

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 11

Introduction: Last week in our study of the book of Ephesians we finished chapter 4. It was in that chapter that the church was pictured as a "NEW MAN".

Ephesians 4:22-24

²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Now as we come to chapter 5 the metaphor changes. In this chapter the church is presented as the BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Notice Ephesians 5:23-27

This is where we are headed in this chapter.

Now we are not the "bride" of Jesus yet, but we will be immediately following the rapture. Today we are in the engagement period and we are awaiting the return of the Groom to take us back to His Father's house where the wedding will take place.

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

After the Rapture and during the Tribulation we will be in heaven where the wedding will take place.

Revelation 19:7-8

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Here we see the marriage has taken place and the bride has become the WIFE. This is all yet future.

Now we are to live in expectation of Jesus return for us and while we wait, we are to conduct our lives in a way that a bride would as she awaits her future husband.

➤ **The Engagement of the Church**

Notice Ephesians 5:1

The word "therefore" looks back to how we are to live our lives in relation to other people which is what we studied in chapter 4. Now Paul exhorts his readers to be "FOLLOWERS" or "IMITATORS" of God. God is to be our Example in life. Just as a young child has a desire to live as his father lives, so we are to pattern our lives after God. We are to be imitators of our Lord.

He does not say to admire God or to think about God, both of which we are to do, but he tells us to imitate God. This is a call to PRACTICAL ACTION.

There are many people who are constantly comparing themselves to someone who makes them feel good about themselves. But we are not to be comparing ourselves to other people, but we are to measure ourselves against God.

1 Peter 1:15-16

¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Let us refresh our minds about what we considered in chapter 4.

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Imitating God will not save you! This verse has nothing to do with being saved. But after we are saved our goal is to live like God. This is so important in the world in which we live in. So many have rejected God and therefore it is our responsibility to allow the world to see Him in us. It is our responsibility to set God before them each and every day.

Notice Ephesians 5:2

This is the 4th time in this letter that we are told to WALK. This is what the Christian life is, it is a WALK. That means we are always to be moving forward because if we are not then we are sliding backwards.

Here in this verse, we are called to a higher plain. We are called to walk in love and Paul gives to us the very Example that we are to follow, and it is the Example of Jesus Christ and His love for us.

Jesus Christ gave Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God. There is something to be seen in this verse that I want to make clear.

The sacrifice on the cross 2000 years ago was to satisfy God. I point this out because there are people who have been deceived into thinking that they can somehow please God with their good deeds. They reject Jesus Christ and they instead want to offer their own offering.

Let us notice a picture in the life of Cain and Abel. But before we look at their offerings let me take you back to their parents, Adam, and Eve.

Genesis 3:21

²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Here was the first blood shed for sin in the Bible. God killed two LAMBS and clothed ADAM AND EVE. In this God made it very clear that He required a blood sacrifice for sin. Adam was to die because he ate the forbidden fruit but instead there was a substitute, and it was an innocent LAMB. Adam and Eve then passed this on to their children.

Genesis 4:1-5

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

² And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

⁶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Cain rejected what God required and he brought the works of his hands and God rejected his offering.

The point I want you to see is that God is the One who has been offended by sin and so He gets to determine what it will take to satisfy His wrath. He tells His wrath can only be satisfied with the shedding of the blood of an innocent sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22

²² And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Jesus' death on the cross satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus satisfied the wrath of God and therefore God will not accept your good works as a payment for sin.

Notice Ephesians 5:2 again.

Back to the thought here; we are to live lives of love and sacrifice just as Jesus did by loving us and going to the cross to be our Substitute. So, we are to love with a sacrificial love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Now Paul will give a list of sins that should never have any part in the life of the believer.

Notice Ephesians 5:3-4

The sins that are mentioned here are focused upon a life of immorality. These are all sexual sins. Before we get into what Paul is concerned about, we need to know a little about the culture of that day for the background will help us.

In the Greek culture of that day, prostitution and fornication were considered permissible activities. A married man in Greece could engage in extramarital sexual intercourse as much as he wished, but this practice was forbidden for the wife! Athenaeus, a writer in the second century AD, quotes from a speech of Demosthenes,

"We keep mistresses for pleasure, concubines for daily concubinage, but wives we have in order to produce children legitimately and to have a trustworthy guardian of our domestic property."

Listen to the words of an unknown writer:

"Remember that in Paul's day the ancient pagan world in general and Corinth in particular was like much of modern-day post-Christian, anti-God, relative values ruled America is today, for people were strongly intent on having their own ways and doing what was right in their own eye. And what they did that seemed "right" to them was particularly manifest in fulfilling their lust in illicit sexual activities, even under the guise of "religious worship." Corinth in fact was so conspicuous for its practice of sexual immorality that to corinthianize meant to participate in reckless debauchery.

Just as in our day so it was in Paul's day. Immorality was practiced and accepted as the normal way of life. But it was not to be so with believers. Paul gives a list of immoral sins in these two verses.

- ✓ **Fornication** - Any sexual relations apart from marriage.
- ✓ **Uncleanness** - This is a broad term for immoral behavior.
- ✓ **Covetousness** - Desiring what is not yours.
- ✓ **Filthiness** - Same idea as uncleanness.
- ✓ **Foolish talking** - Immoral talking.
- ✓ **Jesting** - vulgar humor.

These sins of immorality should have no place in the life of the believer.

Notice Ephesians 5:5-6

Paul is not saying that a believer cannot fall into these sins, but he is saying that they will not stay there and continue to practice the sin. We see a very similar statement in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

¹⁰ *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

¹¹ *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Listen to the words of William MacDonald 1 Corinthians 6;

"Paul "does not mean to imply that Christians can practice such sins and be lost, but rather he is saying that people who practice such sins are not Christians.:

Do not misinterpret what he is saying -- he does not say Christians can never fall into this trap of sexual sin. When a Christian commits sexual sin, he or she is one of the more miserable individuals you will ever meet. And although they may be trapped by the sin, their heart's desire to not to commit the sin but to come out of that sin. If they have no desire and make no efforts whatsoever to be freed from that sin, that is when one has to begin to wonder whether they are truly saved.)"

Many believers have fallen into this trap and become entangled.

Proverbs 5:22

²² *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.*

Conclusion:

1 Corinthians 6:18

¹⁸ *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

Sexual sin alters the brain function and if repeated it can sear the conscience.

Notice Ephesians 5:7-8

These believers were once in these sins but now they were saved, and they were freed from these sins and so are we.

2 Peter 1:2-4

² *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

³ *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

⁴ *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*