

The Portrait of the Church: Purity (Part 5)

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[0 : 00] Let it be a letter to the Ephesians, and so we'll get a few verses under our belt tonight.

Pretty important stuff. All of it's important, but I just don't want to rush through that.

And so we'll take, I think, about three verses tonight. And so if you've got a Bible open there, if you want to, we can... In fact, I think I may have even put all the text in your notes.

But we'll get to that here in a minute. Let's bring ourselves up to speed again. This is the portrait of the church, unity of the church, purity of the church. And then under the purity of the church, we have, number one, the believers walking differently.

All believers walk differently. Number two, believers walk rightly. And so we have been looking at that for a couple of weeks.

[1 : 17] And I mentioned, again, you know, the word clue that helps us kind of organize or help us understand Paul's kind of organization of thought.

And he gives us a word clue. That's the word walk. And so every time the Apostle Paul uses the word walk here three times in this particular text, he's introducing some aspect of the believer's right walk as a child of God in this world.

So we looked at walk in love. We've already talked about that. Second, walk in light. We looked at that last week. And now tonight, third, walk in line.

Walk in line. And I'm not forcing it there just so I have another L word to put in the outline. But really, this is the idea.

It means walk in line. Walk in a straight line. Kind of the straight and narrow. We'll look at that here in just a minute. So let me go ahead and read verses 15 through 17. And you have it there in your notes.

[2 : 27] See then that you walk. So there's our word walk again. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. All right. So that's as far as we're going to get tonight. And so let's just kind of pick this apart, see several things here as we kind of glean what Paul is saying in these short three verses.

And we can see five things. And so you've got those in your notes. Five things that we can glean from these three verses about walking in line.

All right. So the first one is the walk restricted. The walk restricted. Verse 15. See then that you walk circumspectly.

Now that's how it's translated in the New King James. You get into some of the more modern translations. And I don't mean necessarily new modern because it's New American Standard.

[3 : 41] It's been out a long time. But I mean more contemporary translations as compared to the King James and such. So you have kind of different variations of how this is worded.

But I'm just going to kind of walk us along with this particular translation. So what does it mean to walk circumspectly? I mean circumspectly is not a word that I doubt very seriously you use that word today, any time.

And maybe not even this week yet. In fact, maybe you've never used the word circumspectly. And so, therefore, we really kind of need to understand what it means.

Literally, it means exactly. Now that helps a little bit, I think. Circumspectly. That's a little vague. But to walk exactly in an exact way or accurately. To walk accurately. He's not talking about, you know, how you walk physically, you know.

[4 : 49] He's not talking about that. He's talking about, again, this idea of walk or behavior or conduct of life. And so, to walk or to conduct yourself circumspectly means to walk exactly or accurately.

There is an exact way or an accurate way to conduct one's life as a believer. We might call it the straight and narrow.

To walk the straight and narrow. Or we might even kind of borrow from Johnny Cash's famous song, I Walk the Line.

How many of you know that? Shall we sing it together? How many of you do the basses get to sing that? Oh, the basses, yeah. Well, all you have to do is kind of read some of the lyrics.

And if you don't, I mean, if you don't really think about it closely, you could think that he's talking about our relationship with Christ. Though he's not. Let me just read some of the words.

[5 : 54] I can put some of the lyrics down. I thought it was kind of interesting. He said, I keep close watch on this heart of mine. That's pretty good, isn't it? All right. I keep my eyes wide open all the time.

I keep the ends out for the tie that binds. I'm not sure exactly what he means by that. Tie that binds sounds like something spiritual. I mean, it's a great old hymn. Because you're mine, I walk the line. Now, he's not talking about Jesus, I don't think, in this song, is he? No, probably not. I find it very, very easy to be true. I find myself alone when each day is through.

Well, that's good. Yes, I'll admit that I'm a fool for you. Because you're mine, I walk the line. I just thought maybe you might be blessed by the words today.

Now, you know, Johnny Cash talked about walking the line, you know, being a good boy. And especially his relationship with whoever it is he loves in this song.

