

Ephesians 14-09-14a

This is Sunday, the 14th of September, 2014. We resume and continue and advance our study of Ephesians chapter 5. We are in the first third of that chapter. We're going to resume this morning particularly at verse 5. We have a little bit of finish up in the preceding verse.

But we're going to be looking at verses 5 through 7. We'll take a moment to give each of us the opportunity to go before the Lord and acknowledge any transgressions, any distractions that might impede the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. We're spending time formally looking at the Word of God together. And it is, as you well know, an action and a ministry of God's Holy Spirit that takes what would otherwise be words on a page and makes them meaningful and understandable and applicable for us.

Without Him, it does not happen. This is why the world doesn't understand the Bible. God the Holy Spirit is still confronting the world with the issue of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

When they come to the Scriptures, it is opaque. It is like the parables were to Jesus' audience. It just doesn't penetrate.

It doesn't make good sense. It is natural to expect that this would be the case. If everybody in the world said, Oh, that Bible, that's just a wonderful book.

I really like that thing. There would be something wrong. It is designed to be opaque.

It is designed to be a closed door to all but those who have God's Holy Spirit. It's not because we're a cult. It's not because we're trying to be mysterious.

It's not exclusivism for its own sake. It is necessary. Why would God do that? Why would God wall off the truth of His Word to all except those like us who have the ministry of God's Spirit? Why would He do that? Because it focuses attention on the cross.

It focuses attention on the Christ. It focuses attention on the resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus. And that is the issue that is clear.

That is the issue that counts. That is the door. And you don't get to look around inside the house until you come through the door.

And the Lord Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. And God in grace, God in mercy, obscures the deeper truths of Scripture so that the world is left with understanding one thing. God the Holy Spirit makes that one thing clear.

Salvation comes from God alone through Christ alone. And that's the issue. It is a grace that people can't, as unbelievers and even as faithless believers, get into a serious investigation of divine truth.

It's not pertinent. It wouldn't help them if they understood it. Christ is the issue.

And for you and me, as we live in this world as witnesses to the Lord Jesus, our lives should reflect Jesus Christ. That's what this passage this morning is about. We have often said that there needs to be balance when it comes to witnessing.

Well, we're in a witnessing passage. The witnessing passage for Christians is not Matthew 28, 19, and 20. It is not Acts 1-8.

It is Ephesians chapter 5. This is your evangelism, witnessing, reflect Christ to the world passage. Ephesians chapter 5. This is it. This is how you can serve God by communicating the truth of Christ to the lost world.

This is it. So it's critically important that as with all witnessing, as with all divine truth, God the Holy Spirit be in it. He has to be in it as we study it so that we can understand it.

He has to be in us so that we can process it and apply it so that we know when to speak and when to remain silent. We know when to associate and when to disassociate. We know when to identify and when to disinvest with causes, with groups, with people, with issues.

This is our manual for evangelism right here. So it's important that we begin and emphasize that none of this can take place without God's power in the person of the Holy Spirit. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful individually and as a group for the inexpressible grace that you have bestowed on us.

We think along with David, what is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you visit him? You could accomplish so much without involving us, without including us, and yet you have chosen in the mystery of your own will to work your will to reflect your glory in us and through us. The most unlikely of materials, the most unlikely of means, and yet we know that among the angelic hosts and among the world of human beings, you have chosen to embody your person and your truth in humanity, in the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not come as an angel.

He didn't come as a divine being to live and dwell among us. He did not travel in our midst in the invisible glow of Shekinah. He came in human flesh.

He lived among us. He was tested as we are. He experienced what we experience, and he reflected the life that can be lived in the power of your spirit and in the guiding light of your word.

We thank you for him. We thank you for his faithfulness, his obedience, his love for us, expressed in laying down his life for us, and then taking it up again in the power of your Holy Spirit, sitting now at your right hand, interceding on our behalf, representing us before your throne. We are so privileged to live in this age and be his representatives on this earth, his body, his potential future bride.

