

Ephesians 5

Sentence 37 (5:1) Therefore be imitators of God as dear (beloved) children.

An imitator is a follower. We are to be followers of God. We are His children loved by the heavenly Father. For the Christian, to follow Jesus Christ is to follow God. Everything we ever need is provided in God. What God does not provide we do not need.

Sentence 38 (5:2) And walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

In the book of Leviticus the various sacrifices are described as being a sweet-smelling aroma to God (Ex 29:18, Lev 1:9, 2:2, 3:5). We only understand the significance of the Cross in the setting of OT sacrifice. The proof of the love is in the depth of the sacrifice. This love is already demonstrated and available: we are to walk in love. The foundation (substance) of love is sacrifice.

Sentence 39 (5:3-4) But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

Fornication is sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Fornication is a pagan playing field. God created the attraction between man and woman which is ultimately respected and preserved only by marriage. Otherwise it is plundered for pleasure whereby people lose personal definition and they go into deeper uncleanness to get the same kick out of the sexual addiction. Satan can mock God with the evidence of human sexual misuse (sin) which demonstrates the human perversion of a God-given gift. Associated with the core activity of fornication (sexual licence) are indecency (deformed attitude), stupid conversation and ribald jesting. Replace this with God-directed thanksgiving.

Sentence 40 (5:5) For know this, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man (who is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

It is not only true that fornication and uncleanness are not part of the Christian life, but people who practice such things will obtain nothing (no inheritance) in the Christian life. There is nothing for them. Note that covetousness (strong desire for something someone else is or has) is a form of idolatry (Col 3:5). The Christian life is not only about being moral; it is about receiving something from God. It is about being placed in the heavenlies. We have an inheritance in Christ made real (made substance) by the Holy Spirit, who is the administrator of what God offers and promises (1Cor 12:7).

Sentence 41 (5:6) Let no one deceive you with empty words for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

People can have fancy ways of defending their invented moralities which are based upon their experience and perception of the culture (perceived needs). Christian morality is already formed for us to walk in. The bottom line is the judgement of God when He hands the morally inventive over to the consequences of their own behaviour (Rom 1:24, 26, 28).

Sentence 42 (5:7) Therefore do not be partakers with them.

If you share their sins then you share their fate.

Sentence 43 (5:8a) For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

This expresses the change that is brought about in the Christian's life. We move from darkness to light; from no vision to real

vision; from no hope to true hope; from invented (contrived) purpose to God-given (eternal) purpose.

Sentence 44 (5:8b-10) Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth) proving what is well-pleasing to the Lord.

The child of light exposes what is in darkness. Spirit fruits are (turn on) lights in the darkness. Men love darkness because their deeds are evil (John 3:19-21). With the fruit of the Spirit in our lives we can discern and test what is the will of God. In this way we prove (test, validate) the will of God (Rom 12:2). We want to know the will of God before we are in the will of God. The will of God is not cheap information. It will cost you. It will cost you your life.

Sentence 45 (5:11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them.

We are not to persist in the company of the licentious, the lewd or the immoral. We may have a ministry to them but not a fellowship with them. The heart of Jesus was to rescue the perishing and not let them persist in their perishing behaviours.

Sentence 46 (5:12) For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them is secret.

Christian morality is public and open to the light. Genuine Christian behaviour can stand any test although it may still be persecuted (1Pet 4:12-19).

Sentence 47 (5:13) But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

Light exposes whether we like it or not. The Christian (who is light) in a dark environment will automatically expose what is going on. They cannot help it: light exposes. This may well cause embarrassment and difficulty. The Christian needs to be truly right (righteous) and ready to suffer if that be the will of God.

Sentence 48 (5:14) Therefore He says 'Awake you who sleep / Arise from the dead / And Christ will give you light'.

This is the call to the believer. This call has scriptural antecedents (Is 26:19, 60:1). The call of God is to arise from death, morbidity and inconsequence and to become light wherever you are. People may want light yet resent it.

Sentence 49 (5:15-16) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as unwise (fools) but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Be careful how you walk, showing the presence of wisdom not the lack of wisdom. You can get wisdom if you ask for it (James 1:5-8). Redeeming the time is rescuing time from loss or misapplication. Our time is finite. Lord, teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Ps 90:12).

