

Walking with Christ in Our Relationships

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

Introduction

The backdrop for much of this lesson is going to come from two fundamental ideas that Paul has established throughout his letter to the Ephesians.

1. Jews and Gentiles are United in Christ — Eph. 2:11-12

- For every student of the NT, it is extremely helpful to know about the animosity between these two groups of people.
- Much of Paul's writing will be encouraging brothers and sisters to be united. They no longer needed to see each other as enemies, but they must see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- And so that is the very case Paul makes here. Until these brethren see each other as just that, the cause of Christ can be hurt. Here is how Paul makes his case to them:
 1. Paul appeals to the blood of Jesus (2:13)
 2. Paul makes the case that Christ is our peace (2:14-15)
 3. Paul says that Jesus' purpose was to unite them! (2:16-18)
 4. Paul says the result for them is being a whole building, as a holy temple to the Lord! (2:20-22)

2. Being in Christ Changes the Way You Walk — Eph. 4:1-6

- From here, Paul is going to give very practical advice to those who follow Christ.
- He begins using language like "I implore you to walk..."
- Here is the big idea I want to make from here:
 - When we became a Christian, our whole world was turned upside down.
 - In becoming a Christian, we were openly admitting that our way of walking DOES NOT WORK.
 - We wanted a knew purpose. We wanted a better goal and journey.
 - Jesus Christ gives us that, and Paul tells us how we are to walk now.
 - And he starts with the following, walk in:
 - All humility and gentleness and patience (vs 2)
 - But notice in regard to who:
 - "**showing tolerance to one another in love**" (vs 2)
 - The way a Gentile USED to walk, would be to look down on a Jew.
 - The way a Jew USED to walk, would be to judge the Gentile.
 - But in walking with Christ, that is no longer the case.
 - Paul has already made the case that they are united, so now they need to act like it!

Here is why seeing these two ideas throughout the epistle are so fundamental to our study:

1. Until we see that in Christ, there is no difference between race, gender, social or economical background, then we will not be willing to see the difference in the way we treat those we interact with on a daily basis (our earthly relationships)
2. Until we understand that being a Christian changes the way we walk, even in our relationships, then there is no need to go any further.

Paul establishes these two points before he starts telling them how to walk in their earthly relationships with others.

Our Walk with Our Spouse (5:22-33)

A. Instructions to Wives (5:22-24)

- It can go without saying, but this is very counter-cultural.
- Many see this passage as misogynistic and offensive. But we understand this to be God's will for the marriage relationship.
- In fact, from here we understand that a true husband and wife relationship that functions like this, is mimicking Christ and His church.
- But this can be one of many ways that a wife can demonstrate to the world her new walk in Christ.
 - Where much of the world would not walk this way, it would be obvious when a woman decides that she will submit to her husband
- **But what will this look like?**
 - Does the wife let the husband lead?
 - When the husband makes a decision, does she humbly submit? Or is there an argument to be had each time he makes a decision?
 - *This is not to say that a husband cannot seek the counsel and opinion of his wife, in fact, he would be a fool not to!*
 - However, a wife would understand from this passage that it is the husband who leads.

B. Instructions to Husbands (5:25-30)

- Paul starts with this instruction, "**Husbands, love your wives**"
 - It makes sense that Paul would start here with leaders.
 - Godly leaders don't lead because they want to be "top dog," godly leaders lead because they *love people*. Specifically, they love the people below them.
 - That love *should* drive them in their decision making.
 - So the question we ask husbands is this: **do you love your wives?**
 - If you say yes, then the next question is, **how do you show your love?**
 - For Christ, it was giving up His life for her! What are you doing?
 - Do you nourish and cherish your relationship with your wife? (vs 29)
 - **What does that look like?**

C. Back to the Beginning (5:31-33)

- To wrap up this point, Paul, much like Jesus, appeals to the very beginning.
- Genesis 2:24.
- lastly, Paul says that love and respect are mutual aspects of the marriage relationship.