We pray that as we look at these truths from your word this morning, that God the Holy Spirit will minister them to us in an effective way that will bring to light the areas in our thinking and in our behavior that need improvement, that need cleansing, that need rebuke and correction. We pray that those areas where we are doing as we should will be strengthened, that light will shine on our paths so that we know where we are doing well and should continue and where we are not doing well and should change our minds. We thank you for the fellowship of believers who love the Lord Jesus, who love your word, who invest themselves, their time, their energy in understanding it and applying it.

We thank you for the encouragement and the up-building that comes through the dedication and faithfulness of such believers, the blessings that you distribute in our midst, in us and through us as a group and as a fellowship. And we pray that God the Holy Spirit will superintend our worship and our fellowship this morning and that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified. We pray it in His name.

Amen. Ephesians chapter 5, as we have noted now for many weeks, begins, Therefore be those who do what you have seen God doing. And this is an emphasis on application, isn't it? He doesn't say, think what God thinks.

He says, do what God does. We have had four chapters of what to think. The basis for thinking, the perspective of thought in Him, united together, brought together.

The dividing wall of separation has been removed. Don't worry about origins. Don't worry about ethnicities.

Don't worry about cultures. Don't worry about genders. Don't worry about master-slave relationships.

Don't worry about all of the things that the world uses to define perspective and define viewpoint and define opinions and define values and define goals. Put that aside because it partakes of deception. The God of this world is in those things.

Now if you have an ethnicity, that's what it is. If you have a culture, that is what it is. You have a gender.

You have an assignment in the world. That's all fine. But it is not definitional.

Ask yourself this question, what defines me? What establishes my identity in this world? What's the first thing that comes to my mind? For some people, it's their, they don't say race anymore, it's their ethnic origin. For some people, that's the first thing. Well, I'm white.

I'm black. I'm Middle Eastern. I'm Hispanic.

I'm, pick your ethnicity. I'm this, I'm that. I wear the clothes.

I hark back to the cultural heritage. I'm a Native American. I'm going to put a feather in my hair and if my hair gets much longer, I can braid it.

And I'll, you know, start stringing a bow and bringing home my own venison or something. But there are people for whom this is really important. It's definitional.

There are people who define themselves by a culture. In the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, especially the further west you get in the metroplex, you're going to find boots with a riding heel. You're going to find stets and hats.

You're going to find, you know, some of them are working cowboys. Some of them are urban cowboys. Some of them have got a rifle rack in the back of the pickup.

And it is definitional. You see people like this. It'll even affect the way they walk.

I've seen young men who are, seriously, I've seen young men who are insecure about themselves. And so they'll put on jeans and boots and a hat. Or they'll put on riding leathers and get some tattoos and piercings.

And they try to emulate what they have seen in that culture. I'm a biker. I'm a cowboy.

I'm an upwardly mobile yuppie or whatever they call yuppies now. I'm, you know, I'm in the upper middle class working to be lower upper class or whatever they're striving for. I'm wearing a \$900 suit and Gucci shoes.

And I drive a Porsche that I owe \$65,000 on. And I own the bulb in the taillight. That's as much as I've actually paid for.

I'm an upwardly mobile guy. Think about this. Look around.

Do you see people defining themselves by maybe it's their job? I am a lawyer. I am an oil businessman. I am a this or a that or the other.

There are a lot of people that are in the futures economics stock market and that. People will find something, and this defines me. Many times young people as they emerge from the cocoon of their families and get out into the early sproutings of their adulthood.

You know, there's this almost truism that goes on. Well, I've got to find myself. I've got to figure out who I am.

What are they looking for? A lot of times. Well, let's see. Am I going to be my ethnicity or am I going to be my job or am I going to be my hobby or am I going to be my, you know, am I going to look around at something that I admire somebody that was influential in my earlier life? I'm going to be like them.

Question again. What defines you? What's the first thing that comes to your mind if somebody confronts you and says, Who are you? What are you? People's security and sense of worth is often grounded in the answer to that question. I'm insecure because I don't really know what I am.

