

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

Mimicking God

Ephesians 5:1-7

***Ephesians 5:1-7** Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*

Introduction

The first two verses of chapter five should have remained in chapter four. It completes the thought of:

***Ephesians 4:32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Imitate God

***Ephesians 5:1** Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children – The Greek word for “followers” is *mimetes*, from which we get the word mimic. Believers are to imitate the attributes of God in our actions, walk, speech, and the way we conduct our lives. When I say mimic, I do not mean in the silly sense of mimes. This is a very serious plea from Apostle Paul.

We are to be like children that naturally imitate what they see and hear from their parents, that is how we are to mimic God. It is instinctive for children to imitate their parents. It is their constant aim to learn of them, and to copy them in all things; whatever they see the parent do, whatever they hear him

speak, that they endeavor to copy and imitate. The attitudes and temperament of the parents are learned responses for the child.

So what do we imitate of God? We know that God is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent. He is self-existent, self-sufficient and eternal. We know that God is Holy, Majestic and worthy of praise. It is obvious that we cannot even begin to imitate those attributes. So what can we imitate of God? Well the communicable attributes of God would be faithfulness, love, mercy, compassion, goodness, forgiveness and wisdom. Those would be a good place to start. If you are believers today, then you are to imitate God and walk in the example of Jesus and avoid all those worldly ways in the previous chapter.

It is clear by the following verse that the mimicking that Paul is alluding to is to imitate God in love.

Walk in Love

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

And walk in love – Paul consistently uses the word walk “to describe a person’s outward life, the one that others see.

The word depicts progress in the Christian life because the Christian life never stands still...As Christians, we are either moving forward or sliding backward. We are becoming more like Christ or we are slipping back into our old ways.” (Phillips, 1993)

The word the Apostle uses for love is *agape*’ which is the “highest and noblest form of love which sees something infinitely precious in its object.” (Palmer, Wood, Marshall, Millard, Packer, & Wiseman, 1996). Agape love is not mushy or a warm feeling of emotion, but is an unselfish attitude towards others. Agape is used by believers to designate the God’s special unconditional love.

As imitators of God, we are to live our lives in agape.

When Jesus was asked by a lawyer which was the great commandment, Jesus talked of agapao:

Matthew 22:36-40 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? **37** Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt **love** the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. **38** This is the first and great commandment. **39** And the second is like

unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Agape is in stark contrast to the sexual love or forbidden lust found in Ephesians 5:3.

The Apostle John explains the agape in Jesus willingness to die:

John 15:13 *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Paul's epistle to the Romans likens agape to the saving work of Jesus as well.

Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

...as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour – How did Christ *agape*? How difficult was it for Jesus to become the only sacrifice that God would accept as a sweet smelling savour? I think believers in general do not understand the true depth of the agape that God insisted must take place. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans talked about the depravity of mankind. I find these words sobering. They define the kind of person that God sent His only begotten Son to die for. Listen carefully.

None is righteous, no, not one; I no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. ¹³ Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. ¹⁴ Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. ¹⁵ Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known. ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes. (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, 2001)

What kind of love did both God and Jesus have for His creation? They saw mankind as infinitely precious and worth saving from themselves. That love is *agape*!

Walk No More

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. -

This sacrificial *agape* is pitted against the self-indulgence type of love in this verse. Paul lists three types of love that we are not to imitate:

...*fornication* – is any kind of sexual immorality. “generic term for illicit sexual activity. In the Hebrew Bible, sexual misconduct includes seduction of a virgin, rape, sodomy, bestiality, incest, prostitution, and homosexual acts (cf. Lev. 18; 19:20–22, 29; 20:10–21).”¹

...*uncleanness* – is sexual impurity of any kind

...*covetousness* – is greed, the sexual desire such as coveting another man’s wife.

Neither filthiness – is obscene, shameful or indecent conversations. This is the only place in the New Testament that this word is used.

...*nor foolish talking* – may refer to talking to another to excite, especially in a superficial, pleasurable manner.

...*nor jesting* – concerning suggestive dirty jokes or lewd laughter about sexual sins.

...*which are not convenient* – this is not proper for a believer.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. -

For this ye know – be assured of my words that you know already.

... *that no whoremonger, nor unclean person* – anyone guilty of fornication, adultery, incest as described above.

... *nor covetous man who is an idolater* – a person that indulges and serves his own lusts and pleasures and gives himself over to these great sins. Covetousness is worship of the creature instead of

¹ Efirid, J. M. (2011). fornication. In (M. A. Powell, Ed.) *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)*. New York: HarperCollins.

the Creator, the highest treason against the King of kings (1 Samuel 15:3; Matthew 6:24; Philippians 3:19; 1 John 2:15). (Barnes, 1957)

...hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God – such a person that lives in the love of the world, shall never enter the kingdom of Christ and God. The kingdom of Heaven is at hand and for those that refuse to enter as their lives are filled with sexual lusts and desire to serve ones on self instead of accepting the agape of the Father and the Son will not inherit the Kingdom.

Don't Be Deceived

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Continuing the reading any man refusing the agape of God and the Son, will not enter into the kingdom of the Christ and God...Paul says:

Let no man deceive you with vain words – let no man by false excuses for such sins persuade you that there is no danger from living out this depraved and immoral life style.

...for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience – Judgment will follow those that reject the agape of God for the love of this world. Their rejection of Jesus for the lifestyle of the world will come with a heavy price...the wrath of God.

But be aware, as the Apostle Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus, we cannot overlook the point that he is warning the believers of the danger of living this immoral lifestyle. If believers are living in fornication, sexual uncleanness the wrath of God will be meted out. Whom God loves, he also chastens.

Hebrews 12:6-7 *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

Conclusion

Love vs Love. Love the world's way verses Love God's way. The love of the world will not bring joy and peace. Whereas, agape will.

Agape’ is the “highest and noblest form of love which sees something infinitely precious in its object.” Agape love is not mushy or a warm feeling of emotion, but is an unselfish attitude towards others. Agape is God’s special unconditional love.

As imitators of God, we are to live our lives in agape.

Robert C. Crowder