

Ephesians 5:3–7

" Fighting Sexual Sin, and All Sin, by Thankfulness and Reverence to God"

The dear children of God ought not look like (and don't look like) the sons of disobedience. Those who are forgiven begin to think and speak and act in the way that is fitting for saints. And thanksgiving is a most fitting way of thinking and speaking, which thanksgiving also combats fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness.

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Ephesians chapter 5.

Fusion chapter 5 our portion this afternoon is verses 3 through 7. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven how we thank you that? You have given us in your word not just a description of what Jesus has done for us. But of what you by your spirit do in us.

By the Lord Jesus. And we thank you for those places like this one. Were you not only tell us what not to do? But what it is by which you accomplish it. In in our lives we pray for the help of your spirit as we continue consider this portion of your word that this would be what you bless to work in us according to the mind life character of our Lord Jesus.

So that he will be glorified by what you produces in us as we walk. We ask him his name. Amen. If he's in chapter 5 verses 3 through 7, these are God's words. But fornication. And all uncleanness. Or covetousness. Let it not even be named. Among you. As is fitting for the saints.

Neither. Filthiness nor foolish talking nor course suggesting. Which are not fitting. But rather giving a thanks. For this, you know, That no fornicator. Unclean person. Nor covetous man, who is an idolater. Has any inheritance. In the kingdom of Christ. And God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things. The wrath of God comes upon the sons. Of disobedience.

Therefore, do not be partakers. With them.

So far God's inspired and. Inherent word.

There's a command in verse six. Let no one deceive you. With empty words.

Therefore, it should not be surprising to us that not just in the first century in Ephesus. Where the apostle had given this morning but in all of the ages of the church since then and in our age. That there are men who speak empty words. They speak empty words about an empty grace.

About a mythical creature that doesn't exist. Someone who has been forgiven by faith in Jesus, but not at all changed. By the Jesus in whom they believe.

We hear this sadly even in reform Presbyterian circles today. From those who use phrases like. Gay Christian or homosexual Christian.

But God has given believers in Jesus Christ and new identity. There are no longer as the scripture says in verse 6 sons of disobedience or has he said earlier in the letter by nature children of rap. New nature in Jesus Christ. And as they continue their battle against sin, one of their great encouragements.

Is that sin is no longer their nature. It is a remnant from their former nature. And we are engaged in mortal combat with that remaining sin and sometimes it feels like you're losing but praise God what he says and what he has planned is more determinative than how it feels.

At any given moment. And one of the places where? Many even who are believers often feel like they are losing is what the passage starts at with but. Fornication. And we had this in family worship a couple of days ago and yes our family gets through the hopeful at home just like many of yours and we're trying to get our children through the Word of God with teaching and application systematically persistently one of the blessings of it is that the Word of God covers everything so if you just go straight through the word doesn't let you out of talking about certain things.

And especially if you're reading to your children and explaining to your children, they don't let you out of. Explain certain things either. So we had a little hand raise in our house and our supper table this week and a little mouth asked. What is sexuality? Because I had explained fornication using that great big word.

And sexuality comes from the idea that God made two different sexes. When he created them he created the male and female he created them to be able to come together in a covenant of marriage that would display to every age the glory of how Jesus loves and leads his church and how his church learns to and is made by his spirit to love and be led by submit to the Lord Jesus.

There are many wonderful things about marriage, but we are soul and bodies so he made man's boys bodies different than girls. Bodies than women's bodies, so that in marriage. When the two come together even physically. They are able to enjoy and express the beauty of how God has designed marriage and marriage is therefore one of the most wonderful things.

Because it imitates it's a picture that God built into us and into our relationship and even into our body. Of Christ in the church. And it is not surprising. That Satan would want to attack that. That he would not want marriage and the marriage bed to be held in honor as a serious and weighty an important thing to be guarded not to be joked about not to be trifled with.

And absolutely to be kept undefiled. That cleanliness in this area is extremely important. In fact, you have this. Descending description in verse 3 but fornication, which is to.

To even think about the word there is one you may have heard the word pornography and the Greek word is the word from which we get that English word but even to think about or especially to end up acting upon God's design for a man of life. Without being.

