

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 5:1

Message 78

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INTRO: Last message Oct. 6 I want to begin on Ephesians 5. We took a break for a few months and now pick up again. Let me begin by showing you where we are as I outline this book. Chapter 1:1-2 is an introduction to the letter.

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

There are two main points to the book. I called the first section, chapters 1-3, *The Wonderful Work of Salvation*. Paul deals with a lot of doctrinal things related to salvation. He tells us about God's election before the foundation of the world. He tells us the salvation God worked in Christ. Then he tells us what we were like before we got saved in chapter 2 and how God delivers the believer out of his sinful state. He tells us how God brought about the Church and how Jews and Gentiles become one body in Christ. He tells us all about the mystery of the Church and how things are the way they are now. For some 2,000 years this church has been in operation, and we believe that very soon the time of the Church will be over and the Lord will catch the Church up to heaven.

That is from 1:3-3:21. The second major section deals with the duties of the Christian and I have called it "The Worthy Walk of the Saved." It starts at 4:1 and goes through chapter 6.

II. THE WONDERFUL WORK OF SALVATION (1:3-3:21)

Then in chapter 4 Paul begins to tell the Ephesian believers how to live their lives. From this we learn how we should live. So look at 4:1-3:

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

III. THE WORTHY WALK OF THE SAVED (4:1-6:24)

I outlined this chapter under two points. Verses 1-16 instruct us to walk worthy of our calling.

A. Walk Worthy Of Your Calling (4:1-16)

Verses 17-32 instruct us not to walk like other Gentiles walk. So look at verses 25-32 to see where we ended off in the previous messages:

25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

27 nor give place to the devil.

28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

B. Walk Not Like The Gentiles (4:17-32)

Chapter 5:1-14 will instruct the Christian on how to follow God and walk in love. Then 5:15-33 will give instruction on how to walk circumspectly. We are at 5:1-14, which I have called, "Walk in Love." So look at 5:1-2:

1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

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.

You will note there are two commands. The first is that the Christian is to be a follower or imitator of God. The second is to walk in love. When you outline a book you seek to find the thought flow of the writer. This is preliminary work to preaching. It is a very demanding exercise. Lloyd Jones says, "It would be interesting, from the mere standpoint of mechanics, to know whether this injunction belongs to the previous section or the Epistle or to the one that follows. Frankly, I cannot make up my mind, I really believe it belongs to both" (291).

Well, I see it as more important than mere mechanics. When it says, "Therefore..." it is related to what has preceded. But it is now pointing forward as well and that is that the Christian is to be a follower of God. The KJV has verses 1-2 as one sentence. The NKJV has it as two. This makes a difference as well and I know of no rules that tell one which is correct.

I think that the first command closes the previous section, and the second begins the new. That is only an opinion. So I give it in the outline as the twofold command. All of this is by way of introduction to chapter 5 and we begin with the first of two positive commands. Paul says, "Be followers of God."

C. Walk In Love (5:1-14)

1. The twofold command (5:1-5)

a. Positively

1) Be followers of God

Listen to Jones, "Here in this new chapter we come to what is perhaps Paul's supreme argument, to the highest level of all in doctrine and in practice, to the ultimate ideal. There is nothing possible beyond this. This is the highest statement of Christian doctrine that one can conceive of or even imagine. It is really staggering, it is almost incredible; but here it is. 'By ye followers of God!'" (291).

Jesus said in Matthew 5:48, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." There are times when I wonder, are my expectations of Christians too high? Am I realistic? Can Christians live the way I expect they should? Then when I read statements like this I say, "God's expectations of Christians are high."

Now the word translated "followers" in our verse is *mimeetai*. We get our word *mimic* from this word. We are to be mimickers of God. We are to imitate Him. And I ask, is it possible to obey such a command? Can man attain such a level of spirituality? Is this command not beyond reach? Is this not a major exaggeration? We know the answer to that. God does not give outlandish commands nor does He exaggerate. Our problem is explaining how obeying such commands is possible. Well, it is possible and there is a way.

Turn now to 1 Corinthians 11. It is said by some, and I agree, that verse 1 of this chapter belongs to that which went before, not that which follows. Paul has just instructed them on not offending others. Then 11:1 the KJV says:

1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Paul instructs his hearers to follow him as he follows Christ. The same word as our text has is used here. So the NKJV says:

1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

And Jesus said this in John 5:19:

19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."