Or I'm secure because look at my boots. They might be motorcycle boots. They might be cowboy boots.

They might be linemen or oil field boots. They might be beetle boots. They might be lumberjack boots.

I'm a lumberjack. And I'm OK. Think about this.

I ask you for a third time. What defines you? I know what you're thinking. Well, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what defines me. Not so fast. You can ask a question, and there's the answer that we would like to believe.

And then there's the answer that everybody else would vote on at your funeral. Right? For example, I might like to believe that I'm a cowboy. But if I'm, as they say, all hat and no cattle, at my funeral, would people say, Oh, yeah, you know, he was a cowboy.

They'd say, He was a wannabe cowboy. I could go buy myself a motorcycle. You know, this has been on my mind now for many weeks.

I'm going to have to get a little model one, and that'll, you know, pour water on the parade. But I could go get a motorcycle. I could get some leathers.

I could go hang out with bikers. I know some guys that are great bikers, great guys. I could join the group.

I could go on rides. By the way, I know more than one. I could go on trips and stuff.

Listen, I could join. There's a big Mazda Miata club. There's Volkswagen air-cooled clubs, and they've actively recruited me.

Oh, come to our Volkswagen air-cooled club thing. Most of them are. Some of them were even conceived in Volkswagens, and they're kind of like leftovers from the.

It's kind of a scary crowd, actually. You have to go in there with some trepidation. But listen, look, I could do that.

I could I could put on a headband and put a peace sign in the back window of the bus and go join an air-cooled club. I could join a motorcycle club. I could run up there to Tahlequah and try to be a Cherokee.

There's a lot of things I personally could do. There's a lot of things you personally could do. But at my funeral, is somebody going to stand up and say, you know that Sam? He was just the biggest Cherokee I ever saw.

No, I'm not. He was the biggest air-cooled leftover acid-fried hippie from the 60s I ever saw. Look at his Volkswagen bus.

No, I'm not. Well, look at that motorcycle parked out there next to the van that's hauling off his personal belongings to pay off his debts. He was a big-time biker.

No, I'm not. I might like to think that. And there's a lot of people who choose an identity, who invest in an identity, who tell themselves, I am this identity.

And it is, what is the word there at verse 25 of chapter 4? Put away the deception. Put away the falsehood. Don't kid yourself.

Now, again, I ask you, what defines you? How do we answer that question? It isn't what we like to think. What defines us? It is priorities and use of resources over time. What are your goals, your values, and your priorities as expressed in the way you use the resources you have over time? And by resources, I mean primarily your time.

It is what you invest your time in. That's what defines you. Now, let's just take something that's easy to abstract.

Let's say I wanted to be a Cherokee. I wanted to join the tribe. I haven't been a Cherokee.

I lived in Tahlequah and didn't even know what was going on two blocks away at the Cherokee headquarters. But I lived in Tahlequah for a year and a half. The headquarters of the nation.

I've got some great, great, great, great somebody or another grandmother on the Dawes roll, so I qualify. I can go in there. I can sign up.

Okay, got the card. I'm a card-carrying Cherokee. Now, if I'm going to claim that as my identity or a significant part of my identity, what should I do? What would convince you that I really was a Cherokee? Pulling out that card? Or if I subscribe to the Cherokee Phoenix, if I started taking an ongoing and deep interest in the issues that confront the Cherokee nation, such as the citizenship that was granted to slaves that fought alongside the Cherokees in the Civil War.

And there was a treaty that was made with those black individuals, those black men that fought with the Cherokees. They said, look, you've stuck with us through thick and thin. You fought by our sides.

You are members of our tribe. We embrace you. We take you in.

You and your descendants are equal members with us. Well, over time, as with nearly all of the Native American tribes, everything disintegrated and went away. There was no identifiable Cherokee nation for decades, decades, decades and decades.

There was no really identifiable Cherokee nation until about 1971. Everybody thinks, oh, the stuff in Cherokee and Salagi and all that stuff in Tahlequah. There wasn't any of that until recently.

