

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 5:3-4

Message 80

Date: Feb. 2/20

INTRO: We have looked at the two-fold command in Ephesians 5:1-2. Love is the theme. We are God's beloved children. We are to follow Him as beloved children. Then we are to walk in love. Walking in love is doing that which seeks to fulfill other people's legitimate need. That need may be financial, physical labor, food, pointing out to them that they are lost, rebuking others when they sin by pointing out that sin and many, many other things. We saw how Jesus did this to those who looked for answers from Him. We saw how He pointed out the failures of the scribes and Pharisees. Unless the lawyer, the rich young ruler and the scribes and Pharisees recognized where they were, they could never get saved. Their first need was to know where they stood with God.

When we tell others God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives and if they accept Jesus then they will have health and wealth, we have helped the devil to keep them in darkness. The greatest legitimate need man has is salvation from sin. Sin is man's problem. Love must recognize that. If we are to walk in love, when we share the Gospel with unbelievers an understanding that they are sinners and lost and going to hell is most crucial. When God sent Jesus into the world and Jesus died for the sin of the world. The whole emphasis of God's love for the world was spiritual, not physical. Man's *lostness* is a spiritual problem, and that problem is sin. Man's legitimate need is salvation from sin.

I have mentioned that lost people have no relationship of love to God. God loved them, that is He provided for their legitimate spiritual need, but they hate God. Very nice, moral, clean looking lost people hate God. The carnal mind, that is the mind of all the lost, is at enmity with God. God is their enemy. Friendship with the world, James 4:4 says, is enmity with God. The next time you speak to a lost person, recognize that enmity, then recognize that that person has one legitimate need, and that is to recognize his or her sinful and lost condition.

But believers have a personal, present tense relationship of love with God. God loves them in a way He can never love an unbeliever. God and Jesus make their home with the believer and God reveals Himself to them in a way unbelievers can never know.

And if we truly love one another, we will seek to fulfill one another's legitimate needs. That is walking in love.

So look now at our text. Verses 1 and 2 are connected by the conjunction 'and.' We have two commands of equal rank. Now look at verse 3. It begins with the contrasting conjunction 'but.' Here we have a new command, and it stands in opposition to what went before. And notice that the command is negative. The two previous commands were positive. They said, "Do this." The following commands are negative, "Don't do this." So we begin with the content of this command.

b. Negatively (3-5)

1) The content (3-4)

The content of the command is this: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints..." And then he continues and adds several other things to it which are filthiness, foolish talking, and course jesting.

How high are God's expectations of Christians? Notice a slight difference in translation from the KJV to the NKJV. The KJV says, "let it not be once named among you." The NKJV says, "Let it not even be named among you." The KJV has interpreted the original word which is better translated 'not even' as 'not once.' It ends up meaning basically the same thing. Both expressions are very strong. Let it never even be heard of among you! How strong is that? How high is the biblical standard?

And what does it mean to not let it be named among us? It means it should never have to be mentioned as happening among believers. Well, surely, followers of God would not do that, or would they? The reason Paul has to talk about it is because it is likely to happen.

Now notice that it is only fitting to have such expectations. It

is fitting that one who is named a Christian should never fall into these sins. And before we move on, let me remind us of something. Paul has entered a society in Ephesus that is very ungodly. There is not a sin listed here that is not as commonplace as eating and drinking are in all societies. The Ephesians lived in these sins! They grew up in these sins. It seems impossible to expect obedience to a command like this in a culture like that of the Ephesians. Is it not almost impossible to expect among us, who have lived in biblical teaching for 500 years?

Take the traditional churches, are these sins not commonplace? Take our liberal churches, are these sins not commonplace there? Is it not almost impossible to expect such standards in the most, godly churches?

Now note the first sin listed. It is fornication. The original word here is *pornia*. As you might be able to tell, we get our word 'pornography' from this word. This is one of the most debated words as regards divorce and remarriage. Here is the major question: Does this word speak of physical immorality on the part of the unmarried, or does it include physical immorality of any kind?

Let me deal with that first, and very briefly. For those who listen to this message online, let me recommend to you our messages on divorce and remarriage on sermonaudio.com/mecl. Let me take you to Matthew 5:31-32: It says:

31 *"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'*

32 *"But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.*

Now note first that the NKJV has followed the modern view that *pornea* is a broad term that covers all kinds of physical immorality. So they have translated the word *pornea* as sexual immorality. I am convinced that that is a wrong translation of the word *pornea*. The KJV, I believe, rightly translates it as *fornication* here and in Ephesians 5 as well. For those who wish to study this further, Matthew 19 deals with the same topic as these verses do.

So, the biggest question is, does the NT use the word *pornea* in a broad sense, or a narrow sense? The broad sense is that it speaks of all kinds of physical immorality and the narrow sense says it is physical immorality on the part of the unmarried.

I believe it speaks of immorality in the narrow sense. If one speaks of this sin as related to the unmarried, it is fornication; if one speaks of this sin with regard to the married, it is adultery.

