**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Walking Worthy: Walk in Purity**

**Ephesians 5:3-6**

June 14, 2020

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 We are continuing our series in Ephesians, Brought to Life; Brought Together with today’s message entitled, Walk in Purity from 5:3-6. As we have said, Ephesians can be divided in two sections, chapters one through three describe what *God has done in us* through Christ while chapters four through six call us to *live out what God has done in us*. Let’s look at 5:3-6 in today’s message, Walk in Purity. As we look at this text I want to remind us of three truths. First, the commands to walk worthy, to put on the new self, are rooted in what God has already done in us. Second the command to walk in sexual purity presupposes an internal struggle with sin within us. Following Jesus in discipleship is a daily fight against unbelief and sin. Third, discipleship is a community project, you cannot follow Jesus alone.

 Last week we saw that we are to imitate God as his children by walking in love described as a sacrificial life (1-2). Now he tells us not to walk in impurity or stated positively, walk in purity (3-6). I have organized the text around the commands against sexually impurity and the motivations for walking in purity. My two points are walk in purity and motivation for purity, we will look at the first point this week.

**Walk in Purity**

 Paul addresses sexual sins for at least two reasons. First, Gentile Christians came from a highly sexualized culture much like ours that shaped their thinking and lives so this was a current issue for them. Second, sexual faithfulness in marriage is a picture of spiritual faithfulness to God. When God’s people are unfaithful to him, the bible describes it as spiritual adultery or whoring after other gods.

 Looking at the text, Paul identifies three categories of sexual sin that I have called deeds, desires, and discussion. Sexual deeds is described with sexual immorality and all impurity (3), sexual desires is described with all covetousness (3), and sexual discussion is described with filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking (4). Let’s look at *deeds* first. Sexual immorality is fulfilling our sexual desires between a man and woman outside of marriage (1 Cor 7:2). When this subject comes up with singles, the question centers around how far can I go without crossing the line into sexual sin. The better question is how far away can I stay from the line so I do not cross it. Any contact between two people that entices or increases one’s sexual desires is sexual immorality. The second phrase, all impurity, is a broader term that describes abandoning heterosexual relationships (Rom 1:24-27).

 Then he describes *desires* with covetousness. Covetousness narrowly defined is greed for money but more broadly it is cravings that drive a discontentment that leads one to break God’s will (Eph 4:19). I think he includes it here because sexual sin is a dissatisfaction with God’s design for sex and craving someone sexually who does not belong to you. He calls covetousness idolatry (5) because it is dethroning God in your life and enthroning yourself in his place.

 Finally, Paul moves to *discussion*, filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking. Foolish talk and crude joking described filthiness more specifically. He is describing talking about sex in gross and trivial ways, treating God’s sacred gift as filthy and flippant. We have known individuals whose comments and jokes regularly are lewd and sexual. These sins, like all the other sins we have looked at in chapter four are characteristic of the old self/indwelling sin/the flesh which are enemies of your soul that you must fight against, seek to kill.

 Your greatest struggle is not against Satan but against sin still dwelling in you. The old self is corrupt with deceitful desires and those desires are very compelling as they seek to deceive or trick you. Your own deceived desires want to convince you that sin is better than obedience. When you feed those desires, the will melts like a candle from heat of the flame. Sin must be cut off where it starts, in the mind, before it moves to the imagination, because your imagination fuels the flames of sinful desires. Finally, the will melts and collapses. We must fight sexual sin and put it to death whether it be pornography, sex outside of marriage, fantasies in your mind, sexual desires for another, sexual innuendoes with someone at work, or peeking at ads.

 Instead let there be thanksgiving. Note this well. God is not against sex, sexual desires, nor sexual pleasure. He created sex as a gift to be enjoyed in the safety and security of marriage. A healthy emotional and sexual relationship is expected in marriage. If you are married, you need to protect your marriage with a healthy sexual relationship, have filters on your electronic devises, and openly share with each other about your struggles. So, we are to be thankful. But I think there is more to it. Remember the categories we saw in chapter four, put off the old self and put on the new self. Thanksgiving is the opposite of these sexual sins – deeds, desires and discussion. Sexual sin is driven by covetousness, a deep dissatisfaction in life and craving for what does not belong to you. This discontent dominates your life and leads you to violate God’s will which is the opposite of gratitude. Gratitude is being thankful for all that God has blessed you with and content with what you don’t have. It is a contentment and satisfaction with God and every good gift he has given you. Gratitude is the feeling you have when you trust him with your life and circumstances even when you don’t have everything you desire, when life is inconvenient or even painful (5:20). Thanksgiving is the overflow of gratitude for all that God is and promises to be for you in Christ.

**Life Group Questions:**

1. Why is it important to be reminded that obedience is rooted in the gospel?
2. What are the two reasons David said Paul is addressing sexual sin here?
3. Do Christians make too much of sexual sin?
4. How are you tempted to be shaped by our cultures view of sex?
5. How are we shaped by our cultures view of sex?
6. How do we combat our cultures seeking to shape us?
7. What is your most common internal struggle with sin?
8. How did David describe we are to battle sin in our lives?
9. How is God speaking to you in this message?
10. How does this passage relate to you own discipleship?
11. How does this message help you in making disciples