Our Walk with Our Parents (6:1-3)

- This is one of the basic commands that comes from the very beginning as well (Ex. 20:12)
 - It is sad that many people do not feel or see a responsibility to their parents.
- However, Jesus also dealt with this lack of responsibility in the Pharisees (Mark 7:9-13)
- There are two ways we can practically apply this passage:
 - 1. As young children — still in the parents home.**
 - Things as simple as obeying their request to clean and help out.
 - Being respectful to our siblings.
 - Simply doing what our parents ask.
 - 2. As adult children — no longer in the parents home.**
 - I think we often apply this to the small children who need to do chores (as we just did)
 - But this command goes throughout our entire life. Even though we may “grow up”, there is still a responsibility to our parents.
 - To help them financially, if need be.
 - To help them physically, if need be.
 - But it is so important that we do not neglect our parents in our later years. They deserve and need our help.
 - To ignore their needs, would be to violate this passage. We need to honor them.

Our Walk with Our Children (6:4)

- It is here that we learn:
 - A. What not to do — Don’t provoke our kids!**
 - Parents, sometimes without even realizing it, will move the boundaries for their kids all over the place.
 - This naturally will upset a kid, even to the point of anger and acting out.
 - This can take place in the way we deal with our kids. Do we apologize when we are wrong about something? Or insist on being right? If so, we are likely provoking our kids to anger.
 - B. What to do — Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**
 - It needs to be understood here, that the fathers receive this very specific command.
 - I do believe that mothers have their roles in this, but Paul is clearly instructing fathers.
 - So the question is — **What does this look like?**
 - Family Bible study.
 - It pushes fathers in the Word (a result of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 as well)
 - Fathers thinking through how to teach their kids about the Lord.
 - What happened to the generation of Israelites who did not know the Lord? (Judges 2:10)

Our Walk with Our Masters (6:5-8)

- A discussion on what kind of slaves these people were is not relevant for the moment (slaves by force or slaves by debt). Point being, just as the circumstances in which someone found themselves married was not discussed, the same is true here. *But it is the principles that are of utmost importance.*
- That being said, I believe we can apply this text in the way we labor in the workforce.
- Colly Caldwell¹ in his commentary does a helpful job explaining that we servants should:
 - a. Serve with humility (v. 5a)
 - b. Serve with sincerity (v. 5b)
 - c. Serve with honesty (v. 6)
 - d. Serve with cheerfulness (v. 7)
 - e. Serve with trust (v. 8)
- What a wonderful way to sum up this section.
- This type of service to our employers is really a lost art. Much like how we see the marriage relationship is supposed to be, this is counter-cultural.
- My father, has worked in upper-management for the last 20 years would be the first to tell you that good and honest help is hard to come by.
- But with Christians, this is expected.
- **But why?**
 - Because of our dedication to Christ. Notice how many times Paul will employ the name of Christ in this section:
 - “as to Christ” (v. 5c)
 - “but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (v. 6b)
 - “as to the Lord” (v. 7b)
 - “this he will receive back from the Lord” (v. 8b)
 - At work, we are motivated to work for the Lord. That is who we are really a slave of. He is our master.
 - Let that motivate us in the workplace.

Our Walk with Our Slaves (6:9)

- Again, I want to be careful here, and just draw applications from this text.
- For those who are in a place of authority in the workplace, how do you treat those beneath you?
- How do you motivate your workers? Is it by some kind of threat? If so, that needs to change.
- As many of us know, as hard as getting good help can be, it can be just as hard to get a good boss!
 - But I know many Christians that are in a position of authority, on the job, and have helped bring many people to Christ.
 - Why? Because they lead like Christ does. They lead out of love.
 - They are impartial, as Christ was.
- We need to lead this way.

Conclusion

- With all of this being said, I am reminded of Jesus' instruction in Matt. 5:14-16.
- How can we be those who shine our lights?
 - It is in the way we walk.
 - In the way we treat our spouses.
 - In the way we treat our parents.
 - Our children.
 - Our job.
 - Our employees.
- These are the ways we can stand out and let our lights shine. So let's do it!

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Works cited:

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