

Title: Displaying Jesus

Introduction

Welcome again to our next sermon during lockdown. This will be a 2-part sermon in which we will do three points this week and spend a whole sermon on the fourth point: the Christ filled church.

Its times of lock down it is very easy for us to become complacent in our walks with God.

Its very easy to be divided on matters and to lose focus on how to live out Christianity.

Its so easy to compromises and instead of our lives reflecting Christ likeness, to be reflecting worldliness.

Instead of our lives drawing people to Christ, our lives end up chasing people away from Him.

If you're a believer in Christ, you need to watch your walk carefully so that you will reflect Jesus.

Our passage gives us some keys to live a life that displays the fullness of God on our thoughts, attitudes, words and actions.

Historical Background

Paul wrote the letter to the saints at Ephesians from prison (his lock down) in Rome.

This was most likely a circular letter that was sent from Ephesus out to the other churches in that area.

He has time to reflect on how church is to operate, undistracted from all the chaos of day to day ministry.

He writes to a church still struggling with Christian unity, fellowship and the relations between Christ and the church

And in this letter Ephesians he describes the inner workings of how the church should work, he even describes something of Gods over arching will and grand scheme of things., His salvation plan, how He is working to unite all things in Christ so that the Church would be displaying the fullness of God's character and that in the church his wisdom of God would be on display to the angelic beings in heaven(Eph 1:9-10, 3:10)

Part of what brings about unity is their walk(lives) that should be Christ like.

We will be focussing on a small sliver of this letter.

Read Eph 5:15-21

Proposition

4 Ways to watch your walk so that you display Jesus in the church.

1. Contemplate your walk
2. Competent living
3. Comprehend His will
4. Christ's filled church

1. Contemplate your walk

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Eph 5:16 (ESV)

Look carefully then how you walk,

- Paul had urged believers to walk in a manner worthy of their calling in 4:1
- This is done by not walking like unbelievers (Gentiles) 4:17
- By being imitators of God by walking in love 5:1
- By walking as children of light 5:8
- And walking carefully or precisely 5:15

If the church is to be the place in which people are to be united with God(1:10) and with other believers.

If the church is to be a place in which Jesus is the Lord and the fullness of Christ is seen everywhere.

Then The church needs to watch how they walk.

BY church I mean every believer in Christ that gathers to worship him. This is both an individual and corporate responsibility

Look: means watch, be vigilant church, be on the lookout, give your thoughts to , direct you're attention to your walk.

The Grammar reveals that it is a command that must be obeyed in an ongoing basis. This command is also addressed not to an individual but to the believers plurally, indicating the saints of Ephesus.

Carefully: means mindful, in a deliberate manner, with focussed attention, accurately

Walk: refers to your conduct, how you behave, how you live. (A life worthy of the calling we received)

Example:

One of the realities of having served in the military, in border warfare, was the corporate responsibility to be watchful for enemies. We always had our weapons with us. And especially when traveling, we had an awareness of what is going on around us, always look, always being ready.

I believe that both as members of a church and the church corporately are required to be alert, watchful continuously, to be very careful, and precise about your manner of conduct, how you live out your Christianity.

Over time it's so easy to relax, and to become blasé, or nonchalant about your life and soon you find that sinful thoughts, words, and actions have become a part of your lifestyle as a habit.

This way of watchfulness in your walk means that you fundamentally make the best use of your time. (look at vs 16)

***making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Eph
5:16 (ESV)***

If you are vigilant, alert, watching carefully your manner of life, the Bible tells us that You're not wasting time; rather you make the best use of your time.

Making the best use of your time= comes from a commercial term that means to buy or exhaust what is available. It means your buying up time, your redeeming your time. You are utilizing your time the best possible way.

The author provides the motive or the reasons why you are to make the most use of your time to watch your conduct, our walk.

Because the days are evil.

Saying the days are evil is the same as saying this evil age.

In Galatians Paul had written

*³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the **present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father, Galatians 1:3–4 (ESV)*

Jesus died on the cross for your and my sins to deliver us from this present evil age.