Let me give one piece of evidence for that. We go to 1 Corinthians 6. Here Paul gives a list of sins, which if a believer is caught in these, he will not inherit the kingdom of God. We begin in verse 9:

9 *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,*

10 *nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

Now notice carefully that *pornea*, fornication, is mentioned separately from adulterers, homosexuals and sodomites. Now those last three terms are physical immorality and if *pornea* is a broad term, it covers these other words as

well. I have mentioned other times that this is like saying: Last year we planted vegetables, carrots, peas, potatoes and cucumbers in our garden. The word vegetables does not fit because it is a broad term.

Now I give that briefly to refute the idea that pornia is a broad term. If ever there has been a day when the instruction of our text is needed, it is today. Today, pornia is taught to little children in many public schools by teaching things unfit to be discussed among adults. Today, our society and public schools are so depraved, it is hard to comprehend that any who call themselves Christians send their children there. The sin most children have experienced by the time they get out of school is incalculable and will damage them for the rest of their lives, even if they repent and live godly lives afterward.

Now I want to give a word on taking a life partner without entering this sin. Go to 1 Thessalonians 4. This was a passage assigned to me in the last year of Greek I took in Bible school. I came to the conclusion that it speaks, not of possessing one's vessel, but taking a wife. I have dealt with this in other messages as well. So let's begin in verse 1:

1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in

sanctification and honor,

5 *not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know
God;*

6 *that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother
in this matter, because the Lord is the
avenger of all such, as we also forewarned
you and testified.*

7 *For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.*

Verse 4 can be translated, "...that each of you should know how to acquire a wife in sanctification and honor." I believe that translation does the most justice to the original language of this passage. Again, I won't take time to make all the explanations as it takes a great amount of time to explain the original wording.

So let me say a word about taking a life partner. Among the Jews in Jesus' day, the parents chose a wife for their sons. The young people did not see each other much during that time. They did not court or date. One article quoting MacClintock and Strong Encyclopedia said boys could get married at 14 and girls at 12. That is the safest method of taking a life partner. Any adult would understand why that was done. However, until they were 21 the marriage had to always be with parent permission.

I have no doubt this is the safest and best method. But in our culture, that would not work. But though it might be the safest method, nowhere does the Bible prescribes it.

Others say courting is the best way. What we call courting is one system of dating. Though courtship is a method of dating, it is so called to distinguish it from the modern unsupervised dating system. How safe this method is depends on the parents. But I would say it

lends itself to much less danger than our usual, unsupervised system of dating. This system is sometimes held out to be the biblical way. But again, the Bible does not prescribe this way either. Also, if you read of the history of the Victorian age, when what we call courtship was the norm, many still lived in fornication.

However, I want to say this, that the modern method of dating is probably the second most dangerous system in taking a wife. The most dangerous is allowing couples to live together to see if they are compatible.

What is the best way? Well, the very best way is prescribed in the Thessalonian passage. It sets out principles, not a set of rules. I believe it belongs to parents to teach purity to their children. Whatever method you choose, choose that which you think will safeguard your children. Then I would advise, don't make the basis of fellowship with other people the method other parents use. Be responsible for your own children.

Further, young men may move out of their parent's home before they are married. Some young women may do that as well. The Thessalonian passage speaks to you in particular. Here is how you should take a life partner. It is to be done in sanctification and honor. Young men, if you are unfaithful here, you are defrauding the girl and her parents. That is fornication. That is a huge sin. Determine to live right. Put everything in place to protect yourself and the young lady you are seeing. You see, our passage says, "Don't even let this sin be named among you." That is a very high standard.

For our young people, may I recommend to you that before this week is over, that you think this over very carefully. Then go by yourself somewhere before God and make a commitment that no

matter how great the temptation that may come before you, you will live a pure life in this matter.

The second sin Paul mentions is uncleanness. The original word is *akatharsia*. I'm glad so many of you know how to check out these words on your computers or phones. Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich in their dictionary say this word means, in its literal sense, refuse or garbage. If you want to know what that means, go to a garbage dump the way it used to be handled. You can smell it from a long way off. There is everything that is waste and such things as the innards of animals or whole animals that have died and they are rotting away and the maggots are having a feast. How different is the life of a true believer who gives off a sweet aroma to God, as our previous verses said!

In our text, this word speaks of actions that are as offensive as the material in a garbage dump. It is used here of things that are in the moral garbage dump. Here you have every kind of immorality. This same dictionary says the word is used in a moral sense and speaks of immorality. It would fit well with our modern word *pornography* only it goes even beyond that. Just like you have filth of every description in a dump, you have filth of every description in a moral sense in this word. It is 'uncleanness.' It is 'filth.' This dictionary says the holiness of 1 Thessalonians 4 is the opposite of this word. You can find this garbage dump all over our internet. As a matter of fact, the internet will stir up this garbage and put it on the sidebar to attract your eyes.

What is the command in our passage? It is to tell us to not let any of this filth be ever named among you. Let me encourage all of us, beware of side-bars on the internet and anything else that does that in us which it should not

do.

