

Ephesians 14-11-09b

Let's pick up our study now in Ephesians chapter 5, we're going to move a bit more quickly. We have some scriptures to look at because this, as I said, being the central theme and focus in the letter is something that Paul has talked about to other groups and in other places and those ideas are pertinent and we like to go verse by verse, chapter by chapter through a book, but there are times when to be sure we really grasp what is being spoken, what is being communicated, we look at parallel passages that can give us some dimensionality, throw the light on it from a little different angle. And Paul actually encourages that, as you know, he tells these folks, read Colossians.

He tells the people in Colossae, read this letter. You guys are going to need some additional lamps shining on this to be sure that you get it. So I feel somewhat vindicated in looking at some parallel passages that bear on this very important theme.

This is who we are. People are always looking for their identity and what am I, who am I, why am I here, what is my self, how can I find myself, what is my meaning, what am I quote about, which I think is a terrible use of a preposition. What am I about? Well, in literature of a few hundred years ago in England, it meant what are you doing? What are you about there, young lad? And it meant, you know, what are you doing? But now people use it in this sort of, I'm a spiritual person, I'm abstract, I'm, no, you're just confused.

Here is the definition and description of our mission. This is why you are still drawing breath, why our hearts are still pumping, why we have a soul-body existence in this life, this construct that God has created out of essentially holographic points called atoms and photons and this construct that our senses interpret to our brains as solids and temperatures and light frequencies and transparencies and opacities. All of this is fed to our soul.

It's a whole purpose. It is a test for the soul. It is input to the soul.

And if you think, well, it's just a machine running on its own behest, we're just seeing things to see them, we're just hearing things to hear them, we're perceiving things just for the perception's own sake, and pretty soon all of my perceptive gear is going to break down, I'm going to die, and it will all be, you know, pointless, well, you have utterly and totally missed the point. The whole reason the construct exists is to filter, to identify, to classify and categorize souls, the immaterial part of us that is going to go forward, some of us, into the eternal future and be assigned realms, assigned places of service, assigned duties based on our unique experience in this life, our unique grasp to the extent that we learned. Do you want to be a Gabriel or do you want to be a no-name shoveling up the horse apples behind the great army the Lord leads back down onto this earth? You choose, you get to choose, and you get what you choose.

God is so eminently gracious and so eminently fair. If you as a person in this life say, you know,

this whole God thing, this whole living under the light of somebody else's standards, boo on that, God says, fine, you don't have to, you're gone. Well, but I want to live all by myself and do my own thing.

Well, so said the cancerous tumor. Sorry, but you can't be permitted to do that because you are metastasizing. You are malignant and you will destroy everything around you.

That's what human history is a demonstration of. Satan was graciously appointed and given the godship of this world. And God says, look, you think I'm unfair in assigning you all to oblivion? Let me show you why this has to happen.

I'll let you lift your throne up above a whole uncountable set of creatures with free will just like you. I'll let you have the Mayan civilization. I'll let you have the Chinese civilization.

I'll let you have whole continents. I'll let you have the entire world. I will carve out for myself one tiny group from the line of Seth, from the line of Noah, from the line of Shem, from the line of Abraham.

I'm just going to reserve this tiny little part. I'll work with them. You've got the rest of the world.

People say, oh, well, you know, gospel and Jesus Christ, how could all these uncounted hundreds and millions and billions of people have been born and died and never had a chance at, never had a shot at salvation? Yes, they did. And uniformly, without exception, every ancient Hmong dynasty, Chinese guy, every ancient Australian Aborigine, every ancient South American, whether, you know, you want to call it Inca, Maya, Aztec, all of those people down through the uncountable millennia, by the way, all of the millions and millions and hundreds of millions that lived on this continent before the white man showed up, lived and died, never saw a Bible, never heard the gospel. The name Jesus Christ never echoed or reverberated through any of the woods here.

You know why? Each and every one of those people received the witness of God in their hearts and were known in advance to be those for whom there is no other purpose but to serve as Satan's pawns, Satan's playthings. God said, look, I'm going to create everybody with free will. Everybody gets to choose.