[6 : 55] But that's the idea behind walking circumspectly. To walk the line, the straight and narrow. And, all right, so walk restricted.

Second, the way revealed. All right, the walk restricted, the way revealed.

Verse 15. See then that you walk circumspectly. See then. All right, so if the walk is restricted.

These are just kind of natural questions as you kind of question the text. If the walk is restricted, that is our walk as a believer, is a straight and narrow.

It is a way that has been restricted by the Lord and by His Word. Restricted by the Lord, meaning there is a certain way that God wants us to behave in life.

[7 : 51] I mean, there is, isn't there? Yes, there is. Or a certain way that God wants us to conduct our lives, another way of putting it. Then, which way is that?

Which way is that? Or, how do we know the restricted walk? Well, the way revealed. The way revealed. See, the word see here, and in the ESV it's look.

It really kind of throws you, when you look at the New American Standard, they use the word be.

Which, difficult to see where they get that. But the word is, should be translated see or look.

That's the meaning of the word. It's from the Greek word blepo. Blepo, and it means to have the power of seeing. That can be used in a lot of different contexts.

It can be used of seeing, you know, with physical eyes, you know, as a physical way, be able to see things. Or it can be used in more of a kind of abstract way or even a spiritual sense, in the sense of discernment.

[9 : 02] It can be used in the sense of mental, kind of a mental capacity. You know, I see, sometimes we mean I understand. I understand or I discern. But, he says that you can see.

See then, he says. In fact, the word then, in some translations they have it therefore. See then or see therefore, it refers immediately back to Paul's instructions earlier in the letter.

In fact, you really could make the case that everything he said up to this point about oneness, about holiness or unity and purity comes into play here.

See then, therefore. And so, specifically, we go back to the beginning of chapter 5. Be imitators of God.

This gives us the clue as to what he means about the way we're to walk. It's a restricted way. And that way has been revealed. And it's revealed through the person and the word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[10 : 09] He said, be imitators of God. Mimites, mimites, like mimic, is the idea there. Of course, we studied verse 1 way back when.

But, here is the way revealed. And that way revealed is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have that described for us right here in God's Word.

So, all we have to do then is to use Him as our example. To imitate Him in the way He walks. So, the way has really been revealed. We don't have to wonder how God wants us to walk.

And we don't have to be confused or maybe even a little full of anxiety when God's restricted the way we are to walk before Him. We don't have to wonder, how do I know if I'm walking the right way?

We have Jesus as our example. We're to be imitators of Him. Chapter 2. Also, Paul reveals the way we are not to walk. In chapter 2, verses 1 to 3.

[11:18] In fact, he probably says more in detail about the way not to walk than he does about the way to walk. But in chapter 2, 1 through 3. And you He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

So, we can just take that verse and we can come to several conclusions about the way not to walk. We're not to walk in the way of the sinner. All right? That's right there in the passage.

You were dead in trespasses and sins. You once walked according to that. So, we're not to walk the way of the sinner. We're not to walk the way of the secular world.

He says according to the course of this world. And we're not to walk the way of Satan. Obviously, right? The prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

So, we don't walk as the sinner in the secular world, in the way of Satan. We're not to walk in that way. Chapter 4, verse 17 also says you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk.

[12:36] And what he means there is walk like pagans, like unbelievers, in the futility of your mind. And so, those are the ways not to walk.

How are we to walk? The way has been revealed for us. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, we then through our reading and studying of scripture. And the more we understand about the nature, character, the life of Christ.

Then, we order our way, our walk as imitators of him. Alright? So, the walk restricted.

The way revealed. And then third, the wisdom required. The wisdom required. Verse 15. The latter part of verse 15.

Walk not as fools, but as wise. Not as fools, but as wise. Some versions have not as unwise, but as wise.

[13:37] And that's really a better translation. Because in the Greek text, the word fools, as it's translated in New King James, is really just the negative form of the word wise.

So, it's unwise as opposed to wise. It's an alpha privative. It has an A on the front of the word that makes it a negative. So, it's a saphos.

That's foolish or unwise. And then, saphos. We also know the word sophia. It means wise.

