

Ephesians 14-10-12b

We pick up our study in Ephesians chapter 4 and 5, actually this morning, as we look at this wonderful portion of Paul's letter to the Laodicean church, carried in the same letter pouch with Colossians. And if you saw the retrospective lesson that was aired on Friday night, those two letters, you can see the connection in the thinking of the Apostle Paul as he penned these two to two different churches and then told them to exchange letters. You all read this one and make sure this one gets read over there.

And we're looking at the purpose of it all. Why do we have a Bible? Why are we claiming the name of Christ and living on this earth right now? What is the point? We spend most of our day just kind of getting things done. Stuff needs to be done, we've got to get it done.

And if we don't do it, we'll be in trouble or somebody else is going to have to do it, but it's just we're task-driven, we're task-oriented, got to get it done. Wake up in the morning already thinking about, well, by the end of the day, these things need to happen and I need to make them happen. Very seldom do you have just a day stretching before you where it's all optional, it's all maybe at the behest of others, and we look at that as a real Sabbath rest.

Somebody else can plan the meal, somebody else can figure out what's going to happen, I'm just along for the ride, I'm just a passenger today. And this is one of the ways we get a fresh charge on our battery, we get renewed and restored, is to set aside the load for a space of time. God built this into the human program, six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is a day of rest.

God Himself illustrated this and set the pattern by efforting for six days. Don't you love that word? Don't you love it when they take a noun and make it a verb? That's a new word, efforting. We're efforting.

I am going to have to move to the woods and disconnect all media if this keeps up. I just, as an English major and as a human being with common sense, I just rebel against this useless repackaging of things for no apparent purpose. We've got a number of wonderful, historically valid verbs we can use for getting things done but oh no, we're tasking each other and we're efforting to get the tasks accomplished and I just experience an almost physical level of pain on some of these.

But you look at God, for six days He worked. He had a plan and a purpose. It had a beginning, it had a middle, and it had an end, it had a culmination, it had a final goal.

You know all of that stuff that happened with the water and the light and the darkness and the dry land appearing and the plants and the animals, wasn't an end in itself. God didn't say, you know what I really need is a universe with a galaxy in it, with a star in it, with a planet in it that's got a lot of sea life. Let me just get that done and maybe I'll throw in a few other things.

But the main thing I want is, I want a watery planet with a lot of stuff swimming in it. That's my goal. No.

Day one, day two, day three, day four, and day five all had as their express, explicit purpose. There is no other reason for plant life. There is no other reason for animal life.

There is no other reason for the solar system, the greater light that rules the day and the lesser light to rule the night. There's no reason for any of it except the sixth day. It was created for man.

Created for us. No other reason. If God wanted to keep a perfect ecosystem and have a wonderful environmental balance, He would have stopped after day five.

Because we are the ones that muck up the planet. We are the ones that pollute and bury our trash and poison our water and give each other cancer and all of that. We do that.

I think it's so funny to watch, I've told you this before, but it just endlessly amuses me and I saw it again this week. Well, you know, there could be life on the methane moon of Saturn or Jupiter or wherever it is and there's lots of organic chemicals there and you know, it's warm enough, it's kind of cold, but with just a good arctic parka, you know, we could live there and you know, we're going to have to eventually leave this planet because we're going to exhaust its resources and we've got to expect, we sound like termites. Well, we've eaten all the wood here.

We've got to go find some fresh stuff to consume and pollute and destroy. We're like a virus. We're like a, we're like a metastasizing cancer.

It's not enough that we completely mess up this planet. We want to go to the stars and go, you know, spread our consumerist, destructive, ill-gotten, ill-planned, ill-conceived existence elsewhere because we are corrupt and we, it's not a, God usefully confined our corruption to one planet, but we're going to overcome that. We'll build the tower of Babel.

We'll get out into heaven and we'll spread, you know, it's just an end in itself. Why do we need to spread? Why do we need, why? You know, we'll all be long dead. All the people that are planning this and, you know, mission to Mars and the rest of it.

Why? Well, the human race must survive. Why? Well, it just must. Why? What good are you going to do going out there and corrupting and polluting the moons of the other planets and then going off and eventually hyper drive and black holes and wormholes and whatnot? Oh, look, we're in Alpha Centauri.