Satan though defeated by Jesus on the cross is called the god of this world 2 Cor 4:4. He utilizes the world systems as a platter of temptation for man's desires of the eyes, flesh and pride of life just as in the garden Eden. (Gen 3, 1 John 2:15-17)

Unbelievers follow Satan, by following the course of this world, by living in the passions of their flesh

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Ephesians 2:1–3 (ESV)

You and I are called to be the best steward of God given time in this evil age so that every moment of it will reflect the fullness of God, to His glory.

Paul Goes on to provide us with makes three contrasting statements that characterise this kind of walk, the Christ like walk, the Christ like life.

1. Not as unwise but as wise, (competent living)
2. not being foolish but understanding the will of God, (comprehending His will)
3. not being drunk but being filled buy the HS (Christ filled church)

Application

- As a church it is important that the leaders keep a watchful eye upon not only their own walk but also the walk of the church members.
- As church members you have the responsibility to be very careful in looking at your own life and walk.
- But you should also carefully scrutinize the lives of fellow believers and seek to encourage them towards holy ness.

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24–25 (ESV)

- And especially now in this time of lockdown, you and I have the responsibility to watch carefully how we live our Christian lives.
- You should not be complacent in this time, but watchful.

This brings us to the 2 point , but which is the 1st contrasting statement Paul used to describe this walk.

2. Competent living

Or living wisely

*Look carefully then how you walk, **not as unwise but as wise**, Eph 5:15 (ESV)*

Paul describes two kinds walk (conduct, lifestyles)

The unwise, and the wise

The walk of the unwise

The unwise = term that means: lack accumulated knowledge. or discernment. It is foolish, not walking as God expects you to walk. It is one who lacks the power of proper discernment.

The unwise walk is the walk that looks like the walk of the unbeliever.

Paul had instructed the believers not to walk like unbelievers 4:17-19

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. Ephesians 4:18 (ESV)

The **thought process** of the unbeliever is described as follow:

- Their minds as futile, empty, or vanity (useless, pointless, worthless or fruitless forms of thinking) of no eternal value.

Believer when your thought life is not taken captive to Christ, when you're not loving Him with all your mind, when you're not occupying your mind with what's good and profitable, then you are unwise in your walk. (That can be so easy in this period of lockdown)

in Eph 5:3-5

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Ephesians 5:3–5 (ESV)

If your life is characterised in what you do by:

- sexual immorality (fornication sex before marriage),

- Impurity (uncleanness, dirty and impure sexual sins, moral uncleanness),
- Covetousness (greed, the excessive desire for acquiring more= idolatry),
- filthiness (obscene behaviour (conduct which makes you ashamed if it was to come to light),
- foolish talk (stupid, rash conversations, speech which betrays you as foolish) , crude joking(vulgar jokes, play on words that are suggestive in nature, dirty talk)
- Then you are unwise in your walk.

The temptations to sin by being immersed in the things of world media is so big in this time of lockdown. Do not be unwise in your walk.

The walk of the wise

Wise means you have and are accumulating knowledge or discernment. It means that you fear (have a reverential awe of) God and you understand His ways. It does not mean brilliance, but it does mean the skill to apply His word in your life. It's an understanding of God and his will that results in wise attitudes and conduct or practices.

After having taught the spiritual blessings that every believer has in Christ, the fact that God chose you, adopted you, redeemed you and **lavished on you all wisdom and insight concerning His grand plan of salvation**, the glorious inheritance predestined for believers and being sealed by the Hs, Paul's prayed.

He prayed that believers would have spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. Eph1:17–19 (ESV)

- That inwardly they would know the **hope** to which he has called you
- They would know the glorious **inheritance** available for believers
- The immeasurable greatness of the **power** towards believers in Christ

Here we see in chapters 1-3 some of the knowledge needed for believers to live out the Christian life.

Chapters 4-6 then reveals wisdom as the knowledge(doctrine) is then applied in your walk.

How to live out the gospel implications practically.

That is the walk of the wise...applying the gospel practically in your life.

Its walking on the straight and narrow path.

