

Hello, everyone. Today's passage is Ephesians 5:15-21.

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.

Last week, we read through the previous section of Ephesians chapter 5, and this was about walking in the light. And today's passage is a continuation of the Apostle Paul's exhortation to walk in the light as he guides us on how that is to be done. A shorter passage today, so we'll take it verse by verse.

In verse 15, Paul says, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise". In other translations, this word "unwise" is translated to "fools", and what Paul is getting at here is to not be wild and lawless. Later in the passage, Paul talks about drunkenness from wine, and I think this might be what Paul is referring to when he says "not as unwise" in this verse: this worldly culture of losing control of ourselves in foolishness, kind of like what happens when people become drunk.

Then in verse 16, it says, "making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." And the language that Paul seems to be using here in this verse is this idea of seizing opportunity. This phrase "making the best use of the time" implies that this season of time we are in is limited. There will come an end to this particular season, and so because of that, we are called to make the best use of it. And in a worldly context, many people might read "make the best use of the time" and think "I want to do whatever I want. Carpe diem, seize the day, I only live this one life so might as well make the best use of it and have as much fun as I can." But this couldn't be further from the truth of what Paul is encouraging us to do in this passage. And what Paul means when he says "make the best use of the time" is to walk in the light, as we talked about last

week. It says in this verse that “the days are evil”. I think that’s pretty evident looking at our world today which generally rejects God.

But Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians and to us is to “make the best use of the time”, that is to walk in the light, to continue to stand firm in the faith, to walk wisely. He says in verse 17, “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” This is what wisdom is. To walk wisely means to understand the will of the Lord. Then in verse 18, it says, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit”. And I think Paul says this because he knows that becoming drunk with wine goes against understanding what the will of the Lord is. To be filled with wine means to lose our attentiveness and wisdom, and that fundamentally can’t go together with understanding the will of the Lord. Instead of being filled with wine, Paul calls us to be “filled with the Spirit”.

In the next three verses from 19-21, Paul gives us a picture of what being “filled with the Spirit” looks like. In verse 19, it says, “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart”. Being filled with the Spirit naturally causes an outpour of worship from within us. And not just musical worship in singing, which is part of it, but also more generally in the ways we even talk with one another. It says, “addressing one another in psalms and hymns”. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, everything becomes worship, even in how we address and talk to one another. Then in verse 20, Paul exhorts us to always give thanks to God. There are times in our lives where we are naturally led to grumble or mope in our situation, and to not give thanks to God. But when we are filled with the Spirit, thanksgiving naturally pours out of our hearts. Then lastly, in verse 21, when we are filled with the Spirit, we are to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Every aspect of our lives becomes worship—from verses 19-21, we see that when we are filled by the Holy Spirit, we live and breathe worship to God, in our praise to Him, in how we talk and address one another, in always giving thanks, and in submitting to one another. I remember a couple of months ago, I was serving at an Encore service. And that day for some reason, I was so disconnected with God. I was not praising the Lord, as it says here in this passage. I wasn’t talking and addressing others with encouragement, I wasn’t giving thanks, and I wasn’t

submitting to others out of reverence for Christ. And in this state, I led worship. And at least on paper, nothing went horribly wrong, but I knew and felt in my heart that this was not the state that God wanted me to be in.

And the reason, I believe, this happened is that the previous couple of days before that Encore, I was not filled by the Spirit, but I filled myself instead with other things. Constantly on Instagram and YouTube with no filling of Scripture or times of worship and prayer. Sometimes we might think to ourselves that social media and streaming platforms might not be that huge a deal, but when they begin to influence how you think and take precedence over the influence of God, it can really pull us away from the will of the Lord, like it did to me. This passage in Ephesians talks about drunkenness with wine, and I think this filling myself with Instagram and YouTube and worldly thoughts and culture was basically the same as drunkenness with wine. My mind was not in a state of attentiveness and my soul was not looking to be filled by the Spirit. My heart craved the world over God.

And I have to tell you, what a world of a difference it makes in our daily lives when we *are* filled with the Holy Spirit. When we fill our lives with the Spirit and with Scripture, prayer, and worship, all the other aspects of our lives begin to follow suit. Let's intentionally walk wisely, understand the will of the Lord, and be filled by the Spirit so that we live a true life of worship the way that God designed us to live.

I want to encourage us to take some time today to ask God to fill us with His Spirit. There is nothing greater and more joyful than to live life in step with the Holy Spirit, so let's ask God for it.