Paul followed Christ and Christ followed God. Dads should be able to say to their children, "Imitate me as I imitate the Scriptures." Pastors should be able to say that to the people they preach to. Dads should follow Christ. Pastors should follow Christ.

So I ask this question: Why did Paul not say, "Follow me as I follow Christ?" Or, "Follow Christ?" Why did he say, "Be followers of God?" In 4:17-18 he tells us not to walk like other Gentiles walk and he describes how the Gentiles walk. We have looked at all that. Then in verse 20 he says, "You have not so learned Christ!" And then he teaches us to put off the old man and put on the new man.

So let us look at the reason why Paul gives this command here. Paul has some particular area in mind here. The immediate context tells us why he instructed believers to be followers of God. Look at the last verse before our text which is Ephesians 4:32. It says:

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

When Paul instructs the believer to be a follower of God, from the context, the closest connection is to how God forgives. Paul has just explained how God forgives. It is, "...just as God in Christ forgave you." Then he says, "Be followers of God." So what is most closely in view is God's forgiveness of the believer. In the explanation of the online bible, the command has been to forgive one another "kathos," according as, or just as, or even as, or in proportion as, or in the degree that God in Christ forgave us.

So the sum of the command here is to forgive in the same way God forgave us. So we must ask, just how does God forgive us? There is really no greater thing than to have one's sins forgiven. And

who forgives us? It is not Paul. It is not Jesus. It is God! That is why he says, "Be followers of God." It is in this example of forgiveness. And how does God forgive us? Just as soon as we sin, He automatically forgives us, right? As a matter of fact, just like David Jeremiah forgives people in the morning before they sin, God forgives us, right?

It is amazing what views Christians have on forgiveness. You read it in books and in articles and hear it in messages: Forgive. Forgive unconditionally. So you have been abused by a family member; the man we met in Egypt saw his sister butchered; and what is the teaching? Forgive! Our passage will teach us how.

Now look at how instructive our passage is. We are to forgive, "...just as God in Christ forgave us." It is some time ago that I spoke on the last verse in chapter 4. Let me just refresh your minds. The word translated 'forgiveness' here is not the usual word for forgiveness. It is charizomai, which has the root word 'grace.' Forgiveness is to grace someone. The stress this brings to the word is that forgiveness is given freely. That does not mean it is unconditional, but it is granted freely. All of this was covered in the previous message.

So our question is: How does God forgive? Well, God forgives us in Christ. Over my life span I have heard and read of some who have been sinned against in a most horrible manner. And they are instructed, "You must forgive." And the ground on which this instruction is given is, "If you do not forgive you will become bitter." And I dare say there are many who say they have forgiven, but they have not. When the matter is brought up, there it raises its head once more. They are asked

to do something God Almighty Himself cannot do. But because other Christians claim to have done this and it seems they are now victorious, those have been sinned against now seek victory over the pain by following this instruction. Impossible burdens are laid on some such suffering souls.

If we are to be followers of God, and we forgive like He does, how then do we forgive? Well, how does God forgive? Does God forgive without repentance? The answer is a resound, "No!" He would become unjust if He did so. That has never happened and it never will.

Some who listen to this message will say, "Well, what you are saying is very unscriptural." I will not deal with this subject here in detail so I recommend to you our messages on sermonaudio.com/mecl titles, "Forgiveness: Will that be One Goat or Two?"

Let me just give a few brief Scriptures. First, Luke 17:3-4:

3 *"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.*

4 *"And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*

The instruction there is very plain and it has special reference to sin that takes place between believers. What we seek to avoid in the worst way is the instruction in this passage to rebuke a believer when they sin against us. We much rather pretend to forgive and if we have forgiven, then of course, we don't have to rebuke. Anyone wishing further instruction on just how to do that could read Matthew 18:15-17.

So you might say, "Ok, that is between believers. But an unbeliever has horribly sinned against me. What do I do now?" Now you go to Romans

12:19-20 which says:

19 *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

20 *Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."*

When an unbeliever sins against us the first thing we need to know is that vengeance does not belong to us. But the next thing we should know is that God will take revenge on that person. Unless that person comes to repentance God will fully vindicate the one who has been wronged. He will do it in His time and in His way but He will do it. You can rest assured in that. And when it says, "...give place to wrath..." it means to make room for God's wrath. You can hand a situation like this into the hands of God and you can rest assured that God will deal with this. He will. He said, "I will repay." God keeps His promises.

So when we become bitter, it is not because we have not forgiven. It is because we have not handled such a case the way the Bible instructs.