Sentence 50 (5:17) Therefore do not be unwise (mindless), but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Do not be wilfully ignorant, ignoring the truth of the Way and what God is showing us. To be told that we should understand the way of the Lord implies that we can know the will of God. God is not mocking us and setting us some impossible task. The will of God can be known clearly. The will of God is not impossible but it is demanding. We cavil (frivolously object) at its demands because the will of God goes to the root of our being and to the core issue of who runs our life or who we think knows best.

Sentence 51 (5:18-21) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to

God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Dissipation is wastefulness, profligacy, prodigality (living like a prodigal). Consuming alcohol is a context for waste. By comparison, we need to be filled with another Spirit - the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages singing: Christians sing. The Spirit creates a song space and we are to make a melody in our heart to the Lord as we speak to each other graciously and with the themes of spiritual insight. We are to give thanks to God for all things (not only in all things). This is very strong teaching of the providence of God in whatever happens to us. We will not be tempted beyond our capacity to stand (1Cor 10:13). But, in our pain, we can walk away from God's path for us. That path is the way indicated (implied) by our obedience to the perceived will of God. We must submit to one another in (under) the fear of God.

Sentence 52 (5:22) Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. [Point 1 of 2 for wives]

This is the beginning of Paul's great passage on the nature of Christian marriage. (One may also argue that it begins with verse 21.) The wife is to submit to her husband even as she submits to the Lord. Submission to a man is a woman's great power with a man. (Notice Paul says that the wife is to submit to her own husband, not someone else's which creates great mischief.) The wife can submit because she is already submitted to God.

Sentence 53 (5:23) For the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body.

The headship of the husband is spiritual and Paul is not just speaking about spiritual husbands. This is a universal man-woman thing. Sometimes this submission can be exploited by men and rebelled against by women. Paul seeks to model the relationship between husband and wife on the relationship between Christ and the church (although the church is not the bride of Christ, Rev 21:9-10). Paul will argue that even as Christ is the saviour of the body (church) the husband delivers his wife.

Sentence 54 (5:24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in all things.

Is the church subject to Christ? This is a sign of how difficult but blessed this submission is. The wife is to submit to her husband in everything. The temptation (un-blessing) is not to submit.

Sentence 55 (5:25-27) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. [Point 1 of 15 for husbands]

This is the key to the marriage: the husband's love for his wife. Without this love the marriage will not work and the wife has nothing to submit to, as to the Lord. Christ gave Himself for His church. The husband gives himself for his wife to present to himself a woman without spot, wrinkle or spiritual blemish. Husband love creates wife holiness.

Sentence 56 (5:28) So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

This husband love of the wife is so deep that it is a form of self regard for the husband. The husband who loves his wife actually loves himself. By implication, the husband who hates (divorces) his wife hates (divorces) himself.

Sentence 57 (5:29) For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

Only the deranged gnaw at their own flesh. Just as it is natural to regard one's own flesh, the husband naturally regards (nourishes and cherishes) the body (flesh) of his wife. The example, as always, is Jesus Christ and His love for His church.

Sentence 58 (5:30) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

This is driving home the analogy between husband/wife and Christ/church even further. Paul is very keen on seeing the church as a functioning body working fully in all its parts. The human body is a very general purpose thing splendidly made (Ps 8; 139:13-16).

Sentence 59 (5:31) 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.' (Gen 2:24)

This is a quote from Genesis, the Book of Beginnings, where it is explained that the woman is the companion to the man.

Sentence 60 (5:32) This is a great mystery, but I speak of Christ and the church.

The union of a man and a woman is a great mystery. Paul's teaching of Christian marriage retains and deepens that mystery created by God, by likening the marriage relationship to Christ and the church. The mystery is understandable when the hidden is revealed. It is not of itself ultimately incomprehensible. This is a very high doctrine of marriage. May we Christian 'marrieds' be worthy of it.

Sentence 61 (5:33) Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects (fears, reveres) her husband.

This is the summary statement: let the husband love the wife, let the wife respect the husband. In the first instance, the marriage is driven and only made possible by the husband's love of his wife. In the next instance, the wife responds to that love with respect, fear, reverence and dependence.