Being God, I know what they are going to choose. I am not determining it. I am not responsible for it.

I am giving them a chooser. They can choose. But because I know what they are going to choose, I'm going to take all of the negative choosers for millennia and I'm going to put them on whole continents and Satan, you do with them what you want.

They think just like you. They've got the same rejective attitude that you have. And so you guys show me how you're going to do it.

They're not positive toward me. You can't blame me that your stuff doesn't work. Well, there was too many believers mixed in there.

Yeah, I had people that were gumming up the works and throwing wrenches into the gears because they believe in you. No, no. I've given you an insulated continent of nothing but unbelievers on purpose with malice of forethought, the God of this world.

You wanted to lift your throne above the stars. Here's a set of stars. Show me what you're going to do.

Show me how it's going to work disconnected from the God of life and the God of light. You think that you're my equal, that you've got an alternate plan that is just as good. Knock yourself out.

And the record of godless human history down through the centuries is no different than the most recent examples that you see in Cambodia, that you see under Stalin, that you see under Ho Chi Minh and Pol Pot and all of these other godless atheistic attempts to organize human beings into something that isn't abusive, corrosive, destructive, unfair, unjust, that winds up benefiting a few at the expense of the many. It always turns out that way. And God allows the demonstration to run.

And He will continue to do so until every permutation has been explored. It's like a scientific experiment. The experiment is not done until every variable has been tested, until every factor has been accounted for.

That's why human history runs as long as it does. So it's a very simple thing. You and I have a choice.

Which side of the experiment are we going to be an illustration for? You want to be an illustration of here's what happens when you walk in the darkness? Here's what happens when you do not partake of God's light and God's life? It's your choice. There is a minority. It has always been a minority.

Narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leads to life and few there be that find it. Why is that? Why is that? Why isn't it 50-50? If human volition is truly free, then why does it seem that most people choose against? God, here's, I will offer you my thought. I don't know.

I will tell you what I think. I think that God already has eons of angelic history that we humans are not privy to of what it is to have positive creatures functioning under godly authority. There's some history that we don't know about before our time.

That has largely already been illustrated and proven out. The case that is being presented, because the lake of fire was already created for the devil and his angels, right? But there appears to have been an objection. Wait a minute, I object, I've got an appeal.

Rebellion already happened, sentence was already passed, judgment was already accomplished, and Satan and the rebel angels were supposed to go into the lake of fire. But in his brilliance perhaps, Satan says, hey, how is this consistent with your character to destroy us all? Why can't you just give us a universe to go live in and leave us alone? And God uses this as an opportunity for the benefit of those who will go forward. As an inoculation against this ever happening again, at some future point where some other angel or some other saved human says, hey, I wonder what if we just did it our own way? Getting kind of tired of this whole God-oriented, God-purposed existence, why can't we just do our own thing? There will forever be this history.

Look at the, why does God allow suffering? Why do you think? Anybody looking at this is never again going to choose this path. It's an abstraction for the angels until they see it. Why are angels looking at us daily? What do they see? Oh my gosh.

Now I know why God has assigned those rebel angels to the lake of fire, why they must be removed. It's like, hey, we didn't get all the cancer, it came back. I am not going to chew tobacco anymore having seen a guy's lips eaten away by chewing tobacco.

I've seen it once. You don't have to tell me to stay away from that stuff. Have you ever seen, by the way, what mouth cancer does? I have never put a chew in my lip but once and God arranged to where it happened on the school bus and no sooner did I get that chunk of red man in my mouth because I just thought, what is it? Everybody's chewing this red man.

Tell me how great it is. I said, Tommy, let me have a little bit of that red man. I just want to see what it is you guys are doing.

Here you go. I got that chunk of red man, put it in my mouth, I was just trying to get it tucked away and the bus went over a bump and I went and swallowed it. Oh my gosh, was I sick.

Sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick, sick. Totally ended forever. Any curiosity I have, I have never gotten anywhere near that stuff.