The teaching that forgiveness must be extended immediately when one is sinned against is so widespread and so strong that I want to very briefly deal with one other objection. Someone uninstructed in this matter who listens to this message will say, "But Jesus forgave those who crucified Him while they were doing it!" Let me briefly read the passage referred to by such arguments. Here is what Luke 23:32-34 says:

32 *There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death.*

33 *And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there*

they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

34 *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.*

The very first thing we need to note is that He did not say, "Father, I forgive them." That is what most think He said, but He did not. Second, when He made reference to, "them," of whom was He speaking? Was He speaking of the Jewish leaders who brought Him to Annas and Caiaphas? Was He speaking of those who brought Him to Pilate? Was He speaking of Pilate, who delivered Him to be crucified? Was He speaking of Herod? These were the ones responsible for the crucifixion. No, none of them were there when Jesus said, "Father, forgiven them."

Now those men I just mentioned, did they not know what they were doing? Or did they know what they were doing? They knew what they were doing. They desired to have an innocent person crucified. The Jewish leaders knew that. They had to make up things that were not true in order to deliver Him to Pilate. Did Pilate know what he was doing? Yes. He said that for envy the Jews had delivered Jesus to him. But Pilate's political interests were higher than his interest in following truth.

So we ask, who was it that did not know what they were doing? Well, the soldiers who were simply carrying out orders. They crucified people all the time. They had no idea who was being crucified and the reasons behind it. They simply followed orders as they always did.

Third, Jesus asked God to forgive them because they did not know what they were doing. Did God forgive them? Well, it does not say He did. Yet reading

this we say, "Well, Jesus forgave those who crucified Him." But there is not one word of that in the text.

Again, if someone wishes more on this, I mentioned the messages in which we deal with this at length.

We have considered then the word, "Therefore, be imitators of God." The reason Paul calls us to be imitators of God here is because he is continuing the idea of how God forgives in the previous verse.

Paul's point is not that we forgive like he, the Apostle Paul forgives, or that we forgive like Christ forgives, but that we forgive like God does. In this we are to mimic Him.

That brings us to the last words of this command, "Be followers of God..." and here are those last words, "...as dear children." We have been told in what particular thing we are to be followers of God and in the words, "...as dear children" we are told how to follow God.

Now the words, "...as dear children..." are adverbial. An adverb answers various questions such as where, why, when or how. Jones takes these words as answering the question why, and there may be some point to that. He says, "But why are we to be imitators of God? Why are we in these respects to be in our daily lives *as God is*? It is first and foremost because we are God's children. 'Be ye therefore imitators...as dear children. Here once more we enter into a realm that is altogether different from what the world knows, and again the Apostle's argument compels me to repeat what I have often emphasized; I mean the essential difference between Christianity and mere morality. Some of the most unchristian people in the world today are men and women who are living upright and moral lives and are satisfied with themselves and think that

that that is the acme. That, I say, is the opposite of Christianity, it is goodness for the sake of goodness. They are very good people, I know, but the Apostle's teaching is a thing about which they know nothing at all. It is because we are children of God that we are to refrain from some things and to do others" (293-4).

Believers are children of God. John 1:12-13 says this of the believer:

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Now consider that if we are born of God, then we are children of God. And if we are children of God, then we are part of the family of God. And so we sing, "I'm so glad, I'm a part of the family of God." Then consider, if we are part of the family of God, then it should be evident from how we live that we are part of that family.

Now consider what shame we bring on God others see us living in sin and we claim to be Christians. What does it do to a Christian mother or father, when their children live in sin? It brings great shame on them.

So the phrase, "as dear children," indicates that believers are part of the family of God. Therefore we should be followers of God. All that is true. But I think the phrase, that we are to be followers of God, "...as dear children" better answers the question, *how*. How are we to be followers of God? As dear children.

Now the word translated "dear" comes from the word *agapee*. We are to follow God as beloved children. I

want to expand this section a little to add to what I gave in the concluding message on grace, mercy, and Love. When I dealt with love I asked you to find Scriptures on whether God loves the world, present tense. I have spent many hours after that studying that question and numerous others related to it. I have concluded that God both has and does love the world present tense. But His love for the lost is all wrapped up in what He did in Christ 2,000 years ago. I have come to believe that no unbeliever experiences the love of God, present tense.