The next word Paul mentions is covetousness. Well, what is that? Let me give you the words from which this word comes. The first is *pleion*, which means *more*. That is simple enough. The next word is no more difficult. It is *to have*. So what does it mean? It means 'to have more.' It is this desire to have more that takes over one's life. What do you do when you feel this thing well up inside? Say, "Lord, I have a propensity for this sin. Forgive me for letting any thoughts like this dwell in my mind and then cleanse me by the blood of the Lord Jesus and then help me to stay clean."

Let us look at this sin another way. Look at verse 5. It says that a covetous man is what? An idolater! Colossians 3:5 says:

5 *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

What is covetousness then, it is the desire to have more which takes over and becomes our god. We bow down to it. We give our time to it. We love it. For many, it is their god from Monday through Saturday, and Sunday they go to church. And Paul says, "Don't let it even be named among you!" We must never let secondary issues become primary. This can happen with sports. For many, hockey is their god. They bow down to it. They worship at that shrine. They love it and it becomes their compassion. It can be work or even fishing or hunting. Let it not be once named among you!

Then Paul adds to the words, "...let it not even be named among you..." these words: *as is fitting for saints*. So someone might say, "Well, these are exceptional things and anyone who is a

saint should not be involved in these, but I'm no saint." Well, anyone who is truly a Christian is a saint. So just what are saints? Well, saints are not those who have lived an exemplary life, and then years later they are pronounced as Saint Peter, or saint anybody. Saints are those who have repented of their sins and live their life by faith in Jesus Christ. Saints are not perfected sinners. Saints are sinners who have dealt with sin and deal with sin when it enters. And day by day they live by faith.

Now note, that it is fitting for saints to not once have these things named among them. It is fitting. It is not fitting to lie and cheat and live in immorality for saints. Not even sipping alcohol is for saints! When I read these words my mind immediately went back to a message I did, maybe 20 or more years ago. Turn to Matthew 3. I was speaking on verses 13-15 which is given when Jesus entered the ministry. Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized by him. We begin in verse 13:

13 *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.*

14 *And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"*

15 *But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.*

John did not feel worthy to baptize the Messiah. He said, "I need to be baptized by You, and You are coming to me?" And Jesus said, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." I think sometimes we have made too little of baptism. Jesus said that it was fitting for Him to be baptized. This word 'fitting' is the same as that in our text.

And I remember the illustration I used in that message. It went something like this: Let us say you have become friends with someone. And now it is Christmas time and you invite him to your house for Christmas dinner. And sure enough, at 12 o'clock he is there. He comes in in his logging garb. He has big, dirty boots and he plants himself at the head of the table and says, "Bring it on." How do you like that? Well, we don't like it. Why? Because not one part of that entrance and what followed was fitting. It was not appropriate. Jesus said baptism was appropriate and He Himself did that which was appropriate.

Now you see, fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness are inappropriate for a Christian. It should not even ever be named among Christians. How about shady business deals? How about certain kinds of music? How about the way we talk? How about how we do our job? All of this should be done as is fitting for saints!

You see, all of this is the opposite of following God and living as an offering, a sacrifice that brings a sweet smell to God. He loves having me or you in His presence. It does not smell like the dump. It is an inviting aroma. It is fitting for saints in whom both God and Jesus dwell.

It is also the exact opposite of walking in love. Fornication is selfishness. It takes for oneself what does not belong there. It robs others. Uncleanness is selfishness. It lives in self lust. Covetousness is selfishness. That needs no explanation.

Let me take you to an OT passage to draw a picture for us of what is supposed to happen with such sins. Turn to 1 Samuel 14. Saul had become king of Israel and God now had a task for him.

We begin in verse 1:

1 Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

3 'Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

Well, went to battle and look at verses 7-9:

7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,

11 "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal."

13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."

17 So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?"

18 "Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'

19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

Well, why did Saul not obey? Oh how mankind can justify sin. Anything can be justified, but not anything can be justly justified. Listen to Saul now:

20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 "But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the

best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

Let me put Saul's words like this: "Samuel, you don't understand. We destroyed the bad stuff but we kept the best things. Look Samuel, look at how many offerings we can make as a sweet smelling aroma to God. He will be delighted when He sees what we did." What is Samuel's answer? Verse 22:

22 *Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.*

23 *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."*

So I ask you, why did Saul spare Agag? I wonder if Agag does not picture the self-life. Look at what Saul can brag, leading Agag through the streets to show the maids of Israel he is bigger and better than anyone. He has the king of their enemies alive in the flesh. What should he have done? We go on in verse 24:

24 *Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.*

25 *"Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."*

26 *But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."*

27 *And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge*

of his robe, and it tore.

28 *So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.*

29 *"And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent."*

30 *Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."*

31 *So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.*

Saul had committed a sin a leader cannot commit without consequence. He will lose his kingdom. I want you to see another picture now. Verse 32:

32 *Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."*

33 *But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.*

What do we have here? Here we have a picture of how to deal with sin! Cut it in pieces! Saul let one Amalekite live and one Amalekite killed Saul, or at least claimed he did. Let sin live anywhere and it may end up being our destruction.