There's a whole bunch of virgin, unspoiled planets over here. Let's, let's bury our trash on those, you know, let's pollute, destroy, and alter everything about look, get up in an airplane and look at what we have done to the surface of the earth. I'm personally not saying it's a bad thing.

I think it's great. But from an environmental perspective, if you're a Greenpeace person and you

get up there and you're looking down, you say concrete, you know, the sun's light is radiating off of these endless thousands of square miles of paving and parking and asphalt. And we, you know, there's probably some very small percentage of global warming that is anthropogenic, a very low single digit percentage, if any.

The vast majority of it is uncontrollable by us anyway. We're so arrogant. We think we can change the climate of the planet.

Not much for better or for worse. It's going to do what it's going to do. And there are vast sun cycles and there are a lot of other factors that dictate the biggest and foremost one starting with capital G and ending with OD.

That's what determines what happens on this planet. And if God seriously wanted the environment preserved, he would have stopped on day five. Beautiful balanced ecosystem.

But he didn't. He worked all the way through day six because day six was the point and the purpose. It is here for us.

Animals are biological machines that are here to be our food, our tractors, our companions. They serve a number of purposes. They beautify the air with birdsong.

They fill nature. They interact with plant life. There's a lot of plant life that couldn't exist without the animals.

There's a lot of animals that couldn't exist without the plants. There's a beautiful harmony. It is an illustration and a reflection of the character of God, the grace of God.

The what may be known of God is manifest in creation and there's no higher expression of his wisdom and his grace. And yet the necessity for there to be death. You know, it's it's hard to walk through a slaughterhouse, but it's equally hard to watch what happens in nature anyway.

If you stopped all deer hunting, you know how many deer would starve. And death by starvation is way worse than death by a bullet. And that principle pertains everywhere.

As long as we operate in a reasonably humane fashion. But in some ways, it's like, are you going to carefully disassemble your computer and recycle it? Are you going to bash it into small pieces with a sledgehammer and then recycle it? Either way, the computer is not functioning anymore and the computer does not know what you did to it once it's gone. And God is illustrating things for us in nature and in creation.

That's its purpose. But once he accomplished his purpose, he rested. And it is a model for us.

We are commanded, both in the Old Testament and in the New, to remember the Sabbath. We're not restricted to a calendar. We're not restricted to stopping all work on a Saturday.

But we find our Sabbaths and we observe them in wisdom, in light, and in love. And you should always be looking for where is my assigned task, where are my six days of labor and work, and where is my Sabbath? It's easy when you're an Old Testament Israelite. Just wait for Saturday and cease all work.

We're not children brought up under the schoolmaster of the law. We are to function as adults. We are to find our Sabbath and observe it.

It takes wisdom. It takes intelligence. It takes some smarts.

It takes looking to God, asking and seeking and knocking. But it has a purpose. These commands to walk worthy of the calling, to abandon the unworthy, fruitless walk in darkness that characterizes those who are far from God, to walk in love, to walk in light, and to walk in wisdom, they have a purpose.

There is a goal for this. It's not just an end in itself. Well, I see you're walking in light.

Good for you. Well, look at there, you had some love today. That's just great.

There's a purpose. It isn't enough to create the planet and populate it. It has a goal.

It has a purpose. God had a reason for putting humanity here. God had a reason for issuing the call to us.

It's not just, well, I think I'll issue a command to my computer and see what it does. I'll say, pull up a program, and it does. Wow.

Well, I'll close that one and pull up another one. You know how it is when you get something new, get a new car, you just roll the windows up and down, turn the radio off and on. Huh, what does this do? Oh, it's an ashtray.

No, dear, that's a cup holder. You know, oh, look, what does this button do? Well, it turns a little red light on, but I don't know what it is. Look it up in the manual.

Oh, you know what? You can program that to open and shut your garage door, right? But you just try everything out. But it's really, it's just exploration. But learning that is useful, why? Because you're going to drive the car.

You're going to go somewhere. You're going to make it do something. It's a part of your plan and purpose.

I needed this car, not because I want something to sit in and push buttons and entertain myself. I'd have this car for a reason. I'm going to transport myself in comfort and elegance and entertainment and, you know, the air conditioner work and how do you control the, how do you

make the heat come on? You figure all these things out, but then you use it for a purpose and you get things done.