Because of the questions that were generated in my mind in those studies on grace, mercy and love, I will cover the next two messages in greater detail because I did so much extra study. Without those questions that came from my earlier studies, I would not have come to some of these further insights. At this point I have not yet resolved all my questions. But if you wish to ponder this subject, take out a piece of paper, or open a file on your computer and write down this question: "What does this mean: God loves the world?" Then begin to write all you can think of or read or find from others.

The word 'love' comes up in this verse and in the next one as well. In this verse the word 'dear' comes from the word *agapee*. They are to mimic God "as dear" or "beloved children." How do "beloved children" mimic their fathers? Well, they follow in their father's footsteps.

Now let me remind every parent, whether saved or unsaved. It is most likely that your children will follow you at least to some degree. I spoke to an unsaved man about salvation many years ago. We were driving in a crew cab with about 7 or 8 bush workers and we were part of the crew. I spoke to him about the Lord and in our discussion he said he did not tell his

children what to believe. He insisted that they could make up their own mind. And I said, "Well, your children, when they were still small, did they ever come to a point when they put on your shoes though they were many sizes too big? And did they look up at you in pride"? He said that had happened. I said, "Did you teach them to do that?" He said something like, "No, they just copied me." You see, they mimicked him. That is what dear children do. There we have a huge lesson for all parents. You really don't give them that much choice when you live in sin.

But let us consider now some things from the phrase, "as dear" or "as beloved children." Turn to John's Gospel and chapter 14. John is the preacher of agapee love. Twenty seven times he uses the word in the Gospel of John.

We go first to 14:23:

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

What do "beloved" children do? Well, they obey. They keep the word of their parents. As I pondered God's love for the world I pondered this question: If God loves the lost world, what advantage then is there to keeping His Word? God loves me whether I keep His Word or not. What is special about God loving the believer?

Well, the differences are huge. God's love for sinners runs out. There comes a time when God turns the sinner over to the devil and the devil does as he wishes. Let me take you to a fearful passage. It is found in Luke 12. We are going to begin in verse 13. Verses 13-15 are the setting of the parable we will look at. This setting tells us that Jesus will

now deal with the subject of possessions.
It says:

13 *Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."*

14 *But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"*

15 *And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*

So there we have the setting and here is the parable:

16 *Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.*

17 *"And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'*

18 *"So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.*

19 *'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."'*

20 *"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'*

I may have pointed this out in the past, but when it says, "This night your soul will be required of you," a literal reading is, "This night they will require your soul of you!" Who is they? I cannot see other than it speaks of demons. God has come to the place where He has given up on this man and he has given the devil the right to this soul!

What I am saying is that God's love for sinners runs out. There is a time when it is over. There is even a time when God's love runs out for believers

who insist on living in sin. We saw this verse a while ago. Hosea 9:15, speaking of God's people Israel at that time says:

15 *"All their wickedness is in Gilgal, For there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more..."*

Let me make a correction to the last message I gave on love. To say to someone that God loves them is appropriate. It was pointed out to me that for some, like Muslims, that is important. However, in our North American culture, for the most part, to say God loves you is misunderstood and has largely lost its meaning. Along with that understanding one must see that one's sin, no matter how moral one may be otherwise, is horribly offensive to God and will condemn us to hell if we do not repent. The lost are not God's beloved children.

We have here a most clear verse that refutes the teaching of unconditional love. When sinners insist on sinning, the time comes when God's patience comes to an end. There comes a time when God's love runs out. Let every unbeliever and every believer who is backsliding take note.

Further, there is a huge difference between God's love for the world and His love for true believers who continue to believe. The unbeliever has no relationship of love with God. The believer does. We go back to 14:23 once more to note this difference:

23 *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."*

Think of this now! Anyone who loves Jesus Christ and keeps His word, is one in whom God the Father and

Jesus Christ both enter to make their permanent residence in them! God cannot dwell in the dirty, sinful, tent of the unsaved. It does not matter how moral, how nice, how friendly, how caring an unbeliever is, God finds no dwelling place there.

But when a person truly repents of his or her sin, they get washed in the blood of the Lamb, and they invite Jesus Christ in, Jesus Christ and the Father both enter to make their home there. Ponder that! And these are the beloved children!

So from all that, let me now say this with full conviction: God never turns one who is truly a believer over to the devil for the devil to do as he wishes. If you study Job and 1 Corinthians 5, when God allows the devil access to the believer, God sets the limits as to how far he can go.

But look at our verse now. Here is an amazing difference between God's love for the lost world and His love for the faithful believer. By a faithful believer I mean one that is a believer who keeps on keeping His Word. Look at what this verse says: God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ make their home in this believer. They are beloved children. God and Jesus live in them! This is never true of any unbeliever.