So Paul has listed three sins. Then there is a little interlude and Paul says, "...let it not be once named among you as is fitting for saints..." Then Paul continues his list by adding three

more sins. What we have first is the very serious sins. Then follow other, what I might class as lesser sins. Now some question whether sins come in sizes. Some say, "Sin is sin. There is no size." Yes, sin is sin, but some sins are worse than others. So I say, "Would it be bad if somebody murdered one of your family members?" Well, of course, it would be. Then I say, "Would it be worse if somebody murdered them all?" And of course, the answer is also yes.

Now size of sin does not make a difference when it comes to making us come short of the glory of God. But size makes a difference when it comes to consequences, and the evidence is so obvious I think one needs not argue the point.

The first sin in this next section is filthiness. If you trace this word back a little you come to that which is shameful. Now what is shame? Shame is an emotion. One definition I read said, "**Shame** is a painful emotion that responds to a sense of failure to attain some ideal or state. **Shame** encompasses the entire self," end quote. Shame happens when you get caught with your hand in the cookie jar. Shame happens when you do something privately that is not acceptable, and someone inadvertently happens upon you. Shame is when you said something, and then it dawns on you what you said and your face gets all red.

For example, nakedness in public is shameful. We all know it. It is the first recorded emotion Adam and Eve experienced after they sinned, and they did what we all want to do when we are caught in such a situation, we want to run and hide and hope it won't be repeated or remembered.

Sin always wants to tease the borders of sin. So being naked in

public is a shame. So what does sin do? It teases the borders. Fox news is, in modern terms, is a conservative news agency. But they must have in almost every news broadcast at least one woman teasing the borders. And for what? To draw viewers.

What is filthiness? It begins with teasing the borders. It may be in dress or in speech or in actions. And when the teasing has become commonplace, then it goes beyond that and it is doing that which in all other respects should be shameful. For example, dirty jokes. I think as plainly as many preachers preach about certain physical things is borderline shameful if not shameful. And what does it do? It emboldens such speech in front of audiences where it is not proper. What does Paul say? Let it not be even named among you. I have on occasion heard borderline talk among pastors.

The next sin Paul lists is foolish talking. So, just what is that? Well, in the original it is *morologia*. And what is that? Well, the *moro* comes from a word from which we get our word *moron*. What is a moron? Well, a fool. It is one who acts unwisely. It is one who is not prudent. It is one who is silly. The second word is *logia*, meaning a word. So *morologia* is foolish words or foolish talk. It is silly. It is not wise. It is unnecessary words.

You see, we are now not dealing with things like fornication or uncleanness or covetousness. But I would say that these kinds of things will end up bringing about the other sins.

The last word is course jesting. The original word is *eutrapelia*. When I first saw this word I said, "What in the world is the *eu* doing, attached to such a bad word?" When *eu* is attached to a word it speaks of that which is well or good. Well, the second part of

this word is tropee. It may speak in a good sense of witty talk. But when it is used in a bad sense, the translation 'course jesting' would be right. It may be that which is funny and enjoyable, but it is demoralizing.

I think one could safely say that these lesser sins want to lead to the more serious sins. Too much joking, even if it is clean, is not good either.

Now these six sins listed here, are in contrast to how the beloved of God should live. They are to walk in love, as contrasted to these sins. These sins, as contrasted with walking in love are selfish. They all describe selfishness in its sinful forms. And the cure for self is the cross. As Samuel hacked Agag in pieces, so we must do with sin.

And now, in contrast to these sins we have these words at the end of verse for. Rather than living in such sins, there should be a giving of thanks. Let me reason this backwards now. If there is a giving of thanks, we will not be living in such sins. I remember when I was still smoking cigarettes. I'm not sure if I was trying to justify my smoking, or how I came to this, but the Scriptures tell us to give thanks in everything. And it seemed to me that it was fitting to give thanks for cigarettes.

I mentioned the eu being attached to a word earlier. This word, thanksgiving, begins like that as well. It is *eucharisteo*. Here the eu is attached to the word grace. It means to be grateful or thankful and came to mean to give thanks. Would you like to measure the spiritual wellbeing of your soul? You can check it out by how grateful you are. How much thanks do you give?

Many years ago I read a formula for prayer that I use daily. You can remember it from the name of the book

of Acts. The *a* is for adoration. In the early mornings when I pray, I kneel. And I begin with adoration. It usually goes something like this: Lord God of the Bible, I acknowledge you as the only true God. There is no other. You alone are God. I come into your holy presence in the holiest place in existence, the holy of holies in the holy new Jerusalem in heaven.

Many times some attribute will come to mind and I will tell God that He is Almighty or omnipresent and so on. That is the *a*.

The *c* is for confession. Confession of anything that needs confessing but I confess in particular my need for Him for that day and every part of my day. I am insufficient on my own. I need Him and I confess that to Him. Sometimes there may special areas in which I need Him.

And then comes the *t* and it is for thanksgiving. Then I list the things I am thankful for. Oh how crucial thanksgiving is.

And when all that is done, then comes the *s* which stands for supplication. I don't ask God for anything until I have completed the first three letters. It is so easy to enter prayer by asking, but I think that is not the best for us. Once we have entered His presence and acknowledged that we need Him and have thanked Him, then it is appropriate to ask for things.

