

Walking in Love Ephesians 5:1-2

Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. [2] And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Introduction

A. These words seem to be the very highest peak of the Christian life. These words are surely the ultimate ideal. These words are heavenly words.

1. The final chapter (chap 16) in Jonathan Edward's *Charity and Its Fruits* is titled *Heaven, a World of Charity or Love*.

In every heart in heaven, love dwells and reigns... As God has given the saints and angels love, so their love is chiefly exercised towards God its fountain, as is most reasonable. They all love God with a supreme love. There is no enemy of God in heaven; but all, as his children, love him as their Father. They are all united, with one mind, to breathe forth their whole souls in love to God their eternal Father, and to Jesus Christ their common Redeemer, and head, and friend... Those that have a lower station in glory than others, suffer no diminution of their own happiness by seeing others above them in glory. On the contrary, all the members of that blessed society rejoice in each other's happiness, for the love of benevolence is perfect in them all. Every one has not only a sincere, but a perfect good-will to every other. Jonathan Edwards in *Charity and Its Fruits*, p 332 & 335

2. *Charity and Its fruits* is an exposition of 1 Cor 13 where we read that love is supreme.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8a; 13; 14:1a (ESV) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. [2] And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [3] If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. [4] Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant [5] or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; [6] it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. [7] Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. [8] Love never ends... [13] So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. [14:1] Pursue love.

B. If you're like me thinking about love increases your desire for heaven. But, this just in, we are not yet in heaven.

1. The funny thing about love is that we all desire to be loved. We are challenged to maintain our faith, joy and peace when we are not loved as we believe we deserve to be loved.
2. Over the years popular songwriters have expressed this desire for love.
 - Beatles - All you need is love
 - U2 - Love is what everybody loves, we all need just a little love
 - Elton John - I want love

C. Against our desire to be loved Jesus Christ taught that loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves are the two greatest commands. Do that (love) and we fulfill the law perfectly.

1. The title of this sermon is **Walking in Love**. In the text we find two commands:
 - Be imitators of God ... as beloved children.
 - Walk in love ... as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.
2. These commands are not concerned to teach us about receiving love. These commands are given to focus our attention outward (not inward on the self) on others.

- D. These commands will keep us occupied until the day we draw our final breath. Then, in heaven, we will find ourselves in a world of love.

I. The first command is to “be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

- A. If the command was only “be imitators of God” we would find ourselves uncertain about how we imitate or mimic) God.

1. Should we do chemical warfare and send plagues on people?
2. Should we slaughter our enemies?
3. Should we show our anger and wrath to those that would oppose us?
4. Should we function as judge, jury and executor?

- B. We answer no. The context of Ephesians 4 and 5 is the way we treat fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Other believers.

1. We know this because we are to imitate God as beloved children. We are to replicate the love that has been lavished on us by God.
2. Remember that life is lived most fully in our homes. Sadly, I’ve seen situations where what those closest to us receive could not be described as love.

Ex: A husband lashes out at a wife and says that she deserved it.

Ex: A mom is angry so she screams and yells at her kids.

Ex: My own experience with Ryan and Jared ... cold (worse than I treated anyone else).

- C. The key to getting this command is to understand that we are children of God. I doubt that there is anything more amazing in the entire Bible.

1. We were dead, enslaved and condemned in sin (see Ephesians 2:1-4). We were separated from Christ, having no hope, without God in the world (see Ephesians 2:12-13)
2. But God. But God, being rich in mercy, saved us and more, God adopted us into his family.

You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means he does not understand Christianity very well at all. J.I. Packer in *Knowing God*, p 182

3. If you are in Christ you’ve been adopted by God into His family.

Ex: Adopting a child gives you rich insight into this doctrine. You make a decision, you select a child, they belong to your family, and you are never, ever letting go.

- D. Our response to others in the family of God will be based upon how much we get this one thought. We are beloved children of God.

1. For God so loved Scott ... Wendy ... Jason ... Cathy ... that He gave His only Son.

- E. In case we don’t get the first command, a second command, like the first, is given.

II. The second command is “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.”

- A. As I read these words I am struck again in wonder at the love of God. Walk in love as Christ loved us.
1. How did Jesus Christ love us? The cross. We are in God's family because God's wrath was poured out on Jesus Christ.

Were I asked to focus the New Testament message in three words, my proposal would be *adoption through propitiation*, and I do not expect ever to meet a richer or more pregnant summary of the gospel than that. J.I. Packer in *Knowing God*, p 194

- B. The text serves as a bridge. Commentators are divided as to whether it goes best with what precedes or what follows. We suggest both.
1. In Ephesians 4:1-16 we were taught to walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have received. In humility and love pursue unity and purity in the church.
 2. In Ephesians 4:17 we were taught that we must no longer walk as the Gentiles (unbelievers in Christ) do. They lack understanding.
 3. In Ephesians 5:8 (looking forward) we will be taught to walk as children of light.
 4. In Ephesians 5:15 we will be taught to look carefully at how we walk. The way we walk is the way we live.
- C. Five times in Ephesians 4:1-5:15 this term 'walk' is used. The word 'walk' refers to the way we live. Here is Ephesians 5:2 is the third occurrence of walk.
1. When Christ gave himself up for us we were sinners. When Christ loved us it was not because we were impressive, brighter, or godlier.

Romans 5:6-8 (ESV) For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Too many think lightly of sin, and therefore think lightly of the Savior. He who has stood before his God, convicted and condemned, with the rope around his neck, is the man to weep for joy when pardoned, to hate the evil which has been forgiven him, and to live to the honour of the Redeemer by whose blood he has been cleansed. Charles Spurgeon quoted by Dave Harvey in *When Sinners Say I Do*, p 38

2. Walking in love is the way we honor the Savior.

III. When Christ gave Himself up for us He was a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- A. The Old Testament (especially Lev and Num) is full of laws and commands that showed the nation of Israel how to make a sacrifice pleasing to God.
1. They were not able to do it. This is where grace comes in. Christ came to earth, lived a perfect life so He was an acceptable sacrifice, and died my death and your death.
 2. Christ handed Himself over to death. No one took His life. Jesus Christ laid it down as the supreme demonstration of His love. Once for all time.
- B. Christ modeled costly, sacrificial love and this is now to be the distinguishing mark of our lives for one reason.

1. Christ's nature now is now in us (The life of God in the soul of man). So, we walk in love.
Ex: Therefore, we put on the towel and wash feet because we are more concerned about the welfare of others than we are about ourselves (especially at home).
2. The point is this. We will each give ourselves up to something. The Gentiles in Ephesians 4:19 also gave themselves up (sensuality and every kind of impurity). Which way?

Close

- A. Alfred Bernhard Nobel was born in 1833 and died in 1896. Big Al was Swedish and his claim to fame was that he invented of dynamite.
 1. In 1888, a premature obituary was published in a French newspaper.
 - The merchant of death is dead.
 - Who became rich by finding ways to kill more faster than ever before.
 2. Alfred Nobel resolved to be known for better things and he established a trust (103 mil in 2007 dollars) to give away a yearly prize called the Nobel Peace Prize.
- B. The point is that his legacy changed. One day we will each die. In the days following folks will share what they really thought about us.
 1. I would like folks to say about us this one thing. They lived a life of love. That is a legacy to live for not only because of this life.
 2. The legacy of your love will resound forever in eternity forever. Not one instance will be wasted or forgotten.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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