Paul explains it this way

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,(Eph 4:1)

He goes on to explain what that walk looks like: which you would call the walk of the wise

² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1–3 (ESV)

Its characterized by attitudes:

- **Humility** (Humility is an attitude wherein we recognize our own insignificance and unworthiness before God and attribute to Him the Supreme honour, praise, prerogatives, rights privileges, worship, devotion, authority, submission and obedience He deserves.)
- **Gentleness**(the opposite of self-promotion, being meek or tender, its power under control expressed by a humble heart, the freedom from malice or bitterness or any desire for revenge)Gentleness has 3 attitudes:1 Submitting to the will of God,2. teachable,3. consideration of others((Macarthur and Mayhue 2017, 377))
- **Patience**: Self-restraint, meaning you do not retaliate, the idea of long suffering, (Macarthur and Mayhue 2017, 376)
- **Enduring** one another
- Eager to keep or **maintain the unity** of peace.

Its characterized in practice by a life which looks like God.

¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or

covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Ephesians 5:1–3 (ESV)

- It's a life which reflects the character of God: God is loving and so were loving, God is a god of truth so we live and speak truth, God is a giving God and so we are giving people
- It's a life characterized by sacrificial love, a love which is willing to sacrifice itself for the sake of others just as Jesus did on the cross.
- It's a life **characterized by thanksgiving**,
- It's a life in displaying the fruit of what is good, right and true (5:9)
- It's a life that does not partake in the works of darkness but exposes it. 5:13

So, we see the reality that believers are to walk as the wise and not the unwise.

Application

1. This is such a good time to study God's word.
2. Study and read up about who God is and His character
3. Purposefully choose to apply this in your life.
4. Wonderful examples are given in passages like
5. Eph 4-6, Col 3-4, Rom 12-16

The critical principle I think you should take from this is that you should have a process of biblical intake, and then a practical application of that specifically in your life during this time.

In this manner you will be making the best use of your time.

May I encourage you to walk this way, the way of the wise, competent living in Christ.

The 2nd major contrast, Point 3 we see is found in vs 17

3. Comprehend His will

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

Paul then provides two contrasting commands that characterize this walk of the believer:

1. Do not be foolish
2. Understand the will of the Lord.

Both are commands that should be obeyed in an ongoing basis.

Both commands are addressed to the saints Plural, it includes both individual and corporate.

Vs 17 parallels vs 15 but develops the idea further with a slightly different focus.

Do not be foolish

The adjective foolish has its roots in the OT traditional description of a fool.

They are described as people who:

- They oppose God

²² ... Remember how the foolish man reproaches You all day long.

Psalm 74:22

Job 2:9–10

- They display their foolishness

..., But a fool displays folly. Proverbs 13:16

They embrace evil and are careless around evil

Proverbs 13:19

..., But a fool is arrogant and careless. Proverbs 14:16

- They are **perverse** in speech

Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity Than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool. Proverbs 19:1

- They **thoughts** are wicked

⁹ *The devising of folly is sin, Proverbs 24:9*

- They are greedy and can be obsessed with worldly gain

²⁰ *“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ Luke 12:20*

- They **deny God’s word and despise** wisdom and instruction

“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Matthew 7:26

*...; **Fools despise** wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7*

. Proverbs 15:5

- He determines **ethics** based on what is right in his own eyes.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes.... Proverbs 12:15

A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind. Proverbs 18:2

- The Fool biblically is not necessary shallow minded or illiterate. He is defined as a fool because of his fallen state.

*... ²² Professing to be wise, they **became fools**, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Romans 1:21–23*

- He **does not accept** the things of the spirit of God

*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. 1 Corinthians 2:14*

- They **view the gospel**(solution) as foolishness

¹⁸ *For the word of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing,*

but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.. 1 Cor 1:18

The biblical fool has determined that he can live his life **independently** from God by his own intellectual resources. The fool makes his stand **from a God denying position**. They do not honour Him, but instead end up worshipping their own idols

*The **fool** has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.*

Psalm 14:1

Jeremiah 4:22

Romans 1:21–23

The problem lies within the heart of the fool.

*A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the **heart of fools** proclaims folly. Proverbs 12:23*

*He who trusts in his **own heart** is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered. Proverbs 28:26*

So, the believer is commanded not to be foolish, like the fool

They are not to lack discernment in practical living, they need to be careful in how they live, they should return to the sensible way of living and are urged

but understand what the will of the Lord is.