Even the smell of somebody else chewing it, I start getting a little queasy around the edges. I say, oh my gosh. You go be warm, be fed.

You go spit somewhere else. No further interest. This is what God is doing in human history.

People say, oh, well, he can't be God if he's letting suffering happen. You puny intellect. You shallow, one-ply thinker.

Do you not think God is smart enough to know what he's doing in allowing suffering? Of course he's powerful enough to stop it, but that doesn't accomplish his purpose. If he stops everybody every single time, that's no longer free will, is it? Now you've got automatons. Now you've got a universe of puppets.

That's not God's purpose. God wants creatures to be with him who appreciate him and choose for him. And this even is a gross simplification of what God is doing.

His ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. But this is enough for us to understand.

It is enough that our faith makes sense. So Paul is saying, look, you have a choice in this grand demonstration, this grand operation that God is putting on. There are only two sides.

It's not light and dark and 256 shades of gray. It is light and darkness. You are on one side or you are on the other side.

And at any given moment, you can jump from one to the other as a believer. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship. The blood of Christ cleanses us from sin which partakes of the darkness.

If we walk in darkness, if we say we have no sin and we deceive ourselves, we are not walking in truth. We are not speaking the truth to one another or ourselves. It is either deception, futility, and darkness or it is light, truth, and fruitful.

Either or. It's not hard. It's not hard.

It's not well, but it's kind of this and kind of that. This is why I think God was behind the inception of the Marine Corps, a whole organization that thinks in almost purely black and white terms or used to. You need this.

Certain things need to be it's on or it's off. Computers don't work with a .5. It's a 1 or it's a 0. It's charged or it's not charged. It is yes or no.

Computers don't work on maybe. They just don't. You know how hard it is to get a random number out of a computer? Computers just don't do random.

It's amazing how difficult it is to get a truly random number out of a computer because in some way, shape, or form, things are predetermined. You have to base it on the passage of time or some, you know, I'll base it on the space between key clicks or something because our computers, binary computers, it's all about 1 or 0. And in God's economy, in the spiritual realm, it is 1 or 0. So therefore, when you get to verse 17, don't be unwise. There's wise and unwise.

There's no kind of wise. There's no, well, you had the right idea, but you, no, there's wise and there's unwise. One or the other.

Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Now, if you have an exhortation like this, the equivalent of an imperative, understand what the will of the Lord is, let me ask you this, is it possible to understand the will of the Lord? If Paul says, don't be unwise, but understand

what the will of the Lord is, is it possible then to understand the will of the Lord, or is Paul saying, do the impossible? You can't really understand the will of the Lord, but I'm just telling you, do it anyway. If we get this exhortation, it tells you this is graspable, it is obtainable, it is accessible.

It is not high so that you have to go to heaven to find it. It's not down in the depths so that you have to go out to Sheol and haul it up. It is near.

It is in your hearts. It is on your lips. If you seek it as silver and search for it as for hid treasure, it's not down in the mantle.

It's not down in the molten nickel of the planet. It is, it may take some doing. You may have to get out your pick and shovel.

You've got to seek for it diligently. You've got to search for it as though it is a treasure that somebody hid, but you know the treasure is there. It is findable.

It is accessible. Don't let anybody tell you, ah, that Bible, nobody can figure it out. No two people agree on what it means.

Nonsense. Scoobalon. Not true.

Paul says, understand what the will of the Lord is. So the will of the Lord is understandable and we have an exhortation, a virtual command to understand it. Don't be unwise.

What is wisdom? Understanding the will of the Lord. Pretty simple. So do not, verse 18, be drunk with wine in which is dissipation.

This is a word, asotia. What do you know about a Greek word, generally speaking, when it's got an alpha as a prefix? There is theos and there is a-theos, right? There is a thing and there is not a thing. The alpha privative.

Asotia means a lack of health, a lack of productive existence and deliverance. A soter is a savior, someone who delivers. Soterios, soteria, all of these notions have at their root this s-o-t infix.

