

Ephesians 14-09-07a

This is Sunday, the 7th of September, 2014. In our study of the book of Ephesians, the letter to the Laodicean church, we have come to chapter 5. We'll resume this morning in verse 3. We'll take an opportunity to pause and give each of us a chance to exercise one of the great functions of our personal priesthood, which is to go before the Lord and ensure that we have availed ourselves of His grace to have been purged and washed and made clean so that God the Holy Spirit can exercise His fulsome ministry of teaching and of edification of building us up, both as a group and individually. It is essential that there not be obstacles by way of sin or distraction or other issues that cloud our perception.

This is an important time. It isn't the only time. It isn't a definitional time for our spiritual life, but it is essential.

This is our spiritual meal, and in the same way that we ensure that we have good food and we eat it in an unstressed way so that we can digest and profit from it, it is the same when we partake of the manna contained in God's Word. It is important that our focus and our concentration be uninterrupted. We respect each other.

We refrain from distractions. We pray for ourselves and for each other that this time of study and of gleaning these truths from God's Word will accomplish its purpose in the hours and the days ahead. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for this time of fellowship, of encouragement, of unity and focus on the important things in this life.

We are surrounded. We are inundated with other views, other priorities. We dwell in the midst of a people who are largely occupied with the things of the moment, the things that stimulate today, the things that make life pleasant or stimulating or that pass the time in a happy fashion, and we are easily led and misled away from eternal truths and eternal priorities.

We thank you for the gift of your Spirit and His constant influence on our hearts to open our eyes, to enable us to see that which is unseen by the world. We can look at the horizon and see the chariots and the horsemen that comprise your presence and your power on this earth. The representative reminders that we are here temporarily, that this life is short and ephemeral and it is merely preparatory for eternal things.

We pray that as we look at the truth of your Word this morning in this portion of the book of Ephesians that God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, that He will impress it on our hearts, that He will enable us to see clearly the importance that it has and the pertinence that it has for us as we seek to live our lives in a way that pleases you and glorifies the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in His name, Amen. Therefore, Ephesians chapter 5 verse 1, therefore be those who do what you have seen God doing as dear children, as beloved children.

It is a wonderful thing to be a beloved child. It is a wonderful thing to have great parents and to

benefit from and bask in their love. It's a wonderful thing to be a parent and to be given the gift of stewardship for a soul or souls that God entrusts and allows us to enter into just a glimpse, just a taste of His love for us as Heavenly Father when we as parents feel and experience the concerns and the challenges as well as the privileges of being a parent.

And it's not an accident here in chapter 5 verse 1 that this concept is associated with being a doer of what God does. There's a specific aspect. God is the creator.

God flung the galaxies into space. He put all the stuff there for Hubble to pick up and put on film. I can't do that.

I didn't see God do that, by the way, so if I'm going to be one who does what I have seen God do, I didn't see Him do that. I see the results, but I didn't see Him create. So I'm not on the hook to do that.

I didn't see God incarnate the Lord Jesus Christ. I didn't see God effect salvation for the human race, so I don't have to figure out a way to effect salvation for other people. What have I seen God do? What is the context here of seeing what God has done that I should do? It's what I have seen in His role as my Heavenly Father, as my divine benefactor, as the one who entered me into relationship with Himself, who adopted me.

I was not a natural born son. I was, without God and without hope in the world, a far off, nothing to recommend me, nothing to make me worthy, and God, in grace, offered me the opportunity to be His child. And I said, yes, Lord, without question, without hesitation, I, through the Lord Jesus Christ, have been adopted as a child.

So be a doer of what you have seen God do as a child looking at a loving parent. You are a beloved child. What have you seen your loving Father do? Do that.

Loving parents balance expressions of love with training, with discipline, with instruction, rebuke, correction, information. It isn't always strawberries on your cereal. It isn't always a candy bar.

It isn't always your birthday. It isn't always, what would you like for supper? We'll make whatever you choose. Is it? A good parent provides structure.

A good parent defines boundaries. And a healthy child grows and comes to appreciate the predictability and the stability of known limits, known rules, fixed boundaries, and the knowledge that there is, in fact, a penalty and a consequence for crossing those lines. A good parent provides that structure, and a healthy child thrives within the walls that surround the vineyard.

It protects from what is outside, and it also limits what goes on inside. That's what a good father does. That's what good parents do.