Same thing with God's plan. There is a purpose for this upward call. What is it? The therefore's tell us five aspects of the walk to which we are called are given to us here and there are seven therefore's that illustrate for us the goal.

Why should I bother to do this walk? The only thing that interests me is you tell me I might be happier if I do that and I'll avoid a lot of pain and uselessness in my life and that kind of appeals to me. I think I'd rather be happy than sad. I'd rather be blessed than disciplined.

I'd rather be, but I'm not, I don't really find that all that compelling. I think I can probably entertain myself and get along. You know, I'm not having a terribly unattractive life now, so I don't really see the upside of this.

Sounds like a lot of work. What is, what is the purpose of all of this? Well you, if you've scanned down through here, you can see the therefore's. There's exactly seven, no more, no less.

The first one is in chapter four, verse one, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you, beseech you, appeal to you on my knees with my hands outstretched. I beseech you to walk worthy. Therefore, I therefore, what's the therefore referring back to? This is 319, to know the love of Christ, which is unknowable.

To know the unknowable. You know, you've got the dream the impossible dream, and scale the impossible height, and follow the incredible distance, and you know, drive the undrivable car. I don't remember what all's in that.

There's another song that, you know, It's Impossible, and my favorite version of that song is Steve Martin's version of It's Impossible. You know, it's impossible, it's about love, you know, it's impossible for me to ever forget you, it's impossible for me to think of anybody else, and Steve Martin says, well it's impossible to shove a Cadillac up your nose, it's just impossible to, and you know, dream the impossible dream, scale the unclimbable mountain and all that. Well, here he says, comprehend and know the love of Christ that is unknowable.

We began this morning reminding ourselves about the essential ministry of God's Holy Spirit, because these things are impossible and unknowable to us without Him. To know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, requires something outside of ourselves. And if you operate with your own tools, it isn't going to make any sense.

Surprise! People are always telling me on these, you know, chat boards and stuff, atheists and agnostics and you know, off, high and right Christians even, are saying, well, you know, that just doesn't make any sense to me. Of course it doesn't make sense to you. It can't make sense to you, you cannot comprehend what is only comprehended when you have the attitude that allows

God to send His Spirit and illuminate it.

It is a supernaturally grasped truth. People say, well, I think you're just fooling yourself, you know, that doesn't make any sense to me. I think you're just shining yourself on, you know, how convenient that it doesn't require any evidence.

You know, and I know, because you have been there, that this is a reality. I remember when I was a little kid in the 60's, our next door neighbor's got a color TV set. I had only ever seen black and white TV, and not a very good one at that.

That thing had fallen over, it was on a little stand with wheels, and the center of gravity was way too high and the base of support was way too narrow, and it was on wheels, non-locking wheels. And our little Magnavox TV, which is still up in Dad's barn by the way, fell over more times than I can count, and some of them were my fault. Don't tell Mom and Dad.

I knocked it over a few times, they don't know about it. But the neighbors got a color TV, oh, Dad just got us a TV, everything is in color. I couldn't imagine it.

I couldn't picture it in my mind. Color TV? That can't be right. TV is black and white.

I mean, it's hard for you, that's all most of you all have ever seen. But if all you've ever seen is black and white TV, color TV just doesn't make any sense. How can they get the shading of a face and stuff to come out right? What is it like, purple faces and bright green grass and dark blue skies and some kind of a Sunday paper comic color? And oddly enough, when people first got color TVs, they turned everything up to enjoy the color so much that it often looked like that.

You know, the faces just glowed orange and the sky was this neon blue and the grass was this vivid, you know, frightening green. And in the past, people have tried to make color out of black and white by putting a clear cover over the front of your TV that was just tinted blue, tinted cream and tinted green because most scenes would have a blue sky and green grass and people in the middle. And so it was like fake color TV.

And I thought, well, you know, maybe it's something like that. But the colors must just, I mean, how could they possibly confine the colors and get them out? I just, I couldn't envision it. Well, one Saturday, I went up there, Steve and John's house, and we sat down and watched Saturday morning cartoons.