Well, asotia in its fundamental sense, its first sense, its classical, this word asotos and asotia have been used all the way from classical Greek all the way down practically to modern times in Greek. This word has not changed much. It's real easy to understand.

It fundamentally and first and foremost meant to be incurable. Incurable. It's broken and you can't fix it.

It's unhealthy and it can't be made whole. A bullet comes and rips out your lower jaw. You get shot in the face.

They can do a lot of reconstructive surgery, but you are never going to be what you were before

that happened. They can do a lot, but there is an asotia sense. It is not completely fixable.

In some cases, it's not fixable at all. There is an unfillable deficit. There is an unmendable break of some kind.

Asotia, that's the root meaning of it. Incurable. Aristotle uses it to mean someone who is hopelessly sick.

He's asotia. There's no coming back from this. Can't be undone.

Can't be cured. Plutarch uses it in the same way and it comes to mean as someone who is incurable, someone who is too far gone, someone who by their manner of life, especially by dissipation, destroys himself. You think about a crack addict, somebody that gets on a drug that just overpowers their will.

They had free choice of whether or not to start dabbling with this substance. They could freely choose. Yes, I will.

No, I won't. I've heard the warnings. I've seen the examples.

I know what happens to celebrities, blah, blah, blah, but I'd just really like to try it for myself. Well, at that point, sometimes your free will ends and you have made a choice to get into something that you can no longer choose to get out of, even people who choose to smoke. I mean, you can quit smoking, but it is a whole lot easier to choose to quit and successfully implement that decision than it is to choose to start.

Choose to start. You have a little bit of coughing. You get through that.

Now I'm in it. But stopping, ask anybody who tries to quit smoking, it is not as easy to stop as it was to start. There are some decisions you make, and when you make them, there is no coming back.

I chose to ride my motorcycle without a helmet at 90 miles an hour and use the other cars on the road as pylons. I lost traction. Somebody was in a place I didn't expect them to be.

Somebody changed lanes and I didn't expect it. Now I am a long grease mark on the highway. You can't undo that decision.

There are decisions you make that have unfixable, asotia consequences. It's unfixable. You can inflict wounds on fellow human beings that just aren't fixable.

It may heal, but there will be a scar. It is in memory. Things are not going to be the same with certain kinds of wounds, certain kinds of sicknesses, certain kinds of diseases.

Asotia. So you get what this means, right? This is a very serious, irreversible consequence. Now,

and do not be drunk with wine in which is, not always, but there is the potential for asotia.

Stuff can happen when you're drunk that is unfixable. Somebody has a few too many, gets behind the wheel of a car, trying to drive home, runs over a five-year-old child. That's not fixable.

It is not fixable. The rest of your life you are going to be a person who, by sloppy decisions, killed a five-year-old child or maimed a five-year-old child. You cannot undo that.

It is asotia. Do you see the seriousness of this? It's not saying, well, a few too many. That's just kind of sloppiness.

This is not sloppiness. This is unfixableness. This is incurability.

I have got AIDS, and I can never unhave AIDS. There is no cure, right? So Paul is invoking a very serious concept here. Well, don't be drunk.

That's sloppy. That's excess. Don't do things to excess.

That's not what he's saying. If you get under the influence, you can do things that you can't fix. You can bump somebody out a window and they fall and break their neck.

That's not fixable. You can harm and destroy in unfixable ways. Asotia, in which is catastrophe, in which is disaster, in which is unfixability.

No return, okay? It's serious. Don't be drunk with wine. Now, is it only wine that can do this? Would you say, well, he didn't say anything about crystal meth.

Didn't say anything about heroin. He didn't say anything about marijuana, which is now legal in I don't know how many states. What does it mean, do not be drunk with? Do not be drunk with.

This is Methusko. Or, you know, so many times in transliteration, they turn u's into y's. Methisco.

Methusko. Methay, Methuo, Methusos, Methuskomay. All of these words partake of this word group.

And this has the notion of intoxication. To have your perceptions and your operative abilities impaired by drink. This was about the only thing that would do it in the ancient world.

