

Whatsoever Ye Do – Ephesians 6:1-11

I. Introduction:

- A. One of our faults and failures as 21st century Christians is our propensity to compartmentalize things.
1. Or as my pastor used to say, our “*proclivity*” – our “*proclivity*” to pigeonhole various aspects of our lives.
 2. A “*proclivity*” is a choice to do something **regularly**; an inclination or predisposition toward something.
 3. We have a “*proclivity*” to put **work** into one box, our **families** into another, our **religion** into a nice fancy box, and perhaps **a few sins** into another perhaps with a lock on it, while we keep the key in our pockets.
 4. For some people, especially those with high stress jobs, compartmentalizing is the only way to cope.
 5. The **trauma nurse**, the **homicide detective**, the **navy seal** – these people may have to leave such things in their lockers before putting on their street clothes and going home.
- B. But there is a sense in which compartmentalizing is not a Biblical practice – it is not Christian.
1. I am not sure that I will be able to verbalize what’s in my heart right now.
 2. Perhaps it’s because I’m not very successful at doing what the Lord is teaching me.
 3. But maybe together, and with the Spirit’s help, we can begin at least to see the Christian ideal.
 4. Everything we do, think and are, should be enriched and bound together in the realization that we are in God our Saviour.
 5. *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”*

II. Before we consider our text in Ephesians, let me throw some scriptures at you and see if they stick.

- A. **I Thessalonians 5:16-18** – *“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*
1. Notice those words, “*evermore*,” “*without ceasing*,” & “*in everything*” – followed by “*this is the will of God.*”
 2. Have you ever thought that maybe Paul was going a little too far? Maybe this is a bit extreme?
 - a. How can we get things done if we are praying all the time?
 - b. Rejoice and give thanks for everything? **Everything?**
 - c. Are you **sure**, Paul, that this is the will of God for us?
 3. How about **I Corinthians 10:31** – *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or WHATSOEVER ye do, do ALL to the glory of God.”*
 4. And **Colossians 3:17 & 23** – *“WHATSOEVER ye do in word or deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord.”*
 - a. This sounds like more than the general principle – *“My life is dedicated to God’s glory.”*
 - b. This sounds like every little thing I do should be specifically sanctified to God.
 5. **Hebrews 13:15** – Through Christ Jesus, *“let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God CONTINUALLY, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”*
 6. **Colossians 3:23** was directed toward servants – so does this mean polishing the silver and mucking out the stable should be done with a dedicated heart – as service to God?
 7. Should we brush our teeth to the glory of God? Should we cut our finger nails for the glory of God?
 8. Exactly what is the definition of “*whatsoever?*” What is the definition of “*all?*”
 9. Those words mean exactly what you’d expect them to mean.
- B. Please turn to **Ephesians 5:15** – *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* How many minutes a day should we walk circumspectly?
1. Is it like 30 minutes on a treadmill at the gym? Should we walk circumspectly during 8 hours on the job?
 2. And how many minutes a day should we redeem and make profitable to ourselves and the Lord?
 3. *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”*
 - a. Is being filled with the Spirit a good idea only for Sundays, or whenever we are in the house of God, while the rest of the time it’s okay to be drunk with wine wherein is excess?
 - b. Aren’t these exhortations meant to be constant – 24 hour; 7 day a week exhortations?

4. And then there is **verse 20** –
 - a. *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
 - b. Once again there is that *“all things.”*
 - c. But surely that doesn't include my broken arm, my headache and your constipation, does it?

III. Now let's return to **Ephesians 6**.

A. *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”*

1. When should children obey their parents? Only when those parents get really, really specific?
 - a. *“Junior, I want you to tidy up your room, not just the northwest corner, but the entire room.”*
 - b. *And I want you to do it now, not sometime in the next week.”*
2. Are those children required to obey only when mother is polite, or specific or only when she is angry?
3. *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is (always) right.”*
 - a. *Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)*
 - b. *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”*
4. *“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture & admonition of the Lord.”*
5. The only way to successfully bring children up in the things of the Lord is with consistency.