Man and wife. But not just fornication, but all uncleanness. Anything that tends towards it and even. Covetousness. Desiring differently for yourself. Then God has given you rightly at the moment which of course he goes on to say in verse five when he's repeating this that if these things are not things that you are fighting against but are still your nature you are not saved.

So no fornicator somebody who fornicates but doesn't. Isn't in battle against it or unclean person or covetous man, who is what who is an idolater? Why is desiring differently than God has

decided to give you commenting why does that make you an idolater because you're saying at the very least that you would do a better job being God than God has done.

God is God and I have this life and this calling and I live in this place and I have this weather today and I have this in front of me for lunch. But if I were God then I would have had that job and I would have lived in that place and I would have had that leather and a certainly wouldn't have had this for lunch.

And so either I or some idol that I would worship instead because it ostensibly hopefully would give me what I want instead of the true God who has given me what is wise and good and right so you see how covetousness is idolatry. And you see how that covetousness that tenth commandment in that first commandment together, you shall have no other gods before me really, that's the root.

Of self-indulgence. I'm gonna live for myself instead to please myself and I will assign myself more than what God has given me. I'm gonna decide to have more than I know is wise because I will live by my own wisdom instead of by God's wisdom. I will decide to have even what is not right.

And. All self-indulgence tends that way.

But what struck me as I was preparing to teach this to my family and in the devotional and to proclaim it to you this afternoon was what is fitting? In verses 3 through 8 this this week, we've got those whom God hadn't saved. They don't care what's fitting. Those whom God has saved.

He's sent us apart. He's called us saints. He is saved us so that we would be holy we care what's fitting. And so everything you think and everything you say and everything you do there's a question. Am I doing this because it is fitting or do I not care what it's doing?

And so he says don't even let those other things be named among you don't ever speak in such a way that would tend towards not only tend towards fornication but even ten towards uncleanness or tend towards covetousness let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints, but what is fitting?

Well, not filthiness verse four. King Norcourse Justin which are not fitting. You see it there at the end of four. But rather giving of thanks. If you're thankful for that lunch that Mama just put in front of you. You can't be thankful for it and wishing at the same time that it was something else.

Your daddy and mommy have hopefully talked you to say, thank you mama. The Holy Spirit who gives you faith in Jesus and conforms you to His image. He teaches your heart to say, thank you. Jesus. And you're not suddenly going to be wishing it was something else. We're having this problem aren't we as we try to think about keeping the Lord's day?

That was heart and parcel the letter the lesson this morning. You presuppose the goodness of God you presuppose the goodness of his commands you presuppose that he doesn't get some weird pleasure out of our being miserable and reward us for how miserable we're able to make ourselves, maybe bonus points if you can make others miserable too.

But you give thanks for the day and you give thanks for the duties of the day and you give thanks for what he says he's willing to it's very hard to be thankful for the day and at the same time. I wish that it was some other way. This is what defeats self-indulgence.

I grew up thinking that the fruit of the spirit that was self-controlled. Would be the key to defeating self-indulgence. Whether in food or drink or entertainment, or even some of these more enslaving things that he is describing in our passage here. And self-control is very important and it's a fruit of the spirit is actually really scripture control and spirit control.

But what we see here is that there's a part of the fruit that's way further up the list. The love of God, first of all, if you love me you'll keep my commandments and that's the one that I kind of learned to focus on more or foster love for God and that's going to help me hate my sin and we're going to win the battle out of love for God and that's true, that's part of it.

Did you know that joy? Is designed by God to argue against self-indulgence of any kind and especially sin and this area of sexuality. That it is the continual mental habit of thanksgiving to God that rules out excludes covetousness because you can't be thankful to God for the rain and grumbling at it at the same time and you can't be thankful to God for your job and grumbling about it at the same time and you can't be thankful to God that you live in California.

They could almost have a full stop but it is God's goodness and wisdom that isn't signed to many of his saints to live in California and there to be thankful to God for his province and that and they can't grumble against it. They're the same time.

Takes a lot of grace to live in California.