And that's what good children grow and thrive in. What you have seen your father, who has

treated you as a beloved child, do. What you have seen him do, do that.

Now, this means, necessarily, that there are going to be two sides of the coin. There is the positive. There are those positive, happy expressions of love.

And there are also those necessary expressions of disapproval and discipline. It is inevitable. You can't be the cotton candy friend all the time.

There are times when you say there is a consequence for your disobedience. There is a root of evil and selfishness that is starting to manifest itself. I am going to nip it, nip it, nip it in the bud.

Right? It's necessary. Whom the Lord loveth. What does this say? Beloved children, dear children.

Whom the Lord loveth, He blesseth. Yes? Whom the Lord loveth, He gives them whatever they want. Whom the Lord loveth, it's a blank check.

It's the genie with an unlimited number of wishes. Rub the lamp, out it comes. New car, big house.

Don't have to work. Sixty inch flat screen television. Really, really fast internet.

Whom the Lord loveth, He blesseth. If there is a balance, do we have a verse like that somewhere? Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above. From the Father of lights.

Not the God of lights. The Father of lights. In whom is no shadow of turning.

He is the Father providing every good gift. But whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. And He scourges every child whom He receives.

He disciplines. He corrects. He rebukes.

He instructs. He indoctrinates through His Word and through the ministry of His Spirit in this age. That's how it's done, right? So what we have seen God do as dear children, we do.

How does this work itself out? That's what Paul is describing in Ephesians chapter 5. As Solomon so wisely points out in Ecclesiastes, there is a time for a thing and there is a time for its counterpart, its opposite. There is a time to express love in positive ways and there is a time to express love, and it is love, in discipline. If I did not love you, I wouldn't care that you're turning into a weed with a selfish, calloused attitude, and you're pleasing yourself and you're trampling everybody else.

If I didn't love you, I don't care. Get out. Just go away.

Quit bothering me. Whom the Lord loves, He disciplines. He loves us because discipline is

beneficial.

The one-ply thinking that afflicts humanity says, well, God lets bad things happen. Sometimes God causes bad things to happen, and the atheistic world uses this as an excuse for their disbelief, a rationale for their disbelief. And, of course, it's false.

Any good parent will create bad consequences for bad behavior because we love our children and we do not want them to grow up with a lack of skills and with a lack of knowledge of the way God's world works. And there is a consequence. There is a price that will be paid.

And if you love someone, you don't want them to experience eternally bad consequences. It is the same in the church, and here's the point. In the realm of believers, ask yourself this question.

Am I a believer? It depends. There are two meanings of the word believer. In Greek, the word for faith is pistos.

The verb is pistuo, which means to express faith. Faith is a tricky thing because in the Bible, the definition of pistos and pistuo is to have confidence in something that you have not personally verified by physical evidence. You haven't seen it, but you trust it.

I will have your car fixed on Monday. I can't see my car, can't see the mechanics, don't know where the parts are, don't know what might be going on underneath, but if you tell me it's going to be ready on Monday, I will plan accordingly. I have confidence.

Why do I have confidence? I've used this same mechanic before. I trust them. They tell me a thing, and it comes to pass.

So if they say the car's ready on Monday, I haven't seen it, I don't know who's working on it, I don't know where the parts are, I don't know, you know, did a wrench slip and he slashed a brake line and that held it up, I don't know what's going on. But if you tell me it's going to be ready on Monday, without anything other than past experience and my trust, I'm going to plan accordingly. Faith is the substance of hope.

It is the evidence of the invisible. I don't have faith because of evidence. I have faith in a realm where there is lack of evidence.

Well, just give me evidence and I'll believe. It's not faith. Where's the evidence for your God? You know, we saw this, there is no God movie or whatever that is.

What was the name of it? God is not dead. Yeah, we saw that movie last night, so I've got this sort of on the brain. It pertains to what we're talking about.

Faith, be imitators of God as dear children. I don't need God to rip the fabric of heaven and poke his face through and say, Hi there, I'm God. There is a filter right now that is screening out those

whom God is going to take into the eternal future with himself.

And it isn't, well, what I really want is, I really like a group of scientists. I want people who can amass the evidence and draw a conclusion based on the evidence. You know, because we're going forward.

I'm going to have some more galaxies, some more planets. I'm going to be doing some stuff, you know, maybe start over with the dinosaurs on some new planet. And what I really need is a bunch of engineers and scientists.