B. *“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, & not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”*

1. How often during the day was it expected that a servant obey his master? Twice a day? Two dozen times?
2. Obedience was expected to be the way of life to a slave.
3. And when it came to **servants** who were **Christians**, they were to consider themselves as the **slaves of Christ** as well as to their earthly masters – 24 hours of every day.
 - a. Their service was not just to please the human eye, but to honor the Saviour.
 - b. It wasn't to be superficial, but in depth and from the heart.
4. *“AND ye masters,”* the same principles apply to you, *“do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”*

C. The key to living the way Paul describes, is found in the rest of the chapter.

1. *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”*
 - a. Only when we are true servants to God will we have the hearts necessary to *“pray without ceasing.”*
 - b. Only when we are completely surrendered to Him will we be able to *“rejoice ever more.”*
 - c. Only when we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit will we be able to carry out these things.
2. *“AND put on the whole armour of God...”*
3. We need to awaken every day to the reality that we are servants of the Lord, and we need to put on the uniform which He has provided us.
4. This armour is not just for the preacher when he steps onto the pulpit; it is for all of us all the time.

D. Some of you have read enough English novels and seen enough British *“period piece”* movies with Anthony Hopkins and Mr. Carson to know the mind-set of the proper butler.

1. The man-servant awoke each morning, seeking to know the will of his employer, and throughout the day he prayed without ceasing – *“what would you like me to do?”*
2. And no matter what responsibilities were given to him that day – he was thankful for his employment and for something to do that was worth while in the sight of his master.

IV. What was Paul thinking in exhorting us in this sort of way?

A. Remember, Paul was not an American-type evangelist.

1. He was not from a small Midwestern U.S. community – thoroughly American – without an accent or any personal idiosyncracies. He was not raised like one of us.

2. He was a Jew with the mind-set, accent, gestures, peculiarities and “*proclivities*” of a typical Hebrew.
 3. And because it was a part of his culture, he didn’t compartmentalize his life.
 4. Every aspect of his life was related to every other aspect under the sovereignty – and for the glory of God.
- B. I recently read, “*To the Hebrew mind, everything is theological.*”
1. *That is, the Hebrews make no distinction between the sacred and the secular areas of life.*
 2. *They see all of life as a unity. It is all God’s domain.*
 3. *God has a stake in all that comes to pass – whether trials or joy.”*
 4. And then comes perhaps the key statement – “*And they have an awareness of God in all that they do.*”
- C. Here is where **1 Thessalonians 5** becomes a possibility – “*Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*”
1. We need – I need to cultivate a greater awareness of the presence of God in my life.
 2. When I am in a room with Judy, it will not be long before she begins to speak to me.
 - a. I say that without the least bit of criticism; I love her for it, and I long to hear her voice – usually.
 - b. When I am in my study and she is down stairs – when there is no one to listen, she doesn’t talk.
 - c. But my presence triggers her voice.
 3. Why don’t we constantly pray? Because we don’t think of God as by our side or in the room with us.
 4. Why don’t we constantly rejoice in His blessings? Because we don’t see the Lord putting his hand on those things which are immediately before us.
- D. Consider some Old Testament scriptures which were undoubtedly embedded in Paul’s heart.
1. **Proverbs 3:1** – “*My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.*”
 2. Wasn’t Solomon saying, “*If you make my law, a part of your life, you will be blessed throughout your life?*”
 3. When we are so filled with the Lord and His Word, that they become a part of our blood stream, we will be blessed by both God and men.
 4. So why is it that we put the Bible into our “*daily devotions*” box or our “*Sunday services*” box?
- E. “*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour & good understanding in the sight of God & man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways **ACKNOWLEDGE** him, & he shall direct thy paths.*”
1. **How often** or at **what times** should we trust in the Lord?
 2. With **how much** of our hearts should we trust Him? In **how many ways** should we **acknowledge Him?**
 3. And what is it to “**acknowledge?**” It is the familiar Hebrew word “**to know**” Him.
 4. “*In all thy ways **be INTIMATE** with the Lord, and he shall direct thy paths.*”
 5. Since we need the Lord’s direction every moment of every day, shouldn’t we strive to be intimate with Lord every moment of every day?
- F. David said in **Psalm 16** – “*I have set the LORD **ALWAYS** before me: because he is **at my right hand**, I shall not be moved. **Therefore** my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*”
1. As we know, God is omnipresent – He is always present everywhere at once.
 2. So it is not possible to take the Lord, and physically, or even spiritually, set Him in that special chair in our room.
 3. David says, knowing that Jehovah is at my right hand, I am going to constantly keep Him in my field of vision. David was trying to constantly live in the shadow of the Almighty.
- G. Let’s look at the last paragraph of **Psalm 73**, but rearrange the verses just a little.
1. **Verse 22** – “*So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*”
 - a. **Verse 21** – “*Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*”
 - b. When I forgot that I was in the presence of my God & Saviour, I was foolish & like a soul-less animal.