Well, when they got back and reestablished it and they said, all right, here's our citizenship requirements. You've got to have an ancestor, a lineal blood ancestor on the Dawes Roll, which is the inventory of living Cherokees in the start around 1889 and going through the early 1900s. They were counting all the Cherokees and saying, what are you? Who are your people? And they wrote them down.

It was the Dawes enrollment. Well, you've got to have somebody on that list. And they made it official and they voted it along.

It's in the Constitution of the Cherokee Nation. You've got to have a lineal blood ancestor on the Dawes Roll or you ain't in the tribe. Well, as things got ginned up and they started getting organized and counting everybody and having elections for chief and getting everything all fancied up and getting ready to start building casinos and the rest of it, come to find out some of the black folks who had a great, great, great grandfather that had fought in the Civil War and had been granted Cherokee tribe citizenship, guess what they don't have? They don't have a lineal ancestor on the Dawes Roll.

So now there's a question in the Cherokee Nation. Should these people be granted citizenship and be allowed to vote and have whatever standing or privileges or opportunities pertain or not? Does a treaty made by a previous generation, several generations back, is it binding on people today? Or can the nation get together and vote and say, we repudiate that treaty and we're not going to believe it anymore? Well, this is an issue in the nation. If I'm going to be a Cherokee and I'm going to identify myself as a Cherokee, then I need to inform myself about issues such as that and have a position, pro or con.

And I need to know who's running for chief. I need to know what the issues are that are facing the nation, facing those who are living still in Cherokee territory up there in and around Oklahoma. It's not enough to flash a card and say, look at me.

I extend this description and this illustration for a reason. Ask yourself again, this is the fifth time I've posed this question now. What defines you? Are you a card carrying believer in the Lord Jesus Christ or are you an actual believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? At the funeral, what are people going to say? When your life is over and it is reviewed, and by the way, that's just a shallow, superficial review at the funeral.

The real review is coming up at the judgment seat of Christ. It is real. It is more tangible than

anything in this room.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Every one of us and the deeds done in the body, what we have done in this life, not what we said, not what we thought, not what we wished, not what we hoped. Not what was a convenient answer so we could push aside the question.

We will stand before the judgment seat and the details of our life are going to be gone through. This is no joking matter. And just because you've got the card that says, hey, when I was at the age of X, I believed in Jesus, that does not do anything more than keep you from being tossed into the lake of fire.

What defines you? This is what is being spoken of in Ephesians chapter 5. This is how you make sure you're not just a fool. I fool myself. I try to fool other people.

I put on the hat. I put on the boots. I stick in the feather.

I crank up the throttle on the motorcycle. I put another footprint of the great American chicken on the back of my bus. And now I'm a peacenik and I'm a hippie and I'm in the, oh, you know, Woodstock.

Yeah, that's me. It's not a bumper sticker. It's not a facade.

It's not a superficiality. What defines you? Look at Ephesians chapter 5. Be those who do what they have seen God doing. It's doing.

It is the investment of time. It is how you invest your resources. If I'm going to be a thing, I want to be informed.

I want to be involved. I want to be invested, informed, involved, invested. That defines me.

Right? So be those who do what they have seen God doing and walk. This is your journey. This is your path.

This is your ongoing expenditure of time. This is your one foot in front of another day by day by day. And when you're walking, you're going somewhere, right? Which direction are you headed? You're not walking in aimless figure eights.

You're not walking, bumping into things. Walk. This is a purposeful march in a direction.

You have a goal. There's a reason to walk. You're trying to get somewhere.

This is why so many of us walk fast. I find myself continually leaving my family behind, and I feel bad about that. My legs are longer than theirs.

And I think walking is busyness. I don't want to be walking. I started here.

I want to be there. Walking is just a delay. So the faster I can walk or the faster I can drive or the faster I can move, all of us are this way.