And many broadcasts were still in black and white at that time because so few people had color TVs. And a lot of the stations, a lot of the programs were just in black and white. Did you ever wonder why when you see the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, all they ever show is black and white? Ed Sullivan was broadcast in black and white in the mid-1960s.

They didn't have color on that. Well, when I saw it, then I understood. But I had to see it for myself.

I couldn't take somebody's word for it. I couldn't grasp it until I saw it for myself. This is the ministry of God's Spirit.

It isn't going to make sense when I describe it and explain it. You cannot justify or convince someone into faith. You cannot amass enough evidence to flip their faith switch from, I don't think so, to, wow, tell me more.

Evidence will not do it. It is attitude. This is why we pray for people who are far from God, either not saved or saved and not doing anything about it, that God will use His knowledge and His convicting power to bring those people up against the things that will force them to take a fresh look and hopefully realize that life is meaningless without God.

So that's what Paul is talking about. He says, I therefore the prisoner of the Lord. He says, look, if you think that I'm trying to big deal you into this life of faith and light and hope and love and all the rest of it because it's the path to success, it's going to solve your problems and put a new washing machine in your laundry room and a new car in your driveway and, you know, super deluxe frozen food in your freezer.

And if you think that's what it's going to do, I am sitting in prison writing you this. I'm not selling you this as the way to a prosperity-filled life in the common sense of the term. I'm the prisoner.

I'm sitting here in chains, but I'm a prisoner of the Lord. The Lord is in charge of my circumstances and because of that my circumstances are transformed. The world cannot understand why you would not only be content but make an issue out of, for positive, being a prisoner.

It makes no sense. What's the matter with you? Well, there's nothing the matter when your life is illuminated by the Spirit of God. So, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy.

I therefore. Why? Because, here's the goal, this is the therefore, number one, if you're taking notes, number one therefore in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 1, therefore walk worthy. Therefore undertake the worthy walk.

What is the goal? What does the therefore describe? It harks back to 3.19, so that you can know the love of Christ that passes knowledge. You can never know the love of Christ if you do not undertake the worthy walk. The love of Christ just won't make a dent.

It won't really compute. In the abstract you can say, well, you know, I understand that self-sacrifice greater love hath no man than this. You will not know the love of Christ.

You will not experience the love of Christ. You will not appreciate personally the love of Christ, which is the goal, if you do not pursue a worthy walk. Paul says there is an opportunity to

comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, four dimensions by the way, not just the material world but the infinite that is beyond.

That opportunity exists. Therefore, I beseech you, walk worthy. The goal is comprehending the love of Christ.

To experience it, to understand it, to appreciate it, to praise God for it, to express thankfulness. Remember in Romans chapter 1, one of the condemnations of those who receive the truth and suppress the truth, when they knew Him as God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were they thankful. Thankfulness, appreciation, comprehension of the love of Jesus Christ, that's the goal of the first therefore.

The second therefore is in verse 17, chapter 4, verse 17. This I say therefore and testify in the Lord. Paul says, therefore I say and testify that you abandon the unworthy walk, that you abandon the walk in darkness, abandon the lifestyle of the Gentiles, those who are far from God.

I say this therefore. What's the goal of this therefore? He says, I'm telling you this, I'm saying that there is this fruitless, unworthy, dark walk, and I'm saying and testifying that you should leave it, but this is a therefore. What is the goal of the therefore? Well, it's up in 4, 15, and 16, speaking the truth in love, growing up in all things into Him who is the head Christ, from whom Christ, the whole body joined and knit together by whatever joint supplies according to the effective working by which every part does its share causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

That's a mouthful, but there's three things you can just circle there. In verse 15, grow up, to grow up. Verse 16, effective working, growth, and edifying.

Edify just means to construct, to build up. If you have an edifice, it is something that has been constructed, it's been built. Your life, instead of just being a frantic search for happiness, instead of just being what is my next thrill, it is a genuine growth into eternal things, into divine things, into Jesus Christ Himself.

You grow up. You don't grow out, you grow up, raised above the dust from which we are made, raised above this earthly plane. Grow up.

The point, the purpose of this therefore, leaving that fruitless walk, is to be able to grow up, to be higher than we are by nature, to grow and to have effective working. Wouldn't it be great if your work is effective? There's nothing so discouraging as doing a bunch of work and it's ineffective. You work hard on an assignment and you get a bad grade.