They didn't have the drugstore full of chemicals and substances that we have access to now. So it is emblematic. It is symbolic.

It is representative of anything that can produce this effect. Now, can you read too many books and produce this effect? Yes. I have done it.

I used to be such an omnivorous, avaricious, voracious reader. I couldn't get enough books. I just had a compulsion.

I had to be reading a book all the time. Riding the bus any spare minute when I wasn't doing my chores or doing something else. I had my nose in a book.

I read hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of books. I'm not exaggerating. Hundreds of books.

I read every book in my school library. Went down to Claremore, got a card, read every book on the shelves in the areas that interested me. I read every Nancy Drew that was ever written.

I read the Hardy Boys. I liked mystery. I liked adventure fiction.

I liked things where a detective had to figure stuff out. Read them by the dozens. I liked historical biographies.

Still do. They had a section of historical biographies. I read every one of them.

Some of them two and three times. Nathaniel Hawthorne, all of these guys that have since come under a cloud. Well, there was these boyhood life and times, and here's what the guy's famous for.

Nathan Hale, Nathaniel Green, Light Horse Henry, Light Horse Harry Lee, Harrison, all of those guys. Worked alphabetically through them. Adams to Zephaniah.

I mean, I read them all. And I noticed that when I was really in immersion mode on those, I had difficulty coming back to reality. I would forget to close a gate, and the horses would get out.

I would forget to feed the horses. I would forget to finish my chores because my head was so full of this fictional environment. I was thinking about these guys sneaking through the woods and never step on what you can step over.

All these other little aphorisms and little pieces of words knowledge I wanted to try to remember. And in the meantime, I was kind of bumping through my day, not doing what I was supposed to do. I was doing this in lieu of doing my studies.

I was doing it in lieu of thinking about the things I was learning in church. And it became an excess. It imbalanced me.

And it is like a drunkenness. My perceptions in healthy areas were impaired. Anything that impairs awareness.

What is the command we just had? Walk circumspectly. Be aware. First and foremost, if you're going to walk in love, you have love for God, then how do you love God? You've got to understand what His will and purpose is, right? How do you love God? Do you send Him a present on His birthday? How do you love God? Understand His will.

Live in the light of His purpose. How do you love one another? The circumspect walk, the aware walk, is aware of needs. Picking up on small cues that maybe all is not well with someone or that there's an opportunity to be of benefit to someone.

If you've got your mind full of something else, you lose that awareness. You lose that sensitivity. And you can establish a pattern of that that is asotia.

You get to where you're never sensitive. And you're never really seeking the will and purpose of God. Because you're busy seeking the next piece of stimulation.

The next thing that partakes of your bad habit or your predilection or your compulsion or your enthusiasm. Well, it's just an enthusiasm. It's my hobby.

Anything can be overdone. Listen to what the Word of God says on this subject. Romans 13, verses 11 through 14.

You know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. I love to sleep. It's one of my favorite things.

I like the act of laying down and those moments before I fall asleep. Because I lay down and I think, you know what? I don't have to be anywhere else right now. I don't have to be doing anything else right now.

I lay aside all of my responsibilities. Nobody expects me anywhere. I'm not sloughing anything off.

This is the time when I should sleep, when I need to sleep. And I can lay my burden by the side of the bed. I lay down.

And just before I close my eyes and lose consciousness, which usually happens in about 40 to 50 seconds, it is a sweet time. I think, you know what? What great peace. I will lay me down in peace and sleep.

God is going to watch over everything while I'm gone. There's nowhere else I'm supposed to be, nothing else I'm supposed to be doing. It's the right time and the right place.

I can close my eyes in peace. It is a sweet blessing. I love to sleep.

But if I started just sleeping any time the opportunity arose, and there's stuff I should be doing in places I should be, hey, you know, an alarm went off an hour ago. You were supposed to be downtown at work, and you're not there. Well, but I love to sleep.

That argument is not going to fly, right? Asotia. You can develop an incurable pattern of putting the wrong things ahead of rightful priorities. And it can be anything.