When I pondered this word, "love," I studied the passages that speak of John the Apostle. Five times he is called the disciple whom Jesus loved. Now what word for love do those clauses use? Well, 4 times it uses the word 'agapee' and once the word 'phileo.' So we ask, did He not love all the disciples? Without doubt, He did. So why does it speak of John as the Apostle whom He loved? Does God love some more than others? Is He a respecter of persons? Well, we know He is not.

Consider now verse 21 of this same chapter. It says:

21 *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

We are talking about God's beloved children. Notice now this difference between God's love for the world and His love for His beloved children. God will manifest Himself to His beloved children. That means He will show Himself to them. They will get to see Him from the Scriptures. This manifestation of God is for His dear children.

So I ask you a question: Are there those who study God's Word more than others and obey the Word of God more than others? Of course! Now notice what God does for His "beloved children." He promises here that He will manifest Himself to them. So I ask now, will He manifest Himself more to one who is very diligent in His Word than one who does little with it? Beyond doubt! Faithful believers who are entrusted with great problems get to know God in ways not otherwise possible.

I propose that God's love is proportional to our diligence in His Word and our obedience to it! I also propose that there was something exceptional about the Apostle John's love for the Lord, and that is why he was called the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is not that He did not love the others. It is that His love for John exceeded His love for the others. And the reason for that was because of John's diligence and obedience to the Lord.

So in our verse we are told to follow God as dear children. The disciples were all beloved children, but John's life exceeded that of the others. So

how do you know to what extent someone loves the Lord? Well, it is to that extent that he keeps His Word. I remind you that when Jesus said, *"If anyone loves Me"* it is present tense loving. It means I love Him now and go on loving Him. When the NT speaks of believing on Jesus it is present ongoing believing. And those who do this are loved by God in the way a loving Father loves his obedient child.

Who is responsible for keeping the believer in God's love? Jude 21 instructs us to keep ourselves in the love of God. Well, how do we do that? John 15:10 answers like this:

10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

If we keep His commandments, if we obey the Word of God, we will remain in His love. We continue to be His beloved children. And from that, let me encourage every believer who abides in God's love from Romans 8:38-39. Paul says:

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Once more, here we have a difference between God's love for the world and God's love for the Christian. The world has never entered God's love. They cannot abide in God's love. They have never experienced it. They don't dwell in it. To enter this love, one must repent of one's sins and put one's trust in Christ. This, no one who continues to be an unbeliever has ever done!

But the believer has entered the love of God. He has become a

"beloved" child of God. And as long as he or she continues in this love by continuing to follow God in obedience to His word, here is what Paul says he is persuaded of:

38 *...neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,*

39 *nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I can tell you this without any doubt: If you are truly born again, God loves you with a special love! Why? Because you are His child. You have humbled yourself under the mighty hand of God and have repented of your sins and put your trust in Christ and you live in obedience to Him.

Well, the first command in chapter 5 is, "Be followers of God as dear children." Dear children are beloved children. And I remind us that this command, in particular, from the immediate context, relates to forgiveness. As dear children, we are to follow God.

So how do the beloved children of God walk? They walk in the steps of their Father, and in this case, that is God Almighty Himself. And the particular matter in which they are to mimic God in our text is in forgiveness.

CONCL: Well, we conclude on the command to walk in love as beloved children. What is the difference between God's beloved and God's love for the world? First, the unbeliever has never experienced the love of God. There is no relationship of love between God and the unbeliever. God sent His only Son to die for the unbeliever while he is still an unbeliever in order to bring about such a relationship through repentance and faith.

But the Christian is a child of God. God is his Father. There is a relationship of love. And so, with regard to His beloved He

pours His love out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He gives to the believer (Romans 5:5). They experience the love of God. They become blood bought and blood washed and they are cleansed by God's Word (John 15:3). And when this happens, God the Father and Jesus Christ both move in and make their home in that person. Think of how incredible that is. That is not true of any unbeliever. God cannot enter there. They are filthy inside. It does not matter how morally upright they may appear, they are unclean inside.

And now Paul has exhorted the believer to imitate God as dear children. Paul has told us in chapter 4 not to walk like the Gentiles walk. And now he has told us to be followers of God as dear children. And the very next command he gives is that we should walk in love, and we will look at that, Lord willing, in the next message. May the Lord find us walking like that.