You work hard fixing the ice maker in your refrigerator and you get awakened in the middle of the night to discover that not only did your repair not work, but now there is a beautiful frozen ice sculpture, static waterfall of ice covering everything in your freezer. It was ineffective work. Took the whole thing apart, replaced it, did it to the utmost of ability, opened up the freezer.

It's an hour and a half of work now because it went awry. It gave a glimmer, it was ineffective. Ineffective work is discouraging, it's depressing.

You experience this all the time and so Paul says, number two now, the therefore in verse 417, abandon the unworthy fruitless walk, why? So that you can grow up, you can build up and you can work effectively, that your investment of time counts for something. I was looking at a sort of a journal or a scrapbook, a photo album type of thing that my great aunt put together beginning back, she was born in the early 1920s and she was a girl in the 1920s and she had pictures, a couple of baby pictures and pictures of herself when she was a young girl and it was really witty. She has a lot of really funny things to say.

It's on black paper written in white ink and Elizabeth has a journal that's also on black paper and she's using gel pens and I said, wow, that reminds me of Aunt Eloise's scrapbook and so we got it out and looked through it and here are all of the experiences, representative experiences, not all of them certainly, but of her girlhood and her youth and her early adulthood, trips that she took, friends that she had, visits that she made, friends that she enjoyed, scenes from the 1920s and the 1930s and into the 1940s and it's literally snapshots of someone's life, samples taken from life and I remarked to Elizabeth, I was thinking about this last night and I thought, you know, Aunt Eloise is gone and everyone that knew her with a few exceptions in those days is gone and all of those experiences, the joys, the interests, the conversations, the sights, the sounds, it's all perished. We have this one artifact here in this book and there's just a handful of us left who even knew Aunt Eloise when she was alive and when we go, all living memory of her will have ceased and there's just this little scrapbook. Did it make a difference? Does it count for something if it's just an experience that someone had and the only impact of it is a memory, the only impact of it is a photo? Isn't it a wonderful thing, and Aunt Eloise was a believer, isn't it a wonderful thing that God can take our experiences, our work our lives and invest them with an eternal meaning, even if we forget and even if we are forgotten.

When we walk this walk, it is remembered in heaven, it has an eternal fruit, an eternal benefit, it means something and counts for something that never perishes and never fades. We have an example in the pages of Scripture, these people that live their lives, Ruth and Daniel and Joshua and Caleb and Joseph and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Noah and Shem and Adam and Seth and countless individuals in the Old Testament Scriptures, their lives continue to edify, they continue to make a difference. Why? Because God invested their lives with supernatural grace and power, the ability to grow up, to edify, to count.

This is our privilege, that's the goal of the second therefore, growth and building up in love. The third therefore is in chapter 4 verse 25 and you can kind of see the pattern of these now, can't you? You look in the preceding context to see what the therefore is pointing to. Therefore, putting away deceit, let each of you speak truth.

That's the third therefore, speak truth. Why? What is the goal? Look in the immediately preceding

context, verses 23-24, put off the old man and put on the new man. If you want to live this life that God has called us to, you've got to turn away from the old and that's not enough.

You've got to turn towards something new, put off the old and put on the new. How do you do that? You've got to identify and eliminate falsehood, identify and eliminate deceit. Jeremiah 17, 9, the heart is deceitful, we fool ourselves.

It's deceitful above all things and it is desperately anxious to keep us in the dark and in fruitlessness, wickedness. The heart is deceitful. If you trust your heart, if that's going to be your compass, you're going to go astray every time.

This is the decision we make when we're confronted with the evidence of God. Am I going to trust God or am I going to trust the light of my own little internal compass? The problem with an internal compass is it's broken and it's deceitful. There's a way that seems right to a man and it leads straight to death, but it seemed right.

Well, how was I supposed to know? My compass told me to go this way, how did I know it was a cliff? Because you've already been confronted with the idea that you must go to God and ask and seek and knock and get an external reference that can not only tell us where the truth is, but repair our internal compass so that we know what the truth is. That's the goal of the third therefore, put off the old man and put on the new man that doesn't have the natural instinctive direction for darkness. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, because their hearts are evil, because they have chosen evil, because they have rejected the testimony of God first and foremost.