Oh how clean is thanksgiving! If you study Romans 1, it seems the failure to be thankful is one of the first steps to leaving God. And among the last steps before judgement is what we call LGBT.

CONCL: So we conclude. Oh how godly Christians should live! Maybe this morning some of us need to come before God and say, "I have lowered the bar." Maybe this morning we need to make a

new commitment to live right!

And for our young people, remember the recommendation. Go before God somewhere by yourself and then commit yourself to Him and commit your life to Him to live right in the matters of the sins we have been reminded of. And then do what you committed to.

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 5:5-6

Message 81

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INTRO: We are in Ephesians 5. If you use the outlines, I have give you some of the bigger sections so you can get an idea of where we are. Roman numeral I was a brief introduction. Roman numeral II is the first great section, and it gave us the doctrine. The second great section of Ephesians (Roman numeral 3 in your outlines) teaches the Christian how to walk. That is, it teaches us how to live in the world. Ephesians 4:1 begins this duties section and says we are to walk worthy of the Lord. Then 4:17 says we are not to walk like the unsaved. Now, 5:1-2 tells the beloved of God to walk in love.

The walk in love is contrasted in 5:3-4 with walking in fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and course jesting. Paul says these sins should not even be named among those who profess to be Christians.

So look at our passage. We begin in verse 1:

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.

3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;

4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

5 For...

What follows the word 'for' is the reason Christians should not live in the sins listed in the previous 2 verses. So verses 5 then says:

5 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.

So we want to look at the reason the Christian should not live in sin.

2) The reason (5)

Before we begin on this, let me ask this question: Why should a Christian need to be told to not live in sins such as were given in the previous 2 verses? Should not every Christian know that those who live in such sins have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God? Well, we will see why as we go on.

Here is what Paul says:

5 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.

Why should a Christian be told not to live in these sins if he knows such a person will not inherit the kingdom? It is an amazing thing to observe in life that as soon as something good is started, the seeds of evil are already at work. One would think that someone who is saved out of sin would not later be deceived to enter those sins again. But that is the danger. In Paul's day they had such teachings as the Gnostics. Today we have the OSAS teaching. One branch of this teaching says that though a person lives in such sins, he will still go to heaven. "You see," they say, "once you are a son you can never un-become a son." And then they go on to say that such persons will lose some rewards, but they can never forfeit the kingdom. It is the teaching of some today that Christians who live in sin such sins as listed here will be saved, yet so as by fire. But they will have squandered any rewards they might have received.

To answer that, we go to 1 Corinthians 6. In this passage Paul deals with Christians who take other Christians to law over financial issues. And he told them they were doing wrong and cheating their fellow Christian brothers. Then in verses 9-10 he says this:

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

So how plainly does the Scripture have to teach the truth that Christians cannot live in such sins and still go to heaven? Well, it seems it cannot teach it plainly enough. Our passage says that the Christian who lives in these sins has no inheritance in the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:10 says such persons will not inherit the kingdom of God. And in spite of such passage, still professing Christians twist the words to mean something else.

For a number of years I taught the course I called, "Bible Interpretation." And I came across an illustration of what some do with the Scriptures from a sign on some woodworking shop somewhere. The sign said, "Many fancy twistings and turnings done here."

Now let me ask, what inheritance will believers lose who live in sin? Well, they will lose the inheritance of the kingdom of God. It is not a loss of rewards, it is a loss of the kingdom of God! Turn to

Galatians 5. Here Paul deals with walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh. And he has strong warnings for Christians who persist in sin. By the way, let me remind us that all the passages we are reading are written to believers, not unbelievers. In verses 19-21 Paul says:

- 19 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,*
- 20 *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,*
- 21 *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

How much more plain could the Scriptures speak to the issue of OSAS than that? Now let me ask you, to what length will teachers of the OSAS view go to show that once you are saved you are always saved? Well, go to Matthew 25. In verses 14-30 Jesus gave the parable of talents. One had received 5 talents, another 2, and another had received 1. The one with five made five more. The one with two made two more. And to both of these the Lord said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

But look now at verses 24-30:

- 24 *"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered*

seed.

25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

27 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

28 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Since all three were called "servants" it would not be consistent to say the first two were saved and the last was not. So how do some get the last one saved too? Well, they say that the outer darkness is a place in heaven! It is not as good as other places more godly Christians will inherit, but nevertheless, the weeping and gnashing of teeth takes place in heaven!

Chuck Missler held this view. Some folk from our church went to a David Raegan conference in Texas and they brought me two books I had enquired about. Here they are. They are called, "The Outer Darkness." Well, the outer darkness, they say, is in heaven. These books contain over 1200 8.5 by 11

inch pages of small print.

Yet the Scriptures have very plain statements that do not allow for such a view. Professing Christians who live in the sins listed in the passages we read, and there are others that are not named, will not inherit the kingdom of God. That means they will go to hell. Let every Christian be warned.

Now it is noteworthy in our text that Paul only restates the first three sins he has already spoken of. Does that mean one can live in the next three sins and still inherit the kingdom of God? I would say this of the last three sins, filthiness, foolish talking, and course jesting; that those who get involved in such sins will also be led to these other sins.