And I need a group of people who can amass evidence and triangulate the evidence and draw conclusions and say, well, you know, there's an overwhelming case to be made here based on these facts. God is not running a science lab. God is not a God of evidence, although there is evidence.

God is not a God of material, although there are material things. God is spirit. And those who worship him must worship him based on sufficient evidence.

Oh, wait, that isn't what Jesus said to the woman at the Samaritan well. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Evidence is there.

But God has carefully constructed the situation so that much of the evidence is only available and is only visible after you have expressed faith. We've seen some of the deep structure of God's word, some of the beautiful cathedral-like engineering that has gone into God's word. Why are we able to see that? Because we already believe in God, and we already believe in the integrity of his word.

Now, there's a thing called confirmation bias. I see what I want to see. I hear what I want to hear.

Because I want to believe that this, you know, girls are famous for this, especially when they're younger. I want to believe that he loves me, so any small spark of interest or positive, that's confirmation. And all of the rascally things that he does and all of the insensitive and even abusive things, I just screen that out because I want to believe, I want to think that all is well and that, you know, well, you know, he's a little rough around the edges, but it's hard to find.

I know he really loves me. And, you know, you just filter anything that doesn't match your preconceived idea. That is not the case when you start looking at Scripture because having affirmed in our own minds that God is a God of integrity and God's word has integrity, when we go in and we exercise it and we tax it and we place it under a microscope and we look at it in the original language, it is like DNA.

You think, are you kidding me? Accident, a bunch of old dusty Hebrews got together and tried to write some stuff and it's got this level of symmetry. It's got this level of interconnectivity. It never contradicts itself.

It never drops a stitch. Every seam, every line is perfect. These lines crisscross.

They carry from Genesis through Revelation. These books are written over a space of 2,000 years by 40 different authors and they never do anything but confirm and affirm and give a picture of the same God in the same way and themes are picked up. And there's no way that the guys in the New Testament could have been sophisticated enough.

They wrote down things that they didn't even know were in the Old Testament. And the Old Testament authors wrote down things that they had no way of knowing were going to come in the days of Jesus Christ. And at the deep subatomic level, you find this perfect symmetry.

Just as science is finding in nature, there is this perfect symmetry and this is why they have to call it the anthropic principle. There's something about the universe that just innately had to produce human beings. We can't explain it, but it's just too obvious to ignore.

But, of course, there's no designer. It's just the big unknown. I say all of that to say this.

There is a point and a purpose to this communication. There is a point and a purpose to this relationship. Why does God picture Himself and present Himself to us as a loving Father? As trustworthy? And we call ourselves believers and I'm more and more in favor of that word and less and less happy with Christian and Christianity because those terms now connote so much of what I don't believe.

I don't like Christianity. I don't like Christian culture. I don't think it's biblical.

I don't think it glorifies God. I think it is off-putting to any reasonable person who is looking for the bigger truths of life. I think when you look at Christianity, it's off-putting.

I am ashamed to be associated with the cultural Christianity in this country. These sort of giddy, shallow, ignorant people waving their hands in the air and singing repetitious praise songs. You ask them any meaningful question, they don't know the difference between Noah and Moses.

They don't know the difference between Hananiah and Hannah. They don't know the difference between Gideon and Samson. They don't even recognize the names.

It's shameful. And I... It's like the old Mission Impossible. You know, should any of your... I am forced to be caught or killed, the secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions.

It's what the little tape used to say to Jim Phelps. A lot of you are too young to remember that. But you'd always get this little tape and it would give him his mission.

He'd find it in a mailbox or it would drop out of a lamp or something. And he'd... Good morning, Jim. You know, here's the situation.

Some South American dictator needs to be taken out. You guys got to fool him into thinking he's living 40 years in the past. Give him surgery, shoot him full of hormones.

He's going to feel young. He's going to reveal the hiding place of this deal, you know. And they dress up and they make the guy think he's woken up in the past.

And he does the same thing he did 40 years ago. They find the thing. But they say, by the way, you know, you got to do this.

And you only got so much time. But if you guys get caught, we're going to pretend we don't know you. You can't say, hey, wait a minute, I'm working for the government of the United States.

You know, you're on your own. Well, there are times when I feel like disavowing any knowledge or any connection. And I was talking to an individual a couple weeks ago, I think I told you this, who is a missionary to people that are involved in other religions.