Everything is aftermath in terms of evidence and well, I don't think the Scripture compels. You made your mind up before you ever looked at it. Number four, chapter 5 verse 1. Chapter 5 verse 1, therefore be those who do what you have seen God doing.

We've studied that in detail. It's not imitators, you're not a mime, you're not just aping or trying to conform some external behavior. Do what you have seen God doing.

That's what the verse means. That's what the verb means. What is the goal? What is the goal? Look in the preceding two verses.

Out with the old, in with the new. Out with bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking, and malice. In with kindness, tender-heartedness, forgiveness.

Just as God in Christ forgave you, do what you have seen God do. That's the goal. We've seen God by virtue of Scripture create worlds and universes.

We've seen Him judge the nations. That's not what it's talking about. The context of doing what we've seen God do is kindness, tender-heartedness, forgiveness.

Do what we have seen God do in Christ for us. Parable of the ungrateful servant. Forgiven much, has an underling servant, doesn't forgive him but paltry amount.

Master comes back and says, you can't forgive your guy a few shekels? I'm unforgiving your debt. I'm going to throw you in prison until you pay every farthing. Has a goal.

The fifth therefore is in chapter 5 verse 7. Therefore do not be partakers with them. What is the goal? Don't be associated with faithlessness and disobedience. It's right up there in verse 5 and 6. No fornicator, unclean person, covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance.

Don't inherit with them. Partaker is an inheritor. Don't be an inheritor of the wind.

Don't be an inheritor of the lake of fire. Don't be an inheritor of the second death. You're a believer and you're going to glory after this life, but what is that afterlife going to look like for you? Are you going to be a tenant farmer living in a shack on somebody's plantation off in the distant realms where the glow of the lamb is just a distant vision on the horizon? Or are you going to have ownership of, possession of, dwelling in property inside the New Jerusalem? And this isn't again just an end in itself.

Wow, look at me, I've got a mansion. You reflect the glory of God. You're useful.

You have service. The reason you live in town is because you work in town. Why is it important to be an inheritor in the New Jerusalem? That's where you work.

That's where you can serve God. That's where you can express your appreciation and your gratitude for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and all of the many graces that God bestows on us. You know they always say give something back.

I want to give something back. Bill and Melinda Gates, I want to give something back. If you want to give something back, look at the Great Giver, capital G and give something back.

Work for inheritance in the kingdom because that's where you can serve. That's where you can reflect glory. That's where you can be appreciated by God.

It's not just, I'm enticed by riches. I want the carrot that's on the end of the stick. This is opportunity.

Do you think that Gabriel and Michael and the other cherubim in heaven aren't grateful for the privilege of serving God? They don't walk around saying, look at me, I'm a cherub. They walk around saying, I have the privilege of reflecting the glory of God. That's our attitude when we seek to be a partaker and an inheritor of those positive blessings in the eternal future and not be a partaker of those because of fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, have no inheritance.

You're a renter in a far distant mobile home park at the edge of glory. No excuse for that. That is

willful neglect of the call.

That is willful neglect of love, light, and wisdom. And you're going to get what you ask for. If you ask for no light and no love and no wisdom in this life, that's exactly what you're going to inherit in the next.

You'll be waiting for the weekly delivery of leaves from the tree of life coming out the gates of the new Jerusalem and traveling hours, if not days, to get to your distant Timbuktu location. No excuse. You know better.

You know, and why would anybody choose that? It's just senseless, but people do it all the time. Why would Satan choose to leave the realms of glory? It makes no sense to me, but plenty of people choose it. Number six, chapter five, verse 14, therefore he says, wake up in case we're starting to get bored with the therefores, wake up.

What's the glory of that awakening? Distance yourself from evil. If you get careless, if you get complacent, if you stop being vigilant, if you do not watch and pray, you will find yourself slowly sinking into evil. It's gradual.

It's imperceptible sometimes, and we sort of doze. Heaven help you if you're at the wheel at high speed and you doze. It's the sameness of it.

