

This is a Great Mystery

A Study of Ephesians

Week 22 – Ephesians 5:5 - 5:14

Prayer – Lord Jesus, you are the Light of the world, the Light no darkness can overcome. Live in our hearts every day so that we would shine your light to others in our lives with everything we do. Remove all darkness and idolatry from our lives so that we would accomplish these things through the power of your Spirit. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Introduction/Review – Does anyone remember the overarching principle of chapter 5 that we talked about last time?

What comments and questions of yours were we not able to get to last time?

Ephesians 5:5 – τούτο γὰρ ἴστε γινώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶς πόρνος ἢ ἀκάθαρτος ἢ πλεονέκτης, ὃ ἐστὶν εἰδωλολάτρης, οὐκ ἔχει κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ.

For you know and recognize that every sexually immoral or impure or greedy [person]—that is, an idolator—does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

1. While the word “idolator” is normally connected only to the “greedy person,” it could certainly apply to the other sins that are named here. If someone adores physical pleasure more than they do the commands and grace of God, they idolize pleasure and immorality. If someone elevates impurity as something to be worshiped and treated as sacred, are they not worshiping a god that cannot satisfy? We can certainly see these things in obvious ways across our nation and world.
 - a. Turn to **Philippians 3:18-19**. Look at what Paul labels as the god of the enemies of Christ. What does he mean by that?
2. We have all committed these kinds of sins. Paul says that whoever does these things does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. Yet, we can still be certain of our inheritance. To find out why, let’s go all the way back to **Ephesians 1:11-14**, where Paul had first mentioned our inheritance. What does Paul say that makes us certain of receiving it?

Ephesians 5:6-7 - Μηδεις ὑμᾶς ἀπατάτω κενοῖς λόγοις · διὰ ταῦτα γὰρ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. ⁷ μὴ οὖν γίνεσθε συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν ·

Let no one deceive you with empty words; for, because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore, do not become fellow sharers with them.

3. The word for “empty” (κενοῖς) can mean “devoid of intellectual, moral, or spiritual value.” This is close to, but not the same as, the “moron talk” we touched on last time. What kinds of words, phrases, or conversations would fall into this category?

4. “sons of disobedience” – Think of what is usually meant when sons are brought up in the Bible: there’s an inheritance coming their way.
 - a. What will these sons inherit?

 - b. On what basis will they inherit this?

 - c. What might we or others be tempted to say is the basis for this awful inheritance? *Hint: it’s something we struggled with in Ephesians 1.*

5. *Side note: this fits well into our worship theme today. Thanks again, Holy Spirit!* From the options given below, circle the correct interpretation of verse seven. What makes the incorrect explanations not work? Write the reasons in the space provided.
 - a. Don’t talk to unbelievers.

 - b. Don’t open a business with an unbeliever.

 - c. Don’t allow people who lie to become members at your church.

 - d. Don’t be deceived so that you throw away your inheritance, thus, becoming a son of disobedience yourself and sharing (with those who are disobedient) in the same wrath which they are receiving.

What comments and questions do you have?

Ephesians 5:8-10 - ἦτε γὰρ ποτε σκότος, νῦν δὲ φῶς ἐν κυρίῳ· ὡς τέκνα φωτὸς περιπατεῖτε ⁹ - ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτὸς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ - ¹⁰ δοκιμάζοντες τί ἐστὶν εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ,

For you once used to be darkness, but now [you are] light in the Lord; as children of light you must walk ⁹ – for the fruit of the light [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth—¹⁰ finding out what is well-pleasing to the Lord.

6. This is the first time this picture comes up in Ephesians. Paul touched on how the Gentiles are “darkened in their understanding” (4:18), but he didn’t really get to the encouragement to live as light until these verses. Notice how much time and space Paul and the Spirit have devoted to this topic to build up to the point where they can finally say, “Live as children of light!”
7. The picture of darkness and light is obviously used throughout the Scriptures. Let’s visit just a few of those instances where this illustration is used. For each verse, try to think of what it means for us as we consider the call to live as children of the light.
 - a. **Isaiah 5:20** –
 - b. **Isaiah 9:2** –
 - c. **John 8:12** –
 - d. **2 Corinthians 4:6** –
 - i. What other Bible account comes to mind here?
 - e. **1 John 1:5** (we’ll be coming back to this section) –
8. “Fruit of the light” is strange to our ears, isn’t it? But think about plants—what is one of the basic requirements for a plant to not only survive, but to also produce fruit?
 - a. Now, if our light is the eternal Son of God (and it is), then our fruit (what we produce) must be perfect, too, right?
 - b. It seems as though “fruit of the light” and “fruit of the Spirit” is somewhat synonymous. It’s not a one-to-one comparison; but we’re still touching on the same things in both cases.
9. At first glance, verse 10 might sound awful. Why would that be?
 - a. For what reasons do we not have to lose any sleep over what verse 10 is asking us to do?

Ephesians 5:11-12 - και μη συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάργοις τοῦ σκοτοῦς, μάλλον δὲ και ἐλέγγετε. ¹²
τὰ γὰρ κρυφῆ γινόμενα ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰσχρόν ἐστίν και λέγειν,

**And do not [ever] be connected to the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²
For the done-in-secret things by them are shameful even to speak about.**

10. Again, the brackets show the continuous action that the present-tense verb communicates. This is a similar thought to the “don’t let these things be named among you” thought that Paul shared in verse 3 of this same chapter. Don’t be connected to these kinds of things; don’t participate willingly in them.

11. Verse 12 is part of the reason why we are careful to talk about sin to its most vulnerable extent. Paul himself doesn’t go into nitty-gritty details. There’s no need for us to do that, either; but that also doesn’t mean that we don’t talk about the sin or the opposite God-pleasing behavior. There must be a balance.

Ephesians 5:13-14 - τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐλεγχόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς φανεροῦται, **14** πᾶν γὰρ τὸ φανερούμενον φῶς ἐστίν. διὸ λέγει, *Ἔγειρε, ὁ καθεύδων, και ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, και ἐπιφύσει σοι ὁ Χριστός.*

But all the things which are exposed by the light are made visible, ¹⁴ for everything that is made visible is light. This is why it says: *Awake, o sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*

12. What do we use to expose the dark deeds in our lives and in the lives of others?

13. What does it mean that “everything that is made visible is light”? Think about it from a sin/grace viewpoint.

14. While there are certainly places that talk about the concepts found in it, the reference Paul makes (italicized) is not found in the Old Testament. Rather, it could be a hymn that the early Christians used. Paul will do this from time to time, sharing contemporary, short hymns of praise or confessions of faith. Some places this might be the case—Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

What comments and questions do you have?

Closing Prayer Renew Me, O Eternal Light CW 471 v. 1 and 3

**Renew me, O eternal Light,
And let my heart and soul be bright,
Illumined with the light of grace
That issues from your holy face.**

**Create in me a new heart, Lord,
That gladly I obey your Word.
Oh, let your will be my desire
And with new life my soul inspire. Amen.**