And he said, when I'm talking with people and they say, are you a Christian? I say, no. He's not only a believer in the Lord Jesus, he is a missionary. And he's spending his life and investing his time full time as an ambassador for Christ.

But when a Hindu or a Buddhist or a Muslim asks him, are you a Christian? He says, no. Because he says Christian to them connotes a connection with this culture and this paradigm. And I'm not a part of that.

And I thought, you know, I'm not either. It is interesting that Christian says, that Acts says they were first called Christians. It doesn't say they called themselves Christians, they were called Christians at Antioch.

And I think, well, you know, maybe I don't want to be called that. Maybe I don't want to call myself that. What do we want to be? As beloved children of the Father, we want to be doers of what we have seen Him do.

We have seen Him express love. We have seen Him express forgiveness. We have seen Him enter into patient, long-suffering relationship with us.

But there is a basis and a criteria. This is the point. This is the point.

You've been suffering along with me here through this extended introduction. This is the point. What have we seen God do? God is loving.

God is merciful. God is long-suffering. God is patient.

God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But guess what? Some will perish. Some do not come to repentance.

And there are some that God punishes, both inside and outside the household of faith. God, our Father, we didn't see Him do creation. We didn't see Him part the Red Sea.

We didn't see Him take the top off of Mount Carmel. What have we seen Him do? We have seen Him accept people, and we have seen Him condemn people. We've seen that.

We have that record. We have that knowledge. And the question for us is, how do you know when to do which? When do we accept? When do we enfold? When do we embrace? When do we extend our circle of fellowship and friendship and encouragement and patience and forgiveness? When do we include someone under that umbrella? And when do we say, you know, if you'll just step right over here, I need to close this door between you and me.

I need to put distance between you and us. There is a time for you to live in my house, and there's a time for you to not. There's a time for you to sit at our table.

There are people who are allowed to sit at my table, and there are people who are not. Why? Because we're judgmental? Because we're bigoted? Because we are, you know, holier than thou? No, because we do what we have seen our loving Heavenly Father do, and God makes a distinction. People like to point in this day of toleration to the Lord Jesus, eating with publicans and sinners.

Look at the Lord Jesus. He didn't condemn anyone, you know, all comers. That is not what the Gospel record shows.

We've been through three of the four Gospels together, verse by verse. Have you ever seen Jesus be indiscriminate? Who did he eat with? He ate with those who were interested. He ate with those who were responsive.

He ate with those who wanted to know the truth. And if it was a Pharisee, he'd go to the Pharisee's house. If it was a prostitute or a tax collector, he turned no one away who came to him, who invited him to say more.

He would sit in a house, and people would assemble, and he would talk to them all day long if they were interested. But it's the same Jesus who stood up and pronounced the seven woes on the Pharisees who weren't interested, who were rejecters, who called the truth of the Lord Jesus a lie, and put their lie forward as God's truth. And the Lord Jesus said, Woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites.

You have a form, but you deny the truth. You have a shell, but you have no content. Outside, you've got whitewash.

Inside, you're full of dead men's bones. You suppress the truth in unrighteousness. You're outside.

Jesus didn't go to the house of Caiaphas and attend a feast. Jesus didn't go to these members of the Sanhedrin that were plotting his death and say, Can't we just talk about this? Peter, James, John, let's hire a house, follow a man with a jug of water on his shoulder, and when you find it, set it all up for a feast, and let's invite those Sanhedrin members over, and let's just have a chat. You know, they'll come around.

They'll say, Did Jesus ever do that? No. You and I are to be those who do what we have seen God doing. That's what Ephesians 5 is about.

Walk in love as Christ loved us. How did Christ love us? Has Christ's work on the cross been extended to everybody, irregardless? Or is there a criteria on which it is granted, on which it is applied? If God's love, if God loves the world and Jesus loves everybody, why isn't everybody saved? God drew a line. God made some sort of a distinction.

There's the ins and the outs. You will come to me on that day and say, Lord, Lord, in your name, did we ever do all these things? And you're going to shut the door. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to shut the door in the face of people.

Isn't that interesting? You remember that? Many will come to me on that day and say, Lord, Lord, in your name, have we not done these wonderful things? When he's sitting down inside and he's going to look back out and say, I never knew you. Depart from me and shut the door. I was thinking about that this past week.

You think about Revelation 3.20. Right now, Jesus says, I'm outside and you're inside. I stand at the door and knock. And if any man opens the door, I will come in and share that fellowship meal.

