



# SERMON OF THE WEEK

First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau

July 19, 2015

'Wake Up and Walk Worthy' (Worthy Series) - Ephesians 5:1-20

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Stepping further into our "Worthy Series" we will be looking at the book Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 1-20. Paul continues to encourage the believers in Ephesus, as well as you and me, to live a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

And the question we will be asking ourselves and the challenge we are faced with is, "How can we, as the church and as individuals, intentionally walk with people to see their lives transformed by the love and grace of Jesus Christ?"

Last week, Pastor Steve spoke about being intentional with ourselves by: 1) dealing with the reality of our own soul's condition; 2) allowing the transformational love of God to give us the courage to face ourselves; 3) and putting off our old nature and putting on our new nature.

This morning we find that Paul lays out for us three "Walks" using wonderful illustrations on living, or "walking" in our new nature and taking the steps to be intentional with others.

We find there are three ways in which we are encouraged to walk:

1. Walk in Love.
2. Walk as Children of Light.

### 3. Walk as Wise People.

This is the bridge from Ephesians 4:32 to 5:1. **32** – *"Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."*

#### 1. **Walk in Love** = Imitate God & Live Sacrificially.

So how do we live lives worthy of the calling to which we have been called? Where do we begin with that?

The realization, which Pastor Tim spoke about recently, is that everyone needs a community of encouragement...Christian or not!

But in order for the Christian to live a sacrificial life which imitates God, we must realize who we are in Christ and remember that we have been delivered from darkness!

So let us strive together to grow a life that more and more reflects the truth that we are made worthy by Christ's sacrificial investment in us.

And the fruit of this in our lives is not perfection but a desire and, at times, a strenuous effort for us to make sacrificial investments in the lives of others.

D.L. Moody said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man/woman fully consecrated to Him. By God's help, I aim to be that man."

To walk in love is to live a life that is pleasing to God—not *perfect*, but *progressing*. It is a life lived with an intentionality that flows out of our deep relationship with God, out of who we are in Christ, and looks to invest in being a soul friend and a soul guide to others.

Note how the humble sacrifice of Jesus Christ's own life, for us, is described in verse 2. It is "...a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

Can you smell it? What is the aroma of our lives? Smells are an interesting thing. Have you ever been in a place for a time that has a certain smell, either good or bad? And when you leave, it lingers, faintly perhaps, but it's always there? Like the aroma of coffee after being at a coffee house.

**C**urrently, there is something dead in our backyard. I can only describe it as a wretched stench! It has permeated everything! I gag just thinking of it!

I want my life to be a sweet aroma—not the wretched stench of death! Let our lives be a sweet aroma not only to God but also to those around us!

In Chapter 5, verses 3-6 we read: **3** *“But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”*

We live daily in a beautiful but often dark world. People suffer, are abused, go hungry, live in hate, or greed or fear. Why? Because people do not know any other way to live!

For some of us, we know there is a better way but we have no one to show us what that looks like. So we take good things and pour our lives into them and make them idols hoping they will sustain us!

For the original reader, the Christians in Ephesus and Asia Minor, the lists Paul writes out are directly connected to their former way of life. They worshipped idols through magical incantations, sacrifices of bulls, and baptisms in the bull's blood, along with drunken

orgies—all to try and satisfy and carry favor from the “gods”. They put the full weight of their lives into these rituals hoping they would sustain them.

Lots of really good things in our lives were not designed to hold the full weight of our lives. For us today, some forms of idolatry may include taking really good things and making them ultimate things. But only Jesus Christ makes us “worthy”. Nothing else can.

I smash good things to smithereens when I expect them to bear the full weight of my life. Only Jesus can do that.

The questions for us today are: “Where do we find ourselves placing the weight of our lives?”

“What ‘idols’ still hold our hearts and minds captive?”

“Where are we searching for assurance?”

“What places or people do we try to lean on other than God?”

Again, our verses encourage us to walk in love.

Our second point is to: **Walk as children of light.**

**6** *“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light, 9 (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),*

**10** *trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”*

We have another reminder of who we are in Christ! We are Children of Light!

Note in verse eight that you were formally darkness...not IN darkness but you WERE darkness!! That's powerful! And it is set in clear contrast to being children of light.

It is a great reminder of who and what we were without Jesus and who and what we are now in Jesus!

Let's think back. Do you remember when God stirred you to take that step from being darkness to being light?

It was His grace that ushered us in. In the midst of life's circumstances whether they were good, glorious or chaotic, our lives before Jesus Christ were lives lived as darkness!

Paul's encouragement in the next three verses brings us to our original question. “How can we, as the church and as individuals, intentionally walk with people to see their lives transformed by the love and grace of Jesus Christ?” Verses 11-13 say:

**11** *“Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.”*

Let's take a step back and ponder this for a moment. What comes to mind when we read these verses? We are encouraged to not participate in these unfruitful actions, but actually expose them! But what does that look like?

We may think it is to shine our light on people and expose how bad they are living by telling people to stop living a certain way! "Stop living with your girl or boyfriend. Stop taking drugs or drinking. Stop looking to money or your career to satisfy you!"

We can order people around from a distance but not impact their lives up close! We have no right to tell someone to stop living a certain way unless we are willing to walk with them through that change.

Martin Luther King said, "Whom you would change you must first love."

When I was 21 years old, I was engaged and living with my girlfriend. We did not know Jesus or go to church and had no one, no soul friend or soul guide, to help us navigate life.

We got pregnant, and I said I would follow whatever decision she made. How cowardly is that?! We decided to have an abortion. I will never forget the weight of shame I felt walking into that hospital and in the waiting room. No one making eye contact, not wanting to make any kind of connection with another person there.

What I needed at this time was someone to walk alongside me, not condone my actions but understand my pain; not give me pat answers, but cry with me. Not

point out what I did wrong, I knew that very well, but to be a light in my life.

A few years later I found those people. God placed them in my life. People who would listened to my story, put up with my crumbled, broken life, spend time with me and still invite me to Bible study and to church. God, through this amazing diverse group of Christians, met me where I was at!

Eternity is on the line and the result of living as a child of light is that Jesus Christ will change the lives of people and people will be saved! They will step into a relationship with Jesus Christ and see that there is a better way to live!

**14** For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

And our third point is to: **Walk as a wise person.** We are encouraged to do so in verses 15-20.

**15** "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, **16** making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

**17** So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

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

**20** always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"

Walking carefully means walking intentionally. Walking wisely means I redeem the time.

Make the most of even the little moments in life. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will be amazed at the opportunities God will place in our paths—opportunities to change a life because our lives have been changed by Jesus. Let's pray.

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Note: Aaron Larson is the Director of Singles Ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu.

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