What we have here is a very specific warning to Christians to never let any one of these sins to even be named among them. So let me say a word about such sins as cut one short of an inheritance in the kingdom of God. They are sins which are lived in. It happens that some Christians will give themselves to such a sin. If that brings remorse and repentance, such a sin can be forgiven. But at any time when any Christian plays around with any one of these sins, it may be the beginning of a sad end.

God's patience and longsuffering with some people is amazing. But listen to a few verses from Hebrews. Turn to Hebrews 3. The writer warns these believers who are becoming discouraged. Discouragement can lead to letting go. To remain a vibrant Christian is a demanding thing, especially when everything wants to be discouraging. It is in such a case that the writer says:

12 *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*

13 *And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

So to such believers Hebrews 3:12 says:

12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

That can happen. Discouragement can cause us to want to give up. I have no doubt that the devil frequently causes Christians to become discouraged. And then an evil heart of unbelief can creep in. What is an evil heart of unbelief? It is a mind that toys with questioning God. It is a mind that allows discouragement to have a place in one's life and an evil heart of unbelief and wants to cause us to depart from God.

We go now to chapter 6. We begin in verse 4:

4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,*

5 *and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

6 *if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

One could hardly argue that someone who is once enlightened and has tasted the heavenly gift and has been made partaker of the Holy Spirit, and has tasted the good word of God, and has tasted the powers of the age to

come, that they are not born again believers.

If you argue that they are not true believers, then you have to admit that an unbeliever who does not fall away from these things will go to heaven. No, here is a very real danger for believers.

Now we go to Hebrews 10. We go to verse 26:

26 *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

27 *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

28 *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:*

29 *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

We hardly need to comment further. Here is the danger every believer is in who begins to depart from the living God. There remains a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.

Why should the believer avoid fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, and filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting? Here is the answer:

5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

That brings us then to verses 6-10. These verses spell out a danger for the believer with regard to what Paul has said up to this point.

2. The danger (6)

a. The content of this danger (6-10)

Verses 6-10 give us the content of this danger. It says:

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 once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

9 *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

10 *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*

So Paul has said in verse 5: "For this you know, that no person living in these sins will inherit the kingdom of God." So if they knew this already, why did he have to tell them about this again?

Now there is a very serious question before us. Why would Paul say, "Let no one deceive you with empty words"? And then, "Therefore, do not be partakers with them?" Well, the facts are that as soon as the Church was born, Satan raised opposition against it. You can read it from early in the book of Acts and onward. One of the teachings that wanted to creep into the Church was what today is called Gnosticism.

The word "Gnostic" comes from the word *gnosis*, which means *knowledge*. The Gnostics were the people in the know. They were the *intellegencia*. They were not a kind of church, or even a specific

group. There was, I think, no united view among the Gnostics. There were various strains of thought. It is like Calvinism, Arminianism, or OSAS of today. There is no full agreement in any of those camps, but they all have something in common with others who hold the basics of the same view. One thing all Gnostics had in common was the view that they were the knowing ones. They knew what others did not know.

As in our day, secular views want to creep into the Church, so it was in the early Church with Gnosticism. The Gnostics believed that spirit is good and the body is bad. David Cloud says, "Gnostics had two different opinions about how men could become pure. One group tried to deny and mistreat their bodies through fasting, sleeplessness, flagellations, etc. Christians are warned against this in Col. 2:18-32. The other group believed that since their bodies were evil it did not matter how they lived as long as their thoughts were high. These Gnostics lived in sensual pleasure and debauchery. This idea is rebuked in Col. 3..." end quote (Way of Life Encyclopedia pg. 253).

Commentaries do not seem to connect our passage with Gnosticism, but I think it is clearly the case here. Ephesians and Colossians were both written from prison at the same time and the similarities are many.

In brief, this is my take on Gnosticism. They divided man into three classes, according to man's makeup of body, soul, and spirit. Those who are like the body cannot be saved. Those who are like the soul, can receive some purification. Those who are like the spirit are the deepest, the best, the knowledgeable ones who were able to receive the deep mysteries. Since the body is evil, this led some to try to try to do away with all evil desires. It was like the Catholics who lived up on a pole for years or rolled around in thorn bushes to

kill evil desires. The other extreme was that what you did in the body didn't matter. This gave license to all kinds of sin. It is this, I believe Paul is dealing with here.

The effects of Gnosticism on Catholicism from those early years is very evident. But in a sense, its similarities to the extreme view of OSAS are also there. In this teaching, sin does not affect a Christian's standing with God because once a son, always a son; once saved, always saved.

Now I think that Gnosticism or at least some such teaching was creeping into Ephesus. The Colossian church was not that far from Ephesus and here Gnosticism was clearly a problem. And so here is what you then have in church. There are those who profess to be saved. They have come out of the vilest of immorality. Sin is rampant on every hand. Paul has taught them about fornication, covetousness and other sins. He has taught them to avoid such sins. And then Paul gets the news comes that Gnosticism is creeping into the Church. And now some are beginning to accept these heretical teachings. They are taught it simply does not matter what they do in their bodies. They would just needed to tap into this Gnostic teaching and they would realize what you do in the body is of no consequence. It is in the mind, in this knowledge that they can learn to be victorious Christians, while at the same time, following the dictates of the flesh does not matter at all.

