince of the world - meaning that he has hold of all those who have not been reconciled to God - it is then our purpose and goal as Jesus' church to bring people to reconciliation - we share in that same act as Jesus - he shares with us his ministry of Reconciliation. Jesus of course does the Redeeming - but we can and should be part of that work while we are still here on earth.

¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is

Therefore - because you are to be wise - Don't be foolish

vs 17a - Actively work against being foolish.

- Foolish - Literal: Lacking Sense, Ignorance

vs 17b - Actively work towards understanding the will of God

- Understand - lit: grasp, grab hold of

But what of the will of God?

Most people when we talk about this - generally are referring to life's major decisions, and in a lot of cases several of these decisions take place in our younger years

1. What am I here for?
2. Who should I marry, or Should I marry?
3. What School should I go to?
4. What Career should I choose?
5. How Many Kids should we have?
6. Where should I live?

These are all questions that we can and should take to the Lord as we struggle to make decisions. But this is not what Paul is speaking of here. there would have to be a bit more context around it.

So, what does Paul mean by "understand what the will of the Lord is".

There are a few things that come to mind.

The Overarching context of Ephesians leads me to believe that the will of God Paul is speaking of here is The Lord's Redemptive Will, that humanity be reconciled to God in Jesus Christ.

And in this particular context, Paul is exhorting/encouraging the Ephesians to make the most of their time, and to be wise. So understand that the Lord's will is to live wisely, being alert, aware, cautious and not allowing the Devil to gain a foothold.

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

- The command to not get drunk with wine, is not a proof text for those who demand abstinence from alcohol for all Christians, but it should be considered a serious issue.
- Drunkenness has always been an issue of shame, and lack of self control - We see this in the lives of many of the Biblical characters - primarily Noah - who got drunk after being on the ark - to the shame of his children and himself - as well as the daughters of Lot who had no children of their own, got their father drunk and produced children for themselves with their dad. - its shameful -
- The word that Paul uses for drunkenness is **Debauchery**
 - a good definition of this word is: **"excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures"**

But what would Paul bring this particular issue up here - he'd been speaking primarily about sexual sins in the previous chapter section, and as he moves to this wise living in contrast to foolish living, he could have chosen several things

Part of pagan worship in the Greek Culture was drunkenness, part of their worship was to become inebriated in order that they would "experience" some sort of metaphysical reality. This is something that Paul would have been striking against - it is improper for the Worship of God to be disorderly, and shameful - which makes great sense in the contrast he gives - of being filled with God's spirit - leading into corporate worship.

The Contrast that is made - is that instead of being filled with drink to the point of no control, or to the point of shame - Christians are to be filled not with a substance, but with God's own Spirit.

There are a couple things that stick out here.

Does this mean simply that we are to be filled "with" the spirit, or "by" the spirit?

This suggest that the Holy Spirit is the content of what we should be filled with, or that the Holy Spirit of the lord is the agent of how we are filled.

I think this clearly leads to a holistic approach of understanding of both - that we are to be filled With the Spirit and By the Spirit - while the reading only assumes one of these two options, at least more than likely, the truth of this is the same. Only God's spirit can fill us with what we need to live a Godly life, and the only way to Live a Godly life is to be filled BY the spirit.

19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

With the continuation of being filled with the spirit, we are to be filled in process of being in corporate worship for mutual edification - encouraging one another as we participate in singing, and thanksgiving.

3 types of musical opportunities are laid before us here. but they basically mean the same thing. that we are to utilize song in various forms, as a way of teaching one another, spurring each other on, encouraging one another in Christ.

20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

- with gratitude - because of what Jesus has done for us and is for us.
- Always - at all times - this makes perfect sense.
- but for everything - what is this everything that Paul is talking about here.

Paul is expressing that we are to thank God for everything he has provided for us in his spirit. The ability to putt off the old self (Eph 4), the opportunity to be united in Christ with this global new community/family called the church (Eph 3),

This “*giving thanks*” while it should of course be done on an individual level - we are also to remember that this letter is written to a community, and this community is supposed to follow Jesus together. This communal act of gratitude should mark all Gospel Centered Churches. That we understand at a corporate Level we are together, are united to Christ individually.