This is why the Bible talks about gluttony. The time is here. It is full time now, Romans 13, verse

11, to wake from sleep.

It was a time to sleep. Now it's a time to wake up. Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

The night is far gone. The day is at hand. When it is night, it's time to sleep.

When it's day, it is time to wake up and get with it. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. How many of those concepts do we find in Ephesians? Ephesians 6, put on the full armor of God, walk in light, walk in love, wake up, arise and Christ will give you light.

This is partaking of the same vocabulary, the same thematic elements, isn't it? Put on the armor of light. Let us conduct ourselves becomingly, appropriately, worthy of the call as in the day, not reveling and drunkenness. What is, is something wrong with reveling? Thou shalt not revel, the 11th commandment.

Reveling, right out. You need to be stodgy. You need to look like a picture from 1865, frowning, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you think the Lord Jesus didn't have a great sense of humor? Do you think He didn't celebrate and enjoy and have happy times with the disciples? Was it all a long drudgery, a dark march through the three-and-a-half years with the disciples? And they were all saying, man, this guy is such a downer, such a bumner. This guy is just stern and drang.

It reminds me of, you know, really? The Lord Jesus was enjoyable to spend time with. But when it's daytime and time to get the work done, He got it done. When it was time to go aside and rest, He went aside and rested.

When it was time to spend time with His Father, that's what He did. He had a good balance. He knew what time it was.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. The flesh doesn't think.

The flesh just wants to be stimulated. The next chapter in Romans. One man esteems one day better than another.

Another esteems all days alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. 1 Corinthians 10.

Verse 23. All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up.

Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Well, if you're going to seek the good

of your neighbor, you can't be too drunk to know where your neighbor is or what he needs. And that can be drunk, that can be preoccupied with, overdone in anything.

You can be preoccupied with your own problems and you're drunk with your problem. You can be preoccupied with your own hobby, your own pursuit, your own goal, your own thoughts, your own form of entertainment, your own circle of friends, and be insensitive to someone who is right there and qualifies as a neighbor. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on ground of conscience.

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Verse 31. Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

What is it that glorifies God? That's the priority. Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God. I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be delivered, that they may be saved.

And this is beyond just eternal salvation. This is delivered into the light, delivered into the meaningful life. Be imitators of me as I am an imitator of Christ.

You can see similar things in 1 Corinthians 14. I don't have time to read those. Let me close with Colossians 3, verses 12 through 17.

This is the parallel letter. This traveled in the same bag. Put on then, this is Colossians 3, verse 12.

Put on then as God's chosen ones, as those who are the called according to His purpose. Put on. It isn't already on you.

You don't wake up with this on you. Do you wake up with your Sunday go-to-meet-and-close on? No. You have to get up and put them on.

And hopefully you do. Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Put on compassion.

This is an outward-looking attitude. Put on kindness. Put on lowliness and meekness and patience.

Forbearing one another. If one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Remember in our passage, what did He say? What you have seen God do, you do also. Tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. It's the very same idea.

Forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all these

things, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

Let the peace of Christ rule. That is the priority. The peace of Christ is the priority.

You have been called to this in the one body. That's unity, harmony, fellowship with fellow believers. Be thankful.

Remember that in our memory verse this morning. In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Thankfulness is the key to our humility and to our objectivity.

The first thing to go when we are subjective is gratitude, thankfulness. First thing to go. One of the first things to disappear.

I'm no longer grateful. I'm no longer acknowledging that something has been done for me. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, wherein is asotia, incurable problems, but be filled with the Spirit. What does he go on to say in Ephesians chapter 5? Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another, psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that? What does it say here in Colossians 3? Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another in wisdom, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Most of these things are the same. Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, gratefulness, thankfulness. What are the two things that aren't alike that are put in a synonymous place? What can we learn from the parallel? Being filled with the Spirit is letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Do you see the parallel? Compare Colossians 3 verse 16 to Ephesians 5 verse 18. Being filled with the Spirit is directly related to and inseparable from the word of Christ dwelling in us richly because isn't that the ministry of the Spirit in His filling capacity to bring to our minds the truth, to lead us into all truth, to remind us of what we've learned, to illuminate our path. He is the energy that makes that light work.