That's now. We as believers, the Lord Jesus says, look, I'm available. I'm knocking on the door.

If you hear my voice, if you respond to my voice as my sheep do, I will come in and we will share fellowship. But there's many people who don't. There's a cultural Christianity that is preferable.

It's social. It's fun. It's stimulating.

There are waves of emotion. It's like having an experience. It's a thrill ride.

And it's comfortable. I'm with people who are comfortable with me. I'm comfortable with them.

Ain't this great? Not so much when the Lord Jesus knocks on the door. Not so much when it's one-on-one with the Lord. Well, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, and this is something we do, notice Jesus doesn't say, behold, I knock the door down and come in and sit at your table. Behold, my divine battering ram. Hey, hear that crash? The Lord's here.

I stand at the door and knock. It is an opportunity. We have to hear.

We have to go walk over and open the door and invite the Lord Jesus in, not to our hearts for salvation, into our lives for fellowship, for conversation. The meal was a time of conversation. And we need to listen to what the Lord Jesus has to say and heed it.

If any man will hear my voice, open the door, I will come in and share a fellowship meal with him and he with me. Two people at the table, you and the Lord Jesus. The day is coming when many will come to another door.

The Lord Jesus is on the inside. The Lord Jesus has sat down at the table with manna. And somebody is going to be on the outside knocking at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open up.

And the Lord Jesus is going to hear the voice, open the little sliding window there and say, yes. Lord, Lord, in your name, I did all of these things. I was a wonderful cultural Christian.

We all accepted each other and we were all happy and we sang all of those songs and we made all of those banners and we put all that stuff on YouTube and we made all of these wonderful media events. And we made a whole lot of racket in your name, Lord. He's going to say, I don't remember us ever sitting down to the table together.

Depart. You got to let the Lord Jesus in now if you want the Lord Jesus to let you in later. It's all believers.

You wouldn't be there to knock on the door if you were an unbeliever. And the Lord Jesus isn't knocking on the door of an unbeliever's heart in Revelation chapter three. These are letters to the churches.

These are letters to those who have the potential to be overcomers. This is what Ephesians 5 is about. You cannot take it out of its context.

Be those who do what you have seen God doing as beloved children. Remember when Moses interposed himself between God and the people who had messed up? The Lord Jesus interposed himself between God and us who had really messed up. The Lord Jesus continues to intercede for us at the Father's right hand.

And we should go to bat for one another. Which means we first have to have accepted each other and forgiven each other. And you can pray.

Part of prayer, part of intercession is to ask God to not inflict deserved punishment on those who have offended us. Doesn't it give new meaning to the passage that says, I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those... Why would you pray for those that spitefully use you? If you spitefully use me, let the Lord rain down fire and brimstone on your head. Maybe it'll do you some good.

If you really love someone, you're going to pray, even if they've despitely used you, that God will be gracious. That God can woo them rather than hammer them. That God can attract and draw them rather than drive them.

That God can win them with love rather than having to win them with judgment and discipline. Lord, don't punish them on my account. This is the mind of the Lord Jesus.

This is hard, but that's what we're called to. Walk in love as the Lord did. What did the Lord do when He was walking in love? Does it say, as the Lord did, going about healing all who came to Him, as the Lord did, going around saying wonderful, encouraging words to people? It says, no, He gave Himself.

He sacrificed Himself. It cost Him something. He interposed Himself between us who are deserving of divine wrath and a righteous and holy Father.

Jesus put Himself in between, allowed Himself to be torn in half to make a way through the veil so that we could stand faultless before the throne. That's what the Lord Jesus did. That's what we have seen God do, is honor that sacrifice.

That's why in verse 3, when you see that adversative conjunction, but there is also a limit to God's mercy and God's grace, and there is a time to draw a line. There is a time to close the door. Do not fail the grace of God.

If you do not purge out the leaven, if you allow corruption and that which is defiled into the holy precincts, there is a penalty. We saw a couple of weeks ago that for priests, there is a very high standard of righteousness. The daughter of a priest who defiled herself has defiled the priest, and she is to be stoned and then burned to purge out the defilement.

You are a priest. The Lord Jesus Christ is our high priest. And to countenance corruption, to fellowship with defilement, is a direct violation of this passage.

You either have to dismiss the authority of Scripture and say, well, the Bible is not really the Bible, God is not really God, Jesus isn't really Jesus, there isn't really such a thing as holy and defiled, or you have to take this into account. Fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting. This is the word in Greek that we get propriety from, what is as is proper, as is fitting for sanctified ones.