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

the way in which we do this - is to submit - to one another, as caretakers, and as fellow corporate Christian’s part of this family - setting the needs of others above our preferences, and to do so our of reverence.

A Greek military term meaning “to arrange”.. In non-military use, it was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden”.

Enhanced Strong's Lexicon 5293

Reverence - Holy Fear. So, lets now take a closer look at how we can apply these realities.

Let’s go back to the Big idea today.

BIG IDEA

Ephesians 5:15-21 commands 2
Attributes essential for every Christian

Attribute #1 Wise living - 5:15-17

1. Attribute

Wise living - vs 15-17

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Fear God vs Reject God

Proverbs 1:7 (ESV) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Live Cautiously vs Live Recklessly

Proverbs 14:16 (ESV) One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.

Invite and Accept Correction vs Deny and Ridicule Correction

Proverbs 10:8 (ESV) The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.

Proverbs 12:15 (ESV) The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

Embrace Purity & Godliness vs Pursue Self Indulgence

James 3:17 (ESV) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

Proverbs 10:23 (ESV) Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.

Jesus himself even speaks about this a great deal in the sermon on the mount - where he explains that those who build their houses upon the rock of his teaching will do better than those who build it on sand.

Matthew 7:24–27 (ESV) “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Remember the reason for wise living - it is certainly not to puff ourselves up and believe that we are better than others who are less wise, but to make the most of every opportunity, be a Godly example, and a Gospel witness - to become - what we are.

When Jesus speaks these things about wisdom, he is calling for action but so many of us believe that we need to do this action on our own.

Remember last week when we talked about walking as light and needing community in order to do this.

This same truth applies as it relates to wisdom - we don't become wise by chance - now God does of course provide wisdom when we ask - James 1:5, but this doesn't always replace the fact that Christians need other Christians.

Tim Keller (I know another Tim Keller quote) tweeted a few years back, and I actually just saw it again in a Facebook memory, or Instagram memory.

“That the one essential requirement for building godly mature *and I would add wise* Christians, is godly mature *and wise* Christians”

Wise

vs

Foolish

- 1 Fear God
- 2 Live Cautiously
- 3 Invite and Accept Correction
- 4 Embrace Purity and Godliness

- 1 Reject God
- 2 Live Recklessly
- 3 Deny and Ridicule Correction
- 4 Pursue Self Indulgence

So here is what I'd encourage - this corporate expression of the family of God we call West Park - is full, literally full, of wonderful godly men and women who have humbly served Jesus with their lives. If you're younger, go ask them to mentor you. Get invested in a small group. Invite input and feedback about how you live.

Become what you are - under the loving guidance of a fellow believer who is further along the path than you.

Now let's move onto the next attribute - we've looked at wise living and compared it against that of foolishness from the perspective of a small sampling of what the Bible says about wisdom, but where does this wisdom come from.

Attribute #2 Spirit Filled Living - 5:18-21

2. Attribute

Spirit Filled Living - vs 18-21

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

We are to live a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit - one of the outflows of being filled by and filled with the Holy Spirit is that our response is worship, but not only individually, but corporately also.

It would be so easy to assume that the only form of worship that Paul is instructing here is singing, but that is not the case. We will see in a minute in vs 21, that willing self-submission to one another is also an act of worship and is representative of someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit.

The command that Paul expresses here is quite significant. Don't be drunk which leads to debauchery, but instead be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Even at a surface level, if what Paul is describing here is only to ensure we are not drunk with wine for religious reasons from a pagan worldview, the reason for drunkenness is to suppress difficulty for a diluted sense of joy.

Here is what commentary says about this.

Exalting Jesus in Ephesians: Be Filled by the Spirit (5:18)

When you are happy in God, you are a strong and brave witness to his grace. So I repeat, whatever joy or peace you find in alcohol, the Spirit of God can give you more. Even the Psalmist of the Old Testament had experienced this [Ps 4:7-8].