This is a command, it's not optional

This should characterise their lives every single day

This is also addressed to the persons plural, the saints of Ephesus, the church corporately.

But then the question we ask and should ask is so what is the will of God?

Gods will is defined as theologians as His perfect determination(resolve) and sovereign ordination(predestined, decrees, path has been determined, what will

happen has been determined by God being in control, History = His story, His actions) of all things pertaining to himself and to his creation for His glory. (MacArthur and Mayhue 2017, 185) They divide Gods will up into what is called his secret will, which for you and I remains hidden until in history it is revealed.

But then there is what is called his **revealed** will in which we find his commands, laws and imperatives given within His Word. (MacArthur and Mayhue 2017, 187)

But how does Paul use it in Ephesians

Eph 1:9-10 describes it this way.

*⁹ making known to us **the mystery of his will**, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
Ephesians 1:9–10 (ESV)*

Broadly speaking the will of the Lord here refers to Gods saving plan with its various facets.

His grand plan to **unite** everything in Christ

Its described as a mystery (meaning that it was truth that had been hidden until it was revealed).

This world is not united with God.

- Not united with God= unbelievers= enemies of God
- Not united with one another =racism, discrimination, tribalism, cultural conflicts.
- Not united in doctrine= not united doctrinally, false teachings, different churches, cults etc.
- Not united in lifestyle= as our lives don't reflect Christ but rather sinfulness often manifesting sinful behaviour

How does God go about bringing unity with such great disunity?

God brings oneness or unity though **through Christ**:

1. Believers are united in having received every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ 1**:3-14

2. Unbelievers are united to God, as God in His grace saves them through faith **in Christ 2:1-10**
3. The people divided culturally can find peace and unity **through Jesus**, who is their peace, and reconciles hostile cultures into His body The church 2:11-22
4. Through the mystery that **in Christ** Gentiles are also now with the Jews fellow heirs, fellow members of the same body and partakers of the same promises 3:6
5. Christ brings unity doctrinally by gifting the church with pastors and teachers to equip the saints to serve and build the body up to become united: Eph 4:11-16
 - a. Doctrinally:
 - i. unity of faith (referring to the body of Christian teaching)
 - ii. United in knowledge of the Son of God(refers to the deep knowledge of Christ that comes through prayer and careful study of His Word)
 - b. Maturity which means Christ likeness.
6. And as the believers come to understand Gods will for their lives through the word, they begin to live it out.
 - a. The church is to walk in a manner worthy of their calling,
 - b. not as the unbelievers do,
 - c. but as imitators of God,
 - d. as children of light and
 - e. diligent and vigilant to watch their walk.

In summary what we see is that the believer who watches carefully his walk will walk or live in a Christlike manner and will comprehend the will of God.

- It will be seen in Christlike thinking and Christ like actions
- It will be seen in active involvement in the church
- It will be seen in serving and building up the church doctrinally
- It will be seen in a walk that reflects the character of God.

Application

Comprehending His will means that you understand Gods plan of salvation.

It means that you submit to being a part of that plan by:

- realizing your own sinful ness, repenting of it and trusting Christ as Saviour and Lord
- By crossing the cultural divides in Christ, reaching out to the family of Christ, no matter what cultural differences there are simply because in Christ you are brothers and sisters in His household.
- By being equipped for service
- By discipling others in the body of Christ
- By studying Gods word and apply it in your life and reflecting His character
- A life in dependence upon His power, turning away from sin and putting on Christ like words, attitudes, decision makings and actions

But one question remains?

How is it possible for weak, sinful you and I to accomplish this?

Where do we get the strength from?

How can we reflect the fullness of Gods Character in every aspect of our church, in every aspect of our marriages and every aspect of our work and personal live that we make the most of our time and glorify God?

The answer is in the third contrast, do not get drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit. Vs 18-21

We will discuss this next Sunday.

We will be answering the question, "what did Paul actually mean when he said, be filled by the Spirt.?"

How can we display Christ in our churches and lives?

How can we have lives which cause others to become united with God?

Know this that the answer may surprise you.

Conclusion

4 Ways to watch your walk so that you display Jesus in the church.

1. Contemplate your walk
2. Competent living
3. Comprehend His will
4. Christ's filled church