Alright? So, we're not to walk unwisely, but wisely. Alright? So, the fools or the unwise are those who walk according to the old life.

The old way of life. I'm talking about your B.C. life. Before Christ life. Your former life. Your unsaved life. So, as a believer, we're never to revert back to walking as we once walked.

[14:41] Or walk in a pre-conversion kind of life. Like Paul said in Titus chapter 3 verse 3. He said, for we ourselves were also once foolish.

Alright? And he elaborates on that. Disobedient. Deceived. Serving various lusts and pleasures.

I mean, this is quite a list here. And Paul is saying ourselves, all of us. We once walked this way.

We're foolish and disobedient. Deceived. And serving various lusts and pleasures.

Living in malice and envy. Hateful and hating one another. That's quite a description. That's the B.C. life. And you say, well, I didn't walk that way before I was saved.

Well, I was eight years old when I was saved. I'm not sure that I remember how I walked before I was eight years old. But I guarantee you that I would be walking in that way if Christ had not saved me.

[15:45] Alright? So, to walk as wise then means to make sure everything in your life honors the Lord and can be used for His purposes. Now, that's a pretty broad statement.

Everything in your life. That is, everything in my life as a believer should be consistent with the Word of God. It should make sense with God's purpose for me and for this world and purpose for the Gospel in this world.

I shouldn't have anything, part of my life, that cannot be used by Him in some way to be in line with His purpose. That's what we mean by walking the line.

Now, there is that a recognizable logic here when you think about it. Our walk is restricted to the way revealed in the life and words of Jesus Christ.

And a holy wisdom is required in order to consistently walk in that way. So, it just kind of all falls in line. And that leads to the fourth thing. Number four, the waste renounced.

[16:58] First, the waste renounced. Verse 16. Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Now, the word time is, in the Greek, is the word kairos.

Now, you probably won't remember that. But it does not refer to the time on a clock. There are two words in the Greek that are typically translated time in our English versions.

There's kairos and there's chronos. Now, chronos, we can almost guess. Chronological time. Chronos.

And it typically refers to the tick-tock time, a passage of time. Minutes, hours, you know, days, so forth. So, it's kind of the progressive tick-tock ongoing kind of time.

That's chronos. That's not the word that Paul used. He used the word kairos, which refers to a season. A season or epic.

[18:08] Now, the definite article, and this is important in the Greek, when there's a definite article, the, the before the noun, then it limits the meaning to a specific season of opportunity.

All right. So, it's kairos, meaning season, a season of time, an epic of time. Now, he's making it very specific for our lives, and he's talking about the time, the time that's set for you.

God has set a boundary on your life. Did you know that? Well, you say, yeah, everybody's born and then they die.

Well, it's, it's even more specific than that. It, it, even is, is limited. It gives us a limited season for, in, in which our time in which we can serve him.

There's a limited amount of time. I mean, there's going to be a time in my life when I won't be able to do what I'm doing right now. Now, you know, unless, of course, I just keep preaching and suddenly I just drop dead, you know, or get run over on the highway or something like that, you know, who knows.

[19:28] But there is a season that's set for us in which we are to serve him. We're to be walking for him in a way that fulfills his purpose, and he's set that time.

And so, we don't need to waste any of it. That's the point. If there's a limited amount of time for us to serve the Lord, to be a part of his purposes, then I think we could understand how important it is not to waste any of it.

And that's the idea. And it's interesting, and maybe even disturbing, that the Bible never speaks of that time being lengthened. It always speaks of it being shortened. Now, you know, and so we better be careful.

Don't waste any of the time that God has set for us to live for him, to serve him. All right?

The word redeemed means to buy back or to buy up. It's an interesting word. Redeemed, same word that's used also when we talk about redemption and Christ redeeming us.

[20:42] But here in this context means to buy up. And so, we should buy up all the time that we have been given and use it for the Lord's purpose and for his glory.

Kind of, in a sense, buying up the time. Thinking of it as, this is time allotted. I need to grab every bit of that time and use it for the Lord. The phrase, because the days are evil, refers then to both our motivation, but also our urgency.