Here is what that Psalm says:

Psalm 4:7-8 ESV You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. ⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

The filling of the Holy Spirit should lead to such joy that drunkenness is a faulty replacement for real joy. And in truth drunkenness is an over-promising under-delivering experience - one that is often replaced with regret and anxiety, and the potential for grave sorrow.

Then Paul moves on in vs 19.

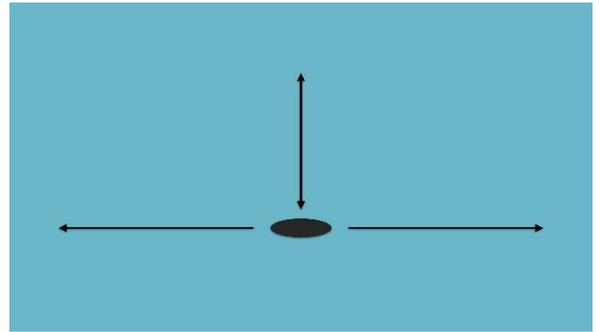
¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Look here at vs 19a) we are to address who? One another. This is a corporate experience, when we are filled with God's spirit, by God's spirit, our response is corporate worship.

We are to do so with Psalms (the literal psalms of the Bible), Hymns & Choruses we sing together as we gather, and Spiritual Songs (songs we burst forth with towards Jesus from our hearts)

These avenues are to be done toward each other, and toward God in our hearts.

Notice this: there is both a Horizontal and Vertical Aspect to our corporate gatherings



When we engage in corporate worship - not only singing, but with corporate prayer and intercession, in service of one another, in utilizing our spiritual gifts to edify the church, as we speak words of encouragement to someone who is struggling, when we serve our brother/sisters in a practical way after a surgery with a meal, etc.

We are doing what we are called to do as the church. We are providing one another with the *Love One Anothers* of the NT church movement.

But something vivacious, life giving, and transformative happens when we sing together. Not only are we singing to God things about God, not only are we reminding ourselves of the truth of God's word, his character, his promises, and the Gospel of Salvation, we are also encouraging one another.

[Watch this wonderful little clip from John Piper - about Corporate worship.](https://www.desiringgod.org/corporate-worship-saved-my-marriage)

<https://www.desiringgod.org/corporate-worship-saved-my-marriage>

What? What??

What we are doing in Corporate Worship is not some nicety that Christians do just because we sing. It isn't some perfunctory activity to fill time before the preaching.

It is Spiritual Warfare against the Devil - empowering us towards Jesus, and his gospel mission. No, we Sing together because there is POWER in the Gospel sung.

When you don't sing, when you hide under the guise of your preference of worship songs, hymns, whatever - you my friend, you are robbing the neighbour you sit beside of stand beside in church of what God may do in them because of your singing the truth of the Gospel around them.

This has been true of my own life - you've seen me, you've seen me thank you as a church for singing along, because I've NEEDED it, you have encouraged my sorrowful, disillusioned, faulty, broken heart, by singing the Truth of the words we sing back toward me. I may lead the congregation - but you had better believe that the congregation also leads the worship team.

This is the reason for the NEED for us to gather as the church.

And - we are to make this melody together - corporately - to the Lord in our heart - individual - We all need to participate in Corporate Worship.

It is both *Vertical* toward God as he showers us with his grace, and *Horizontal*, as we disperse that same grace to those around us - who are part of the local little family God has orchestrated here.

Okay - that's a hobby horse I could live on for too long.

Then Paul adds another portion of what being filled with the Spirit looks like.

21 ESV submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

What does this submission look like?

It's putting the service and needs, of others ahead of our own desires, its loving in the same self-sacrificing way that Jesus has loved us - its being motivated by our love, and holy fear, holy respect of Jesus, to put others first. Its actively looking to out serve our brothers and sisters because this is for their good.

Okay so that's it - this is what it looks like.

Here are the responses

How do we become what we are? We live wisely, and we are continually filled by and with the Holy Spirit.

Big Idea: Ephesians 5:15-21 commands 2 Attributes Essential for every Christian

Point 1: Wise living - vs 15-17

Point 2: Spirit Filled Living - vs 18-21