He gives us the understanding we do not have in the carnal mind. So the word of Christ dwelling in you richly is inextricably linked to, parallel to, compared to the filling of the Spirit. And by the way, if we are filling our minds with something else, too much entertainment, too much hobby, too much obsession with some other thing, too much attention to something else, what is it that isn't taking place? We say, well, I can't be filled with the Spirit if I'm drunk with something else.

The word of Christ cannot dwell in us richly. We can't be circumspect. We can't be perspicacious.

We can't really understand what the issues are so long as our hearts and minds are running on,

filled with something else. Do you see now what I mean when I say this has little to nothing to do with wine or whether or not there's alcohol in your cabinet somewhere? It has everything to do with what do we fill ourselves with? How do we invest our time? What is our mental attention devoted to? We need to be devoted to ensuring that whatever we do in word or deed, which is mostly mundane tasks, is done with the idea that I can do this in a way that glorifies Christ. I can mow this lawn.

I can wash these dishes. I can fix this thing. I can do this job.

I can attend to this need. I can think about my neighbor in a way that glorifies Christ. I can be sensitive to others and glorify Christ.

There are many obsessive things I might want to do that don't necessarily glorify Christ. And sometimes we have to ask ourselves hard questions. I just spent several hours teaching myself a new song on the guitar, and as I was musing on this passage, I thought, well, can I play a secular song? Can I learn a secular song and devote a lot of time, and my time is spoken for a lot? Can I spend this time, because it pleases me, to play this guitar and learn this song? It's just a song.

But can I do this to the glory of Christ? Well, I'm not going to tell you the answer, but I did learn the song. But I need to do whatever I do. We need to do whatever we do with an eye on Is there a reflection of the glory of Jesus Christ in this? Does being skillful in the playing of an instrument reflect the glory of Christ? Could I only learn the piano by playing hymns, or can I play finger exercises to make myself better, so that when I do express myself and express my love and praise for the Lord Jesus, the way David did on his harp, do you think David only played psalms? Did he never hear some drinking song down in Bethlehem and go out and try to figure it out on his harp and get better at the harp, so that when he is playing his harp, he can do it to the glory of God? It isn't what we do.

It is why we do it, and we bring it before God and say, Lord, is this okay? I want to please you in my life. And that's what he's looking for. And many times it is just the bringing of the question, and God says, look, you're my child.

If you enjoy that, knock yourself out. You can fly a frisbee. It doesn't have to be going to a quote down in learning memory verses.

You like a frisbee? Fly a frisbee. But I appreciate you coming and asking, because I know your heart is for me. This is God's attitude towards us.

He's our Father. He loves us, and there are wonderful things. And if they don't get out of balance, and if they don't interfere with sensitivity to others, the circumspect walk, it's great.

God loves music. He invented it. God loves humor.

He invented it. God loves a lot of things in this life, but we bring them before Him. We can do

them in a way that does not defile us, in a way that maintains our sanctification, and is a part of our focus on Him.

And even as we do trivial and frivolous things, the glory of God is still in our hearts and in our minds, and we are not unmindful. We are not drunk and insensate to the real issues in life. You don't have to be Amish or a Quaker.

You don't have to do nothing except stirm and drang and, you know, trudge toward glory. But we do need to be aware, circumspect, walk in love. That is the message and the focus in this passage.

And if we catch that, Paul has not written this letter in vain where we are concerned. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the clear light that it shines on our path. Thank You for the presence of Your Spirit who, in His filling ministry, makes these things understandable and meaningful and applicable for us. We pray that as we seek for Your truth as hidden treasure and search for it, lift up our voices and cry out for it, that we will understand how to serve You and find the knowledge that reflects the way we should walk and the way we should conduct ourselves as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

We know that if we can accomplish this, if we can achieve it, if we can enter into it, the Lord Jesus will be glorified. And this is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.