

## The ABC's of a New Walk

Ephesians 5:1-2 Sunday AM, December 10, 2023

**Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 4:20-5:2** (NASB95) But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Life and change mark true believers, direct results of the gracious work of God to use individuals to display His disposition to love the unlovely and power to change the unchangeable. Christians under the Headship of Christ are not unstable and distracted, tossed . . . by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming, following different voices with different goals. They are not dependent on the futility of their own minds and therefore darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the hardness of their hearts. Instead, they are purposeful in their work among the people of God, speaking into each other's souls with the goal of each growing in ALL aspects into Christ. While the growth WILL be noticed, the saving difference of this change will be internal as God works through the personal work of the Holy Spirit so His people know Him in a way where change stems from worship for God's greatness and provision. Instead of grieving the Holy Spirit, true believers treasure God's words, desiring them to have greater impact on their daily focus, attitudes, and choices. As we have seen, born again fellowship with God leads not only to having an essential role to fill in the people of God growing together to the fullness of Christ, but the results of that goal will change your tongue, your anger, your work ethic, and your heart's response. And that heart's response is directly related to the Spirit's work in showing us the love of God for us—**Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.** What a treasure to be a recipient of God's forgiving love! Gaze at the love of God shown in the incarnation!

**\*Hymn #166: We Three Kings**

As we think about the incarnation and recognize God did it for us—His sinful, independent, and wayward creation. But it was not merely an act of love, it was an act with a goal—reconciliation with God so we could carry out His good purposes. How do we do this? Not only by giving God His place and submitting to Him, but looking at His acts and marveling at His holy condescension in Christ. **Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.** He is Immanuel—God with us—gaze, worship, follow, and imitate.

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): Immanuel (From the Squalor)**

**\*Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn**

**Choir: Anthem for Christmas**

**Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:1–17** (NASB95) But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. 2 For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? 3 This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be the joy of you all. 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. 5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you. 6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. 9 For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10 But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes. 12 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, 13 I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia. 14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. 15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? 17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

**Offering: \*Doxology:**

And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Love, look at Him and love like that. Wait, what a love! Christians don't just follow Christ, they treasure Him. Learn this song with me, that if lived, will lead you to offer up a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess His name.

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): All My Boast is in Jesus**

**You may Be seated.** Jesus work on our behalf was a fragrant, sweet-smelling, acceptable offering to God. In our Scripture reading, **“We are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.”** And yet, there is a different smell received. To those saved, we are **“an aroma from life to life.”** But to those perishing, that fragrance is **“an aroma from death to death.”** A fragrant offering to God involves hardship, sacrifice, and rejection. Listen to Paul, knee-deep in caring for souls who mistake his gospel work as harsh and uncaring. **“For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.”** Feel the pain and hear the heart of Paul fully invested in the lives of individuals and the entire body at Corinth even as he writes from another city with its own needs. Love includes taking ownership—not just stabs at problems from a distance. It involves misunderstandings, forgiveness, and even scars. Are you fully invested in the lives of the redeemed? It's easy to say you will follow Christ even through difficulty. Contemplate what following Christ includes in this Christmas hymn as we think of the practical abc's of living for Christ as Pastor preaches.

**\*Hymn #127: Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne**

**Message: The ABC's of a New Walk Eph. 5:1-2**

**\*Hymn #371: Have Thine Own Way, Lord**

**\*Prayer**