If they've got a nine-hour flight to the East Coast and they've got a four-hour flight to the East Coast, which one are you going to take? Well, I want the four-hour flight. I don't want to waste five hours on the journey. Well, it's a little bit different here on walk.

Walk in love. This defines the walk. This is how you walk.

And the purpose here isn't speed. It's quality. He doesn't say walk quickly, does he? He doesn't say walk as fast as you can.

Run, don't walk. He doesn't say that, does he? It's not defined by the speed of it. It's the quality of it.

Walk by means of love. This is definitional. How you and I negotiate our day, how we treat other people, that defines us.

Are you routinely impatient? Are you routinely short? Are you routinely critical? Are you routinely slack? Are you routinely over-tolerant? Are you routinely anything goes? I don't care. Say anything, do anything. I'm easy.

You'll never get any confrontation out of me. I just roll with the flow. I'm just going to ignore everything around me.

I'm just going to float like a bobber. The ocean can be stormy or calm. I just float.

I'm uninvolved. I'm uninvested. I don't care.

This says walk by means of, in the sphere of, love. This defines us. And the way you get through the day, that's your real definition.

Don't just glibly say, well, of course, I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus. Look at my notebook. Look, I've got four Bibles.

I've worn out three of them and I'm on the fourth. It's the walk. What do you do with your resources daily? What is the pattern of your goals and priorities and values? Paul says don't kid yourself because you're not fooling anybody else.

We like to think we are certain things. Those around us typically know us better than we know ourselves. Walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us.

Love that is sacrificial and beneficial is Christlike love. This means, definitionally, I am not out for number one. Who are we supposed to love the most of anybody? You can say it out loud.

Who are we supposed to love more than anybody? First commandment, right? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might, all thy strength. First and greatest commandment. If love is sacrificial toward self and beneficial toward others, how are we sacrificial toward God? You've got a memory verse for that, right? Adam Romans.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, invoking what God has already done mercifully for us, that you present yourselves a living sacrifice. That's love. You can say you love God.

Oh, I love God, love the Bible, love all of that Jesus talk. I love all of that brotherhood and Jesus with the child on his knee and breaking the bread and everybody having a nice meal out there on the lawn. I love that.

I love that Christianity stuff. I love the prayer. I love the angelic choirs, you know, singing.

I love the praise songs. I love to wave my hands and feel good. Well, to a greater or lesser extent, we, you know, people that do that stuff as a real big thing, we're all made out of the same clay.

And there's a part of us that relates to that. Everybody likes to feel good. Everybody likes to, there's nothing wrong with being wafted up on a wave of emotion.

Anybody that's ever stood in uniform and heard the song of their service played, looking at an American flag, you know what it's like to be lifted on a healthy wave of appreciative emotion. However, it is the practice that defines us, not the feeling, not the wish. It is the practice, the walk.

The walk defines us. When you walk, you are either walking toward your own destination or you are walking toward the destination that God has requested, that God has commanded, that God has called us to. You think about a calling.

When I was little, my siblings and I, we'd go out and play in the woods, play in the pasture, play, you know, big yard, time for dinner. You get called. One or more of the names get shouted.

Cowbell might be rung some of the later days. We didn't have the bell when we first got there, but by the time I left, there was a bell. But there's a call.

Now, you think about calling. On the radio, the broadcast we listen to on the way over here, talking about election and calling and all of that. What is a call? What does a call do? Not a phone call.

If you call, what are you doing? If your dog's outside, you call them. What are you trying to get them to do? Come to me. Right? Your mother hollers, supper time, come to me.

Come here. You're far away, get closer. You're outside, come inside.

Right? That's the call. And calling, the whole election sovereignty, free will scenario, make your calling and choosing secure. Endeavor to make your calling and election secure.

What does it mean? If you hear the call, respond. Move toward the sound of the voice. My sheep know my voice, and they come when I call them.

That's what Jesus said. So, we're back to the question. What defines me? Am I the called? In that context, the called aren't the ones who have heard the voice.