2. Verse 23 – “Nevertheless I am continually with thee.”

- a. When is the saint of God outside the presence of the Saviour? Never.
- b. Then why don't we more frequently talk with Him? Why don't we take comfort in that presence?

H. “Thou hast holden me by my right hand.

1. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*
 - a. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*
 - b. *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”*
2. God is not our strength like some electrical outlet for us to plug into only when we need His power.
3. We need Him all the time, and He is nearer to us than our spouse or our seeing-eye dog.
4. *“For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*
5. *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”*
6. How often should we draw near to God? Twice a day – first thing in the morning and just before bed?
7. The implication of Scripture is that we should make it a point of remembering that we are already in the presence of our Saviour – always in His presence.
8. This makes praying and rejoicing as easy as talking with our spouse who is sitting in the chair next to us.

I. In my study of Jewish social life during the days of Jesus and Paul, I have learned that prayer was far more important and ubiquitous than it is for most of us.

1. They *“prayed without ceasing.”*
2. Jewish prayers were short because the entire working day of a devout Jew was punctuated sentences expressed to God – desires and thanksgiving.
3. Israel's most godly people constantly asked for the Lord's blessings on everything – large and small; special and as a common as relieving one's self.
4. As Creator and King, God's presence was acknowledged at all times and in every activity – not just eating and preaching the gospel.
5. Some rabbis taught that it was forbidden to enjoy anything without a benediction.
6. If someone enjoyed something – a drink of water, a butterfly, a smile – without offering a benediction he committed sacrilege.
7. I have read that good Jews thank God for good news and bad, when smelling a flower, when the sun hurt their eyes and when a cloud covered the sun.
8. So I suppose they would have thanked God for sunglasses and sunscreen as well.
9. They offered prayers in the presence of thunder and lightning, rainbows and starry skies especially when pierced by a shooting star.

J. Do you remember when in “Fiddler on the Roof” the rabbi was asked, “Is there a blessing for the Tsar?”

1. He said, *“Of course, there is.”*
2. He thought for a moment and then said, *“May the Lord bless and keep the Tsar far from us.”*
3. When he was asked if there was a blessing to offer God for a sewing machine? The rabbi said, *“There is a blessing for everything.”*
4. The Jews in Paul's day were constantly praising God for all things – with sentence prayers.
5. And for them it was easy, because God wasn't in Heaven, He was beside them, in them, surrounding them.

V. Conclusion:

- A. Harken back to ***1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*** – *“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*
1. These exhortations are difficult for most Christians, because of the way in which we approach life.
 2. Even the best of us, compartmentalize our lives.

- B. But the Word of God describes life as a journey – as walking towards Heaven – on the narrow way, if you like.
1. If we stopped looking at all the highlights and view points along the way – Sunday, Prayer meeting, devotions before breakfast, a blessing before we eat....
 2. If we stopped looking at the places we visit and looked more at the journey itself – taking each step as directed by the Lord and with the blessing of the Lord, we'd be living more Biblically.
 3. And remember, we are not walking alone, and I'm not referring to our closed loved one.
- C. Please turn to page 545 – in your song book. The hymn is entitled ***“Each Step I take.”***
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“Each step I take my Saviour goes before me,</i> <li style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>a. And with each breath I whisper "I adore Thee;</i> 2. <i>At times I feel my faith begin to waver,</i> <li style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>a. It's then I turn and look up to my Saviour,</i> 3. <i>Each step I take I know that He will guide me;</i> <li style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>a. Until some day the last step will be taken.</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>And with His loving hand He leads the way,</i> <i>Oh, what joy to walk with Him each day.</i> <i>When up ahead I see a chasm wide.</i> <i>I am strong when He is by my side.</i> <i>To higher ground He ever leads me on.</i> <i>Each step I take just leads me closer home.”</i> |
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- D. The hymn reflects the general gist of scripture.
1. Each step we take is made in the presence of our Lord and Saviour.
 2. Not only does He lead, and protect.
 3. But in Him, we have someone to talk to, to lean on, to rejoice in and with whom to share the blessings of the journey
 4. Let's break those boxes and pigeonholes and live our whole lives with the acknowledgment that we are in the presence of the Saviour.