This is prepo, prepo in Greek. Do you know what is fitting for those who are dedicated to God? They used to stamp the vessels and the implements and the tools that were used for temple worship, holy to the Lord, holy to the Lord, holy to the Lord. And they did not allow them to touch the unclean thing.

Nobody who was in a state of ritual defilement was allowed to get anywhere near those things.

You are a priest. No getting around it.

You are a believer priest. Read Hebrews. The Lord Jesus Christ is our high priest.

We are a holy people. We are priests. And God's expectations for the sanctification and the holiness of our lives is rigid and unchanging.

There is a time for tolerance. There is a time of opportunity. God gives all of us the opportunity to live and breathe and exist in a sinful corrupt state.

But at the point that the issue has been made clear, and by the way, this doesn't mean, oh gosh, you're an unbeliever, I can't talk to you, you're somebody living in some sort of an evil lifestyle or state of sin, I know, can't talk to you. That isn't what it says. Paul says in Corinthians, the second one, I'm not telling you that you can't have any truck with anybody that's not a holy sanctified believer in your church, otherwise you'd have to leave the world.

What he is saying, do what God does. God grants a space of time. Traditionally it's understood that there was 120 years from the time Noah started building the ark until the flood came.

It's a time of opportunity. But once it becomes clear that someone is not interested, isn't asking, isn't open or sensitive to the opportunity for accepting the grace of God, a change of mind, an interest in the truth, there's not that little flickering flame that can be fanned into relationship with God. When someone makes it clear, that ain't for me, forget it, there is a time to draw a line and say, you know, I can't make it.

You invited me to this thing, can't make it. Hey, you know, we ought to get together. Well, ain't going to happen.

There is a time, and it is necessary. This isn't frivolous, it isn't trying to be condemnatory or picky-oonish or anything else. It is the walk in love, and love is sometimes harsh.

Love sometimes creates a distinction, closes a door. And by the way, God uses these things in a positive way. Sometimes what you think you're going to accomplish by acceptance and toleration and endless continuing contact with the thing, you think, well, you know, but if I just wait long enough.

Many times it is the break and it is the distinction and it is the separation that God the Holy Spirit uses to force the issue in that person's soul. You are the obstacle because you are disobedient. You are slowing down the process.

You are the gum in the works. You are what is holding up the work of God in someone's life because you are disobedient. You are too tolerant.

You allow sin in the camp, and God can't bless the camp because you are not willing to purge out

that which is unholy. God's ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

And His plan is much more perfect. We, in our little two-dimensional perception, think, well, this is the way that would be best. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

If you genuinely have a concern for others and you want the best for them, then be obedient and do what God commands. Commit them to God. Pray for those people.

But when it's time to close the door, that door needs to be closed. And if you fail to do so, how many examples I could give you from Scripture of people who fail to obey, and it creates so many problems. People who are obedient, even when it's hard, those are the ones that God can bless.

And God blesses people in their periphery. God will bless an entire household because one person is faithful, because one person does not compromise. One person in a household, God says, you know what, for the sake of the one, I'll bless the whole household.

I'll leave the entire city of Sodom in place if there's just ten people living there who honor me. A very small presence produces a very wide scope of blessing. But you cannot put yourself in a place where God can't bless you.

If God can't bless you, He can't bless anybody in your periphery either. And He can't bless us when we are disobedient. He can't bless us when we compromise, when we're apathetic, when we corrupt and defile ourselves and allow corruption and defilement in the camp, in the soul, in the environment.

Trust God. Be obedient. He knows best.

And many times it is your obedience in the hard things that are going to create a turning point for the very people you care about. The very people that you end up having to separate from God can use that. But He can't use it so long as us, we, in our little limited myopic view, think that we know better than God.

Well, in this case, Lord, I just really can't follow Your will because look at what would happen. How arrogant. Trust God.

Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is proper, as is fitting for sanctified ones. Be a polished reflection of the glory of God. Don't gum up your mirror and expect the glory of God to do its work.

Let the light of Christ shine off a cleansed, sanctified life. Well, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to look at these attributes and the progression they make from what's inside to what's outside.

It will help us understand what is and is not the truth. We started out in verse 25, put away the deception. We're going to see it again in verse 6, let no one deceive you with hollow words.

It's where we'll pick up when we come back.