You know, I used to know kids when I was growing up out in Southern California, land of the fruits and nuts. When I was little, there was already incipient hippieism, even in the early 60s. And a lot of the people that became hippies were my friends when I was in grade school.

Their mothers would call them up the street. We lived on a hill, 2424 Sarbonne Drive, Oceanside, California. We lived on a hill.

There was a hill this way, there was a hill this way. Our street was like a slanted descent around this hill. Avocado trees above, ice plant below, plain down below.

And when it got close to supper time, people's mothers would come out in the front yard and call little Johnny. Come home. When my mother called, I went home.

Little Johnny and little Randy and what was that guy's name? His grandmother told me that President Kennedy got shot. Ricky lived up the street. His grandmother lived in their house.

His grandmother would come out. Ricky paid no attention whatsoever when his grandmother called. I'll never remember that lady because we were playing in his backyard in 1963 in the fall.

And she stuck her head out the back door, opened up the screen, said, Sonny, you better run along home. President Kennedy done been shot in the head. And so I ran home.

That was one time when I ran home and was not called. You're not the called because you hear the voice of somebody calling. You are called when you respond to the call.

Right. That is definitional. Am I the called according to his purpose? Whose purpose are we pursuing? If I am pursuing my own purpose, I am not the called and I am not presenting myself a living sacrifice because love is sacrificial towards self, putting the interest of others, putting the interest that God has established and defined ahead of my own.

Right. That's definitional. Therefore, be those who do what they have seen God doing as dear children.

When your father calls, you show up always, regularly as a pattern. It defines you. You're an obedient child, not a disobedient child.

Well, I'm a free spirit. You know, I listen to the beat of my own drum. You know, I can't be confined.

I color outside the lines. You know, people have popularized this and have glamorized it as though, you know, look at any of the modern cinema in the last 50 years. And, well, you know, he's an outlaw.

He's an outlier. He does his own thing. He's unconventional.

Largely, they're just stupid. And this is glamorized and popularized and held up to be an example. Well, you can go that way.

See how that's going to play at the judgment seat of Christ. Show up in your just-like-everybody-else unconventional dress and your just-like-everybody-else unconventional vocabulary and your just-like-everybody-else unconventional taste in this, that, and the other. And see how it plays at the judgment seat because you and I are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are family of God. He is our Father. We are his children.

And we have been called. And it's a no-kidding call. It's serious.

Sometimes it's just supper time. If you're a few minutes late, it's not the end of the world. Other times, when your father speaks, instant obedience.

And the practice and the habit is always respond immediately. Then when it's important, it'll just be reflex. You say, well, why did I respond to that? It didn't seem to be that important.

When it is important, you've built the pattern. You have the habit. It's reflexive.

I've told you this story before, but my own father, being a Marine, required pretty much instant and unconditional obedience. And, you know, you chafe under that from time to time, but it is what it is. And I learned that, and I was good with it.

I had a good father. I never came to any harm doing what he said to do. And there was a day when we were working on a fence, and the fence went across a gully, and there was a wash where the cows could get out because the fence went straight and the ground went in a dip.

So we were going to hang a tire under there with wire to keep the cows from going out. And we're out there, and we've got bailing wire that came off a hay bale. Well, my dad was working there and happened to step on the end of the wire, and the other end of that bailing wire went up and hit me in the eye.

And I felt it, and it hurt, and I was reaching to grab it and pull it out. And my father, instantly, he felt something under his foot. He looked over, saw that wire fly into my eye, and he said, Freeze! And the reflexive action that I had to grab a hold of that and tear it out of my eye was stopped by

the voice of my father because that was my habit.

That was my training. That defined me. I was an obedient son.

When my father spoke, I listened, and I did what he said. And it saved my eye because I stopped with my hand inches from that wire, and he walked over and carefully extracted that wire, which miraculously had gone right between my eyeball and the eyelid and poked a hole in the top of my eye socket and stopped at the bone. If I had ripped that out, I would have probably seriously damaged, if not lost, my eye.

