



11/12/24

When I look at the holiness God calls us to, I am so grateful that Jesus paid the price for my sin. I know that I cannot begin to measure up to the holiness of God. I remember singing the lyrics of a song, "Justice and mercy meet at the cross." I'm so grateful! His justice had to be met, so He mercifully gave His Son to meet it for us. Wow.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Ephesians 5:1-10 ~

How do I pursue Jesus in the way I live? How do I prayerfully live as a witness for Christ?

Vs. 1-2 ~ "Therefore..." What's the therefore there for? Therefore, since Jesus forgave me... "be imitators of God, as beloved children." Not only did Jesus forgive me, but He paved the way for me to be adopted by the Father through His blood. I am God's child. I am loved. So, being loved by God and knowing Him personally, follow His example.

In case I'm not sure what that looks like, I have Jesus to model after. He walked in love, so I need to walk in love. He loved me and gave Himself up for me as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to the Father. It pleased the Father to see His Son love us so deeply that He would give Himself for us. Jesus was a dying sacrifice, and God calls me to be a living sacrifice... as I model myself after Jesus.

Vs. 4-6 ~ What does it look like to imitate Jesus? Or rather, what does it NOT look like? Imitating the life of Jesus is NOT letting the following things even be named among God's kids... We should not be known for these things in any way, even by those who know us the best... especially by Jesus ~

•Sexual immorality... Jesus was never sexually immoral. It's so easy to go by what culture says rather than what Jesus says. Culture says it's no big deal, but God's word is what I need to follow after, not culture.

- ALL impurity... yikes. What does this not encompass??? This is anything that does not align with the holiness of God. Don't LIVE in this.
- Idolatry... letting anything be more important to me than Jesus. An idol is simply something that I let rule my heart rather than the love of God.
- Filthiness... morally offensive speech
- Foolish talk... lacking in the wisdom of God
- Crude joking... humor that I would not be comfortable saying if I could physically see Jesus in the room.

All these things don't line up with being an imitator of God and walking in love. What should my attitude, actions, and speech be instead? Thanksgiving. An attitude of thanksgiving toward the Lord for His mercy and grace... with my actions and words following that heart of thankfulness.

The truth is that I was saved from all these things. Those who make themselves KNOWN for these things, not turning to God in repentance, but being rooted in all the things that stand against God... have no inheritance with God, no matter what they say. We are known by our "fruit."

There will be people who will try to deceive with empty words. They will say things like, "I believe God is okay with what I'm doing because of His kindness." It's a lie. I have to go by what His word says. If I truly follow Him, I don't decide what is holy... He does. If that means I have to surrender something to Him, I just do. God LOVES me. But His is not an enabling or pampering love... It's a perfecting love. He perfects me with gentleness, but He didn't die for me so that I could continue living in slavery to my sinful passions that corrupt my soul.

Vs. 7-10 ~ Therefore... since the wrath of God comes upon "the sons of disobedience," those who according to Ephesians 2:3 "live in the passions of their flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and are by nature children of wrath," remember that I WAS once one of them! So don't partner with them. Don't be a "partaker" with them, sharing in the same behaviors with them. That is who I WAS, but that is NOT who I AM anymore... because Jesus gave His life for me and set me free!

I WAS darkness, but now I AM light in the Lord. Walk... let the path I am on reflect that I am a child of the light... so as I walk, the fruit of my attitudes and actions will be the fruit of ALL goodness, righteousness, and truth. That is how Jesus walked. That is how I need to walk... in gratitude for His goodness, righteousness, and truth poured into my life because of His love.

My goal as I walk and make decisions of how I will walk is NOT to fight for my rights or do what feels good in the moment, what makes me comfortable. My goal IS to discern what pleases God. The ESV says to "try" to discern what pleases Him. The Greek doesn't use that word. But the word for "discern" means to learn by testing it out, by examining what pleases the Lord. My whole goal needs to be that I would do what pleases God. My strategy is to study His word. To pray. To study the life of Jesus and seek to model myself after Him. This ALL stems from walking in His LOVE.

O Lord, let me never forget that You are NOT just about me being a great rule follower. You want me to be in close relationship with You, experiencing Your love, walking in Your love. Help me to see that the things You call me away from are things that don't help me experience or walk in Your love. They're things that seek to deceive me. Please help me cling to You and Your word. Help me to keep my mind always set on the gospel. Then I will easily live in gratitude and love. Praise Your name.