It's the roar of the wheels under you. It's the sameness of the landscape. It's the lack of traffic keeping you alert, and something soft is on the radio, or somebody next to you is reading something that doesn't really captivate your imagination, and you begin to doze, and he says, wake up.

Therefore, wake up. Why? It's in the preceding context. Have no fellowship, verse 11, with unfruitful works of darkness.

If you are static, if you don't exert an effort, that's where you'll end up, just by default. The days are evil, and if you don't make an active effort to wake up and employ the day and live in the light, you will be an evil. It's the default.

It's what happens if you don't take action. Number seven, chapter five, verse 17, is the final therefore. Therefore, do not be a fool.

Now, people say, well, nobody wants to be a fool. If it was impossible to be a fool because nobody wants to be one, why would there be a command in the Bible that says don't be a fool? The reason we need a command to not be a fool is so many of us are foolish, and we need somebody to tell us don't be a fool. If it never happened because everybody is so anxious to be wise and is actively seeking wisdom all the time, why would there be a biblical command? It would be pointless.

If somebody is saved, you don't tell them, get saved. They're already saved. It's pointless.

If nobody is acting foolishly, everybody is so anxious and convicted about living a wise life, the Bible wouldn't have to say don't be a fool. The reason it says don't be a fool is because so many of us are. Wake up, don't be a fool.

What is the goal? Verse 16, redeem the time. The days are evil. The days are short.

You've got to make these days count. Any one of us could have our heart stop before this day is out. What are you going to do with the time? Redeem it.

Cash it in on eternity. That's how to not be a fool. Those are the five aspects of walking.

Those are the seven therefores. Five plus seven is twelve. That's God's great number of accomplishment in this world.

The twelve tribes were called to carry out God's purpose in the Old Testament age. The twelve apostles called the church to carry out God's purpose in the New Testament age. And Paul uses twelve points here carefully constructed, elegantly interwoven to remind us that we have such a privilege to live in this age, to have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that enables all of these things to take place.

It is all choice. You cannot blame circumstance. You cannot blame lack of evidence.

You cannot blame other people. God has personally gifted each individual with this information and with this opportunity. It is all completely a matter of choice.

This is why we will be judged. God can't say, oh, sorry, I've got a whole crew of angels over here just pulling people out of line. Well, they didn't have enough evidence.

You know, there was somebody in their periphery that really goobered that up and they didn't really have a chance to take them out of the line. It's only this group of people over here. I'll judge them because they had sufficient evidence and nobody messed it up for them.

I really have to hold them in. But all the rest of you, just come on in. You come in the small door over here.

Just come right on around. Skip the judgment seat. Nobody skips the judgment seat.

Why? Because it's not a matter of anything other than choice and we will be judged on our choices. Don't kid yourself. Don't be a fool.

Be wise. Understand what the will of the Lord is. And what an opportunity.

What's the downside of this? I'm going to get to eternity and say, I can't believe I spent all that

time walking in love, walking in the light, you know, walking wisely. Oh, darn. Now I live in the new Jerusalem and I've got this wonderful opportunity to serve the Lord and reflect His glory and learn new things, partake of the hidden manna.

The Lord Jesus is girding Himself and serving this group that appreciated Him. Why am I here? Why can't I be out in the darkness sitting in a mobile home in Timbuktu waiting for the bucket of leaves to get delivered? Oh, boo, why did I? Are you kidding? We're so prone to not think through, to live in the moment and be distracted by momentary, ephemeral, transient things. God calls us.

I beseech you, Paul says, walk worthy of the call. What's the downside to this? There is no downside. It is eternity.

It is life. It is the Savior, His presence, His power and His glory. Who doesn't want that? Anybody who doesn't want that, I can only say, God's grace and mercy beyond you to illuminate it sufficiently for you to change your mind because it's just senseless to go any other way.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of Your Word. Thank you for the illuminating presence and power of Your Spirit.

Thank you that we find ourselves divided asunder to the core of our soul and spirit, our joints and marrow by these things that Your Word reveals. We pray that as we contemplate, as we reflect on these truths, that their meaning and their import will be clear in such a way that we find ourselves motivated and encouraged to be consistent in their application. We know that as we do so, the Lord Jesus is glorified, our witness to the world is multiplied, and Your glory is made manifest to us, to the angels now and evermore.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.