But when it counted, that habit, that practice that defined me as a youth was instrumental. My whole future life depended on having two good eyes. I would have had a completely different path through life.

One moment, one instant. You never know when that's going to be. Your father might say something like, pick that up or shut the door or some other mundane thing you think doesn't matter, but there's going to come a time when the father's voice is definitional.

And the practice and the habit and what you have become by choice and by investment and by self-sacrifice puts everything on the line. You never know when that's going to be. Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.

Jesus Christ put the plan and purpose of the Father first, because He loves the Father, and the Father loves Him. If we love the Father as the Father loves us, we love because He first loved us, then that will define us, and that will establish our goals and our values and our priorities. That will define our walk.

We're not going to adopt the shamle of a pseudo-cowboy. We're not going to adopt the rock-back-and-forth, bow-legged stance of a wannabe biker. We're not going to adopt the effeminate walk of somebody who wants to be all things to all genders.

We are going to have a walk that reflects who we are. Believe me, there are affectations. You look around, there are affectations.

Guys that want to be cool and have their pants down around their knees, the top of their pants, they adopt a walk. They adopt a look. There's this slope-shouldered effect.

It's an affectation. And they say, I want this to define me. I want to be looked at by others as part of the baggy-pants brigade, whatever they think they are.

Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. It's an offering and a sacrifice. An offering and a sacrifice.

This is what love is. You either love the Lord or you don't. And if you don't, honestly, what are you

doing here? If you do, then we want to ensure that this does in fact define us and that we are not walking in a deception.

Well, I just keep taking the card out and looking at it, and it tells me I'm this, or I'm that, or I'm the other. I'm a member of the Harley Club, or I'm a member of the air-cooled VW Club, or I'm a member of the Feather in the Head Club, or I'm a member of the Ethnicity Here Club, or I'm a member of the United Petunia Society of America, whatever it might be. People get a click of some kind going, and well, that's what defines me.

Well, no, what really ought to define us as believers in the Lord Jesus is right here. If that is true, this is the section we are now in. If that is true, here's the gut check.

You say, well, I know when you first said what defines me, I said I'm a believer, and now I realize that I've got to really kind of think this through. What does define me? Well, here's a way to know. Here's a way to check the definition, if it's real or not.

Is fornication, pornia, which is that disregard for the lines that God has drawn, is that a part of my life? How about uncleanness, things that are defiling, things that soil and sully and mar and disqualify, by the way, a priest, which we are, disqualification by association, disqualification by contact. That's what uncleanness is. Touch a dead body, instantly unclean.

Maybe nothing came off. Maybe he's wrapped in a shroud. In Israel, if you had contact with a dead body, you're ritually unclean.

You're defiled. Maybe no germs came across. Doesn't matter.

The contact defiled you. As a priest, contact with that which was unclean would defile you. Behavior of people in your family as a priest would defile you.

And even in this age, a pastor can be defiled. He can be disqualified if his household is a mess. If a man cannot rule well his own household, he has no business being the pastor of a church.

That's what the Bible says. Your actions affect others. You can have a defiling effect, not just on yourself, but on others, because you're part of a body.

If you go cancerous, don't think you're not going to metastasize and that you're not going to spread and harm and influence others around you. You're part of a body. This is definitional.

This is what you really are. So it's important to recognize who and what we are and walk accordingly. Walk sacrificially.

Walk as the called. Listen to the voice that calls us and respond in obedience. What's the downside of this? What do we lose? Happiness? There is no happiness apart from life in Christ.

Success? Popularity? A sense of self-worth? You'll never have a sense of self-worth like you will

have when you recognize that the precious blood of Jesus Christ of infinite value was paid for you. That's how much you're worth. I was looking at Volkswagen buses to see what they're worth.

There's one that's got the same paint job as mine on eBay right now. It's a mess. It's rusted out.

It's got no battery tray. It doesn't have the right bumpers. It doesn't have the right seats.

It doesn't even have a right front seat in it. \$5,500 for that wreck of a bus. Well, if somebody pays \$5,500, it's not the ask.