The urgency to use every opportunity to serve the Lord. Now, all right, so here's the idea when we put all this together. Don't waste a single moment of the time that God has given you. Don't waste any of it.

Take every single opportunity to serve his purposes. Because you won't always be able to. There will be things that God has for you to do now that you need to do now.

That you can't necessarily do later. So, don't waste any of it. Because the days are evil. There are plenty of things that we would like to do and want to do and maybe God would lead us to do.

[21:56] But there are only little windows of opportunity to do that. I think of that on the larger scale in gospel ministry around the world. In our Muslim countries and communist countries.

And sometimes they're just windows that are open. And I've thought of that in terms of Ukraine. And Ukraine right now is a very free country. And you can share the gospel without any restriction.

But Russia is not as free. And, you know, Russia is knocking on the door of Ukraine. And we could see that window, that doorway close.

Or at least be diminished a great deal. So, we take every opportunity. Because the days are evil.

So, when we have the opportunity, take those opportunities.

And fulfill God's purposes. Alright, so walk restricted. The way revealed. The wisdom required. The waste renounced. And then there's one more. The will realized.

[22 : 58] Verse 17. Therefore, do not be unwise. But understand what the will of the Lord is. Alright. Now. The idea here is to come to a full realization of God's will for your life.

Paul uses a different word here for unwise. And the word is. Afron. Rather than. Sophia. Or Sophia. It's Afron. And it means to be without reason. Alright. So. To be unwise means. Don't be senseless.

Don't be foolish. Don't be stupid. Don't be without reason. Um. As. Then the word understand means. To bring together.

To bring together in your mind. To bring certain realities or facts or truths. Bring them all together into your mind. And so. Here. Here is the idea.

[24 : 00] We want to realize God's will. So. You know. We're walking. God's restricted way. We've been. We've been called to that. Uh.

It may not always be enjoyable. May not always be. What we want to do. But we have a line to walk. Uh. According to his word. And. That way.

That restricted walk. It's been revealed to us. Revealed to us. Uh. In the life of Christ. And revealed to us through his word. We need wisdom.

Wisdom's required. Uh. Holy wisdom. To be able to know the difference. And. Uh. To stay in that way. And. As we're walking in that way.

Let's not waste any of that time. That we have. Because the days are evil. The days are desperate. And as we are walking. The will of God.

[24 : 54] Becomes more. And more. Crystal clear. In our minds. His will. Is. Realized. Is realized. Dr.

Roy Beeman. And. Not a name. That you. Would recognize. Not necessarily. But. Dr. Roy Beeman. Was a professor. For a long time. At Mid-America Seminary. And.

A very. Intelligent man. I think he knew. Fourteen. Languages. And most of them. Dead languages. You know. Like. Egyptian. Egyptian. Some.

Ancient Egyptian. And. Other. Other. Things like that. Very intelligent man. But also. Very spiritual man. And a great deal of insight. Into. The truth of God's word.

And I. Kind of captured this quote from him. Grace. He said. Grace. Seeks not. To make. Philosophers. Or. Brilliant. Men. But.

[25 : 49] Men. Sensitive. To God's will. And. Of course. He's talking to a bunch of seminarians. So they're. All men. But he. You know. This applies to the ladies as well.

Now think about this statement. Grace. The grace of God. It doesn't seek to make us philosophers. Or even brilliant. It seeks to make us sensitive to the will of God.

To the will of God. And so we go from. You know. This is the ultimate. Kind of goal in all of this. To walk the line. To walk that restricted way.

Because we are seeking to understand. The will of God. Not only for. For our lives individually. But for our family.

For our church. For the work of. Of the Lord. In the world. And. A billion other things. That. God wants us to know.

[26 : 46] We want to know. To know his desires. We can use the word desires. That might even be better. Better there. Maybe more understandable to us. To. To know his desire. Every single day of our lives.

And understanding that. Everything that we do. All the decisions we make. All of our own personal desires. Need to fall in line.

And be consistent. With God's overall. Will and desire for our lives. And we. And we walk the line. And discover that. Every step of the way.

Thank you.