But it is thankfulness to God that I am not married yet. Thankfulness that He knows whether it is wise if I ever will be. Thankful that he has designed for me to be in the season of life with a particular joys in a particular pleasure. But thankful most of all.

That God is mine. That I'm not a son of disobedience. Because that phrase sons of disobedience and our passage this morning it comes in the context of verse 1, doesn't it? As beloved children. That whenever else you're thankful for from your father. That that's part of being thankful that you are your fathers.

Daughter. Son. And therefore if you're thankful that you are not a son of disobedience you're thankful that you're a dear children you're thankful that you have been assigned to be an imitator of God you're thankful that you have a perfect elder brother who has given himself for you and showed you what love for the father offering yourself as a living sacrifice and view of God's mercy and how that expresses itself and loving others.

And that's an assignment for our conversations, isn't it? Because so far we've been thinking about and talking about the thankful heart, which is the heart of the matter was very specifically in the context of speaking. Here in verse 4. I am sure that many of you can remember. Being in conversations or somebody said something filthy.

Maybe you even felt more embarrassed of not laughing. Before them than you felt embarrassed before God. To have been in that conversation. God help us like we saw in Genesis 34 this morning God help us be more aware of what we look like before him so that we won't be embarrassed when we don't laugh.

In fact, we'll try not to be in conversation like that again. Nor foolish talking. Nor of course jesting. You know, people like to joke around about she likes him and he likes her. Older people like to joke around about things that people that like each other do. But that connection between a man and a woman where God joins one to the other until death do them part in a covenant from him that is something sacred and weighty and it is not for joking around.

And being silly about. Because then you learn to take such a bond lightly and to take such a connection lightly. And we take things lightly we don't honor them. And so there's that third commandment treating God and the things in which he is especially made his image to show in us treating him as waiting and not something to be joked about and there's that first commandment of being glad that he's God and continually being thankful and maybe having more of our conversations about that.

I'm so thankful for this that I see in US as I say for this that I heard in the sermon. I'm so thankful for this that that mommy or daddy did for me this week. And talking about things in such a way that knows you have a brother or sister that has to fight the self-indulgence that remains from their former nature.

And that thankfulness is God's weapon against it. So you're planning now and and building the skill of how to have conversations with one another in which each of you is stirring the others up to thankfulness. So that we can help each other maintain that mindset of gratitude. That will defeat self-indulgence.

And so we'll be thinking about the words that we put out. Is that one fitting? Is that a fitting word or is it a foolish word. Or may the Lord conform us to the image of his perfect, son. Our Lord Jesus as we know he is promised that he will.

A man was praying. Our Father in heaven when we realized. How serious a? Spiritual danger and harmful thing dangerous and harmful thing unthankfulness is. We come before you humiliated. Discouraged. Because we do not tend towards thankfulness nearly as we all. But we thank you for showing that to us in your word, we thank you for your son our Lord Jesus who could go 40 days without eating.

And still be thankful that he had all that time to be fed by every word that proceeded from your mouth because you were his father. As a lead come to you clinging to him that that perfect righteousness of his would be credited to us and also clinging to him that your spirit would produce in us even our savior's thankfulness.

So that we would thereby be enabled to live for his lives of response in love and joy and service to you and in love for our neighbor as well. We're grateful to you for bringing us through a portion of your word and a topic that.

We tend to shrink from thinking about talking about. And we're grateful for the way that you treat it here so that it would keep us on track of a right way of thinking and talking about it. Lord, I pray for these children here. Lord if any of them are already.

Being harmed during slaved by. This sin have mercy in them produce the thankfulness antidote. Enable them to get help from their parents or their elders. So that the secrecy of it will keep them enslaved. And Lord for any others. We pray that you had grants to them to recognize the greatness of the danger.

And to stay as far away as they can and to immunize themselves against it with thankfulness unto you. But being grateful for their dinner are grateful for your providence and the weather being grateful to you for Christ being grateful to be your child all the time. That you would form such a heart and mind in them.

To strengthen them against the power that such sin can wield don't let them ever come under it we ask. We're asking Jesus name.