

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for January 13, 2019

Walking in Love
Ephesians 5:1-2

I. Live like God (5:1)

Therefore

- What's it "there for"?
 - Connects us back to the previous verses (Ephesians 4:17-32)
 - The entire put off, renewal, and put on process of sanctification
 - Ephesians 4:24 "and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."
 - Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
 - Paul now says that we are not only to pattern our forgiveness after God; but instead, we must pattern our whole lives after God

be imitators of God,

- Greek word for "imitators" is *mimetes* from which you can hear the basis for our English word "mimic"
 - The word carries the sense of imitating, emulating or copying someone or something else
- Paul's command here is for the Ephesians to imitate God
 - Paul was not giving the Ephesians a random and arbitrary list of do's and don'ts in Ephesians 4:25-32
 - Paul is exhorting the Ephesians to live a life patterned after the character of God
- This command summarizes the Christian life
 - Humanity was created to represent God, bear His image and His likeness
 - Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"
 - Israel was chosen to represent God to the nations on the earth
 - Exodus 19:6 "and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation..."
 - Leviticus 11:45 "For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."
 - The church is still called to represent God to the nations on the earth

- 2 Corinthians 5:20 “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”
- 1 Peter 1:16 “since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”
- 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
- We are called to utilize examples around us in the process of imitating God
 - 1 Corinthians 4:16 “I urge you, then, be imitators of me.”
 - 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”
 - Philippians 3:17 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”
- Jesus stated this calling quite bluntly in the Sermon on the Mount
 - Matthew 5:48 “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
- If this sounds like a tall order, it is because *it is* a tall order
- In fact, it is impossible!
- But this is why the gospel is so beautiful
 - God has a standard of perfection for those who would be in His Presence
 - He does not lower that standard of perfection to allow us into His Presence
 - Instead, He upheld that standard of perfection by punishing His Son in our place, as Christ carried our sins with Him upon the cross
 - And now, God looks upon us as the righteous, holy and perfected ones because Christ’s perfect life has been credited to our account based upon our faith in Him
 - Thus, it is a tall order that Christ Himself accomplished on our behalf
- However, our responsibility to live holy lives that imitate God does not diminish
- Just because the standard has been met in Christ does not mean that we can relax and do nothing
- We are commanded to strive for holiness, godliness and imitation of our God
 - 1 Timothy 4:7 “Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness”
 - 1 Timothy 6:11 “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”
 - 2 Peter 3:11 “Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,”

as beloved children.

- Since God has taken the first step in exercising love toward us, we must imitate Him

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- Since God has adopted us into His family, we must imitate Him—our heavenly Father
 - Ephesians 1:5 “In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will”
- It is our absolute privilege to imitate our heavenly Father in light of our past
 - Enemies—not family
 - Opposed—not embraced
 - 1 John 3:1 “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”
- Thus, we imitate our God not in pursuit of acceptance
 - We were already accepted by God at the cross
- Instead, we imitate our God as blessed and beloved children that have already been accepted
- The primary way that this imitation of God will be present in His children is in their display of love

II. Love like Jesus (5:2)

And walk in love

- Previous walk/live statements
 - Ephesians 4:1 “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,”
 - Ephesians 4:17 “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.”
- The primary means by which we imitate God is by loving like Christ
- The importance/significance of love
 - Fulfills the law
 - Matthew 22:37-40 “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”
 - Romans 13:10 “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
 - Testimony to the world
 - John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - The excellent way to unity
 - 1 Corinthians 12:31 “And I will show you a still more excellent way.”

- 1 Corinthians 13:13 “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
 - The chief of all virtues
 - Colossians 3:14 “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

A. The action of love

as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us

- Along with the mandate to love, Paul gives an example of love
 - We could say that Paul gives *the* example of love—namely, Christ Himself
- Christ’s mission upon this earth was to give Himself for us on the cross
 - Christ’s mission was a mission of love
- Christ’s love was a giving love
 - Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
 - There is no expectation of return or reciprocation in displaying Christ-like love
- Christ’s love was a sacrificial love
 - 1 John 3:16 “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”
 - There is no limit to what one is willing to give in displaying Christ-like love
- Christ’s love was a transforming love
 - Titus 2:14 “who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”
 - Christ-like love brings out the best in others
- Christ’s love did not regard the audience of his love as worthy to receive His love
 - Romans 5:8 “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - There is no assessment of others to determine if they are worthy of our love
- Christ’s love did not reach a limit
 - John 13:1 “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”
 - There is no end to our practice of Christ-like love

B. The accomplishment of love

a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- Old Testament offerings and sacrifices were made along with fragrance to appease God

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- The problem with the Old Covenant system was its inability to remove sins for good
- Hebrews 10:3-4 “But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”
- The sacrifices persisted year after year but there was no removal of sins
- This was until Christ’s work of redemption at the cross
- Christ’s own life and death were a once for all sacrifice in order to bring us to God
 - Hebrews 10:11-12 “And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”
 - 1 John 4:9-10 “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
 - God’s wrath against sin has been satisfied in the offering of Christ upon the cross
- Thus, Christ’s act of love brought about peace between God and man
- This is the power of Christ’s love—it brings relationship and fellowship between God and man
- If we truly desire to display love in all of our relationships, then we must return to the example of Christ’s love and what it accomplished
- In meditating on the love of Christ, we will walk in Christ-like love toward those around us

Conclusion:

- What happens if we do not heed this command to love like Christ?
- We become at risk for committing the same error as the Ephesians in Revelation 2:1-7
- Revelation 2:2-5 “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.”