So, here is what Paul says:

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Now let me ask, just what kind of words are empty words? Well, let us say you are starving. And a philosopher comes along and says, "If you

will imagine the most delicious meal you could have, and if you believe it enough, soon it will become real, even if you get nothing physical to eat." Well, if you imagined a meal like that, when you are done your tummy is still just as empty as those words were.

But those are not yet the emptiest words you could hear. You see, you could rationally figure out that those words are empty by the fact that your tummy is still empty. But let us say you are told that you can enjoy all the lustful desires you might have and it won't affect your spiritual life with God at all. All you need is this knowledge and you can live the way you want and enjoy all the spiritual blessings at the same time.

But now you can never discover if those words are empty or not until you die, but then it is too late. There is no way of objectively verifying the truth of such teachings. You simply believe it and when you die, you find out too late those were empty words. That is what false teaching is when it comes to the spiritual realm.

Now consider how far we have fallen in society. A man can now say he is a woman, and others feel sorry for the poor guy because he got the wrong body. He is actually a woman. And whoever assigned him a body got messed up. If false teachings in the spiritual realm are empty words, how much worse is believing such things?

So how do you determine what truth is? Well, in the physical realm you do it objectively. It is not hard to verify objectively in the physical realm if one is a man or a woman. But in the spiritual realm, now we are completely at a loss unless we have some divine Word and such a divine word is what we have in the Bible.

So to read our verse once more, it says:

6 *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

So what do empty words do? They deceive! And when one is deceived, one now acts on the basis of words that are empty. One is going down the wrong path when all the while one is thinking it is the right one. But when the path ends one finds out one has followed vain or empty words. And what is at the end of the road our text is speaking of? It is the wrath of God. And what does it do? It comes upon the one who has been deceived.

That brings us now to a new question: what is this wrath of God Paul is speaking about? You may wish to study this word for yourselves. It is my view that whenever it speaks of the wrath that is coming, it speaks of the seven year tribulation and in particular, the last half of the tribulation.

Turn to Matthew 3. You will recall that when John the Baptist preached, the people came and repented. Let me give you one of the big points of his preaching. Daniel had prophesied of seventy weeks to come upon Israel. Sir Robert Anderson's study, which I have found no one to refute yet, concluded many years ago that the 69th week ended the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey and they hailed Him as the Messiah. The 70th week should have begun shortly thereafter, but because Israel refused their King and were going about to have Him crucified, that 70th week was put on hold and it has never happened yet. The history of the 69 weeks is clear. The events of the 70th week have never happened yet.

John the Baptist was preaching just 2 or 3 years before this 70th week was to begin. It depends on how long one sees Jesus ministry to have been. I believe it was just over 2 years. By far the majority believe it was just over 3 years. It all

depends on how one interprets one unnamed feast recorded in the Gospels. In light of that, look now at Matthew 3:7 which says:

7 *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

When John spoke of the wrath to come, he is speaking of the tribulation that should have happened only 2 or 3 years after he was preaching. I believe that is one of the reasons why his preaching was so very urgent. That is then also one of the things that brought great concern to the people and brought them to repentance. Well, what happened was that Israel rejected the Messiah, and that 70th week was set aside and now lies before us. It starts when the tribulation starts.

Now go to the book of Revelation. From chapters 6-19 we have the tribulation. If you want to get a picture of the wrath of God, read these chapters. We'll just read one description. We begin in verse 12:

12 *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

13 *And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.*

14 *Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*

15 *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

There are many very gruesome such passages in this book. To anyone living right now, this wrath can begin at any moment. A believer who lives in sins such as our passage speaks of is in danger of that wrath every moment. And so, in our text now, Paul strongly instructs the Ephesians to never let sin once be named among them and then he says in our verse:

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

If the wrath of God refers to the tribulation, why did Paul not say that because of these things people go to hell? It seems to me from my studies that the Apostle Paul views the catching up of the Church as more imminent than death. That would mean that after the catching up, those who live in such sins will not be caught up but will be plunged into the wrath to come.

So go to 1 Thessalonians for one more passage on this wrath. You see, the Thessalonians were new believers, but Paul has already fully instructed them on the rapture. Both 1 and 2 Thessalonians deal with the rapture a number of times.

So look at 1 Thessalonians 1:10-11:

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

When it says, "...they themselves..." it speaks of other Christians all over Macedonia. And they have heard of the Thessalonian believers, how they repented of their sins and turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. And one other thing that stood out to all those Macedonians is how the Thessalonians were waiting for Christ's return, the Christ who does what? The Christ who delivers us from the wrath to come. That is the wrath we read of in the book of Revelation.

John the Baptist warned the people of Israel about this coming wrath which then lay only 2 or 3 years before them. When the Church began, the time of the Church is given no time span. It is always as coming to an end imminently. It could happen at any time. It is always in order to live in such a way as shows one expects Christ's return at any time. It is good for us to be reminded of this. So let us now read verses 1-6 together:

- 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.*
- 3 *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;*
- 4 *neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*
- 5 *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.*
- 6 *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

No person who lives in fornication; no unclean person; no covetous person has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Because of such sins, the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience.