It's what gets paid, right? You can ask whatever you want. I always look at the completed auctions. That's what things are really worth, not the, I sure wish somebody would give me this much.

And I promise you nobody's going to give you \$5,500 for that rust bucket. But if they do, that establishes the value. How do they establish the value of your home? Comps.

What is somebody paying for houses like this? Well, what's your value? What was your last sale price? The blood of Jesus Christ. Do you have worth and value? In God's sight, you are of inestimable value. That's what God paid for your soul and my soul.

You want somebody else's evaluation? Or do you want God's evaluation of what you're worth? Self-worth, happiness, success, a future, stability, comfort, encouragement, fellowship, both vertical and horizontal. What do you lose by responding to the call? What do you lose by the worthy walk? What's the downside to this? And yet we don't think. This is where this passage is going.

Look now just before we take our break. We've looked at verses 3 and 4. Get rid of the fornication, uncleanness, and covetous. Let it not be named among you.

That means association. You don't have to be a fornicator to associate or have fornication named among you, in your midst, in your circle. You don't have to have uncleanness personally.

You can be tolerating or cultivating or associating with uncleanness. You don't have to be covetous. You can be in the company of covetousness.

And if you're keeping company with idolaters, guess what? That's a part of your definition. It helps define you. Neither filthiness, foolish talking, and coarse jesting.

We looked at these last time, which are not proper. They're not tolerable under the definition that you claim. If you are what you say you are, then these things aren't a part of your life.

They can't be. Because if these things are a part of your life, if you associate with them, if you participate in them, you have changed your definition. You've changed it.

You've chosen to be something else. And you are no longer defined by Jesus Christ. You're no longer defined by the call.

It's just that simple. What defines us? What is the contrast at the end of verse 4? Rather, thankfulness. One of the first ways we know we're going off our spiritual rails is we lose our sense of appreciation for what God has done and for what God is and what God has given us and what God has allowed us to become, what God has done in us.

Look at Romans chapter 1. When they knew Him as God, they did not glorify Him as God. What's the next part? Neither were they thankful, but they became empty in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened. The downward slope is defined by knowledge that doesn't result in appreciation.

When they knew Him as God, they did not glorify Him as God. They didn't appreciate it. They didn't think it was great.

Neither were they thankful. If you lose thankfulness, if you lose appreciation, if you don't look at God and get down on your knees and on your face and say, Lord God, what have I done to deserve these many blessings, these wonderful graces? You are truly the God of grace. Look at the Lord Jesus Christ.

If that does not stand at the core of your definition, you just look at that plot in Romans chapter 1. Read the last half of that chapter. That's where you're going. Thankfulness.

You want to know where you are? You want to check the gauge of definition? Where's the thankfulness? How thankful are we? Now, a lot of us can check that gauge and say, you know, I'm okay on that. And God bless us if that's the case. And believe me, I'm not saying that I discerned a problem in this area.

I'm just saying this is what the Scripture puts before us this morning. This is how you know. How thankful are you to God? How appreciative are you to God? And if the appreciation is not there, you are going to be quickly in the above six things that were mentioned.

For this you know, verse 5, No fornicator, no unclean person, no covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Inheritance always speaks of the future. You have no future as a child of God, as an inheritor in the coming kingdom.

And this sort of lumps together all of the future. You know, we could slice it into the... But the kingdom of Christ and God, that's everything that comes after death. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon sons of disobedient.

Disobedient sons. Are you an obedient son or a disobedient son? Disobedient sons get the wrath of the Father. Therefore do not be partakers.

This is metakos, meta-echo, to have and to hold with. Do not hold with, do not have with, do not be co-investors with them. Are you an inheritor or are you without a future? If you identify people that are without that future, don't be partakers with them.

This is definitional. You want to be slack and easy-going and tolerant? You can do that, but you're going to have the same inheritance they have. You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk, verse 8, as children of light. Let's pause here and take our break.