

Outline

I. Introduction to Ephesians 5:1-21

- A. Encouragement to connect beyond Sunday mornings
- B. Importance of genuine Christian fellowship
- C. Opportunities for connection at Rivers Edge

II. Be Imitators of God (v. 1-2)

- A. Understanding the Greek word "mimetai" (imitators/mimic)
- B. Not play-acting holiness but reflecting spiritual DNA
- C. Transformation flows from Christ's power, not human effort
- D. Walking in love as Christ loved us
 1. "Walk" as present active imperative - ongoing, continuous pattern
 2. Moment-by-moment obedience
- E. Christ's sacrifice as a fragrant aroma to God
 1. Old Testament imagery of burnt offering
 2. Quiet, humble obedience rising before God

III. The Sweet Aroma Illustration

- A. Examples of pleasant aromas (perfume, coffee, grilling)
- B. Living and loving in a way that reflects Jesus' self-giving heart
- C. Sin is beneath our calling as children of God
- D. Walking in dignity of higher calling in Christ

IV. From Darkness to Light (v. 8-14)

- A. "You WERE darkness, now you ARE light"

- B. Greek word "phōs" - moral and spiritual clarity
- C. Fruit of light: goodness, righteousness, and truth (v. 9)
- D. Learning what is pleasing to the Lord (v. 10)
 1. Greek "dokimazontes" - test or examine closely
 2. Spirit-led discernment, not mindless conformity
- E. Partnering with Holy Spirit to reveal beauty

V. Illuminating the Darkness Illustration

- A. Camping story on St. Mary's river
- B. Fear in darkness transformed by light
- C. Light didn't change situation, just illuminated it
- D. Our calling to illuminate darkness around us
 1. Casting out fear
 2. Bringing hope
 3. Speaking life
 4. Being a sweet aroma to the Lord

VI. Walking in Wisdom (v. 15-21)

- A. Be careful how you walk - examine accurately
- B. Making the most of time (v. 16)
 1. "Redeeming the time" - buying back what was lost
 2. Every moment as an act of redemption
- C. We are redemptive agents working on behalf of the Lord
- D. Be filled with the Spirit (v. 18-21)
 1. Continual process, not one-time experience
 2. Mutual encouragement

3. Spirit-inspired fellowship
4. Giving thanks always
5. Submitting to one another

VII. The Heart of the Gospel

- A. Not a moral checklist
- B. "You are loved—so live free!"
- C. Righteous living is tasting joy
- D. Holiness as a delightful, beautiful life
- E. Reclaiming what sin has stolen

VIII. Three Practical Applications

- A. Walk Intentionally
 1. Morning prayer: "Lord, help me imitate You today"
 2. Imitation flows from identity
- B. Shine Naturally
 1. Reflect Christ's light through kindness, integrity, truth
 2. Look for one opportunity this week
- C. Redeem Time
 1. 10 undistracted minutes daily
 2. Thank God for something specific
 3. Worship instead of worry