So we ask, what is this kingdom of Christ and of God? And, when and where do believers receive their inheritance? Turn to 1 Peter 1. And while you do that, let me ask you, are you interested in your inheritance? It is amazing how people on earth fight about their inheritance here on earth. It consumes some people. Is it not amazing how little we make of the believer's inheritance? Look at verse 3 now:

3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4 *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

5 *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

We have been born again to a living hope, to an inheritance. Now look at its description. It is incorruptible. We won't spend time on these but you might wish to ponder them. Then this inheritance is undefiled. It is pure. It is clear. It is clean. And it does not fade away. All of these are contrasts to an earthly inheritance. And then note that it is reserved in heaven. Moth and rust do not corrupt there! It is reserved there. If you are truly born again, in heaven there is a place where the inheritance of believers is preserved! It is protected there! Nobody can get at it but you!

But think of this now. If we should live in the sins such as are listed in this passage, and we do not repent,

the inheritance is lost. Listen to 1 John 1:8:

8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

Now this inheritance is reserved in heaven, but I propose it is experienced on earth! When the Lord Jesus returns to earth to set up the kingdom of God on earth, the Christians in heaven return with Him. This is clearly spoken of in Revelation 19. And I propose that here is the real beginning of taking possession of one's inheritance. Oh, how much do people not do on earth now for position and power! But in this kingdom, the position and power will be incorruptible, it will be clear and clean and pure. It will be to experience privileges beyond compare.

But I propose further that because it is an incorruptible inheritance and it never fades away, that this inheritance will go with the believer into the new heavens and new earth and will remain forever! I ask you, are you interested in your inheritance? Then do what Jesus said. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven!

So where are we? Paul has commanded the Ephesians in this section to be followers of God as beloved children and to walk in love. Then he said, "But..." And then he warned them to never once let certain sins be named among them. Avoid these sins at all cost. No doubt many other sins could have been listed, but these must have been a special problem among those who had let the teaching of Gnosticism creep into their Christianity.

And then he said, "For this you know that no fornicator, no unclean person nor covetous man has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." And now we come to verse 7:

7 *Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

Therefore, for the reasons listed above, Paul now instructs the Ephesians not to become partakers with 'them.' And who is the 'them'? It is the gnostics or whatever group it was that was enticing them with empty words that living in sin was of no consequence. The Charles Stanley type of teaching on OSAS has this same danger. It is as erroneous as Gnosticism in respect to the danger Paul points out here.

In Ephesians 3:6 we find that Gentile believers, which includes us, become partakers with the Jews of the promises of Christ through the Gospel. How unthinkable then that we should become partakers in such vile sins with professing Christians!

Now let me make one more note from the original language. Look at the words, "...do not be..." The verb, "do be" is a present imperative. But it is negated by the word *not*. In the original language there are two words for the negative *not*. Here it is the negative *mee*. When the negative *mee* is used with a present imperative it can be translated as to stop an action already in progress. So Kenneth Weust, a widely known Greek scholar of years ago has made an expanded translation of the Greek NT to give these nuances. And here is how he translated this verse: "Stop therefore becoming joint-partakers with them..."

Why was Paul so concerned in this passage? The Ephesian believers were beginning to do that which would lead them into these sins. It is like when we hear Zoomba dancing or some types of meditation are taking place in our community, or that some are doing Yoga. When we hear that we know where it will lead. And as soon as pastors hear such things they should be preaching to stop those kinds of involvements as soon as they begin.

Today false teachings have taken root in many churches. It began in the Ephesian church too. If such things are not dealt with as soon as they begin, then it creeps further and further. That is the nature of wrong teaching. That was the problem in Ephesus.

In this passage Paul is teaching the Ephesians why they should not live in the sins he has listed. Then he says in verse 5, "For this you know..." and then he goes on to tell them that those who live in these sins will have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

Then he spells out the danger, and we have been looking at the content of this danger. And in verses 8-10 he concludes on the content of this danger like this:

8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

9 *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

10 *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*

Lord willing, we'll look at those words in the next message.

CONCL: Well, Paul has warned the Ephesians to let the gross sins he mentions to not even be named among them. These sins have always been a danger but at no time has temptation be so readily accessible as it is today with the internet. And Paul reminds us that no person living in these sins has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and God.

And then comes this warning, "Let no one deceive you with empty words." What a lot of empty words are preached over many pulpits today. The words, "Once saved always saved," are empty words. First Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." You can't depart from something you never had. The words, "Total depravity," as meant by Calvinism are empty words. You don't have to be one of

the elect in order to repent and believe. Any unbeliever can repent and believe. The words, "You must be born again before you can believe," are empty words. All five TULIP words, when understood as they are meant by Calvinism, are empty words. The prosperity Gospel is empty words. How many words are spoken like this, "If you will only believe, you will be healed of your sickness. Healing is in the atonement." Those are empty words.

The warning for our day is loud and clear, "Let no one deceive you with empty words." And it is because of these things that the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.

