

Ephesians 15-01-25a

This is Sunday, the 25th of January, 2015. We resume our study in Paul's letter to the Laodicean and Colossian churches, popularly known as Ephesians, resuming this morning in chapter 6. We just dipped our toe in this water last time, and we're going to move forward in some detail here in these first few verses because it is a very important issue. It is something that affects all of us.

It's something that is a prominent factor in the quality of our lives, both internally and externally, our families and in our culture. And the Bible has a lot to say on this subject, and Paul the Apostle in particular has a great insight here for us that is both personal and outward-looking in its application. Let's take a moment as we approach the study of God's Word to go to the Lord in prayer, ensure that this time is well spent, that it results in fruit that lasts, that we can take with us.

There are a lot of ways to spend time, but no better way to spend time than being nourished from the spiritual food that comes from God's Word, especially in a setting such as this. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for granting us another day. Every morning seems in some ways like a resurrection.

We have a fresh slate, a fresh set of opportunities. We leave behind us that which entangles and that which besets us, and we look with hope and with anticipation toward the mark of the high call that you have issued to us through the Lord Jesus. We hope to advance.

We hope to do better today than we have done in any previous day, to dedicate ourselves, even in the common tasks of life, to pleasing you and reflecting your glory as we represent the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. We thank you for our fellowship. We thank you for the freedom we have and the insight that we gain as we spend this time openly and without fear, pursuing our relationship with you through the Holy Spirit and through the truth of your Word.

We pray that each of us will have understanding and gain insight, that the truth we look at this morning will be meaningful, will be something we can carry away with us in our hearts, something the Holy Spirit can use to speak to us, to guide us, to enable us and strengthen us and motivate us in the days ahead. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

We saw beginning in chapter 5, verse 22, the specific illustrations for functioning under structured authority in this life. This is divinely ordained and appointed authority. It is the foundation.

It is the root and the stability of society, of culture, and certainly of spiritual growth and function for believers. It is important to see it objectively, not subjectively, not what can I gain, but how can I best serve? This is the mind that was in Christ Jesus, Philippians chapter 2, looking at the interests of others ahead of our own. This is the mind that was in Christ Jesus when he did not think his deity and his position in heaven was a thing to be held on to.

He let go. He came to this earth and took on the form of a servant and came in our likeness,

made of mud, made of dirt, made of dust, partaking of the earth, and he humbled himself and was obedient. This is our example.

This is our reference point. When I'm unsure, when the issues are clouded by complications and it's difficult to know exactly what to do, a good first direction to look is the Lord Jesus. They used to have this abbreviated saying, you know, what would Jesus do? It's a good concept.

I don't personally have any of the little bracelets and magnets and coffee cups with the WWJD on it, but it's a valid concept. The Lord Jesus is our example, and when in doubt, the selfless direction is usually one to consider as a first choice. So, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Submit actually coming from the previous verse as we have seen. Submitting to one another in the fear of God as to the Lord as also Christ. He is the Savior.

He is the example. We saw that wonderful chiasm focusing on the purpose and the point, and many times we have to step back and gain objectivity by not looking at the immediate circumstance. This person wants me to do X. I find that demeaning.

This person will not let me do Y. I find that limiting and insulting. I find this to be personally distasteful or dissatisfying. The path to my satisfaction and my happiness lies over here, and somebody is blocking my progress in that direction.

Someone's, I think, maybe unfairly exerting authority, et cetera, and we find ourselves thinking in personal terms. I feel frustrated. Frustration is going to be a big part of our study this morning.

I feel limited. I feel held back. I feel denied.

Why can't I, and it's even worse when you look to the left or to the right and you see somebody who is availing themselves of something that you can't currently grab hold of, and you think, look at them. They've got X, Y, and Z. They're doing A, B, and C. Why not me? Well, to step back, and this is the strong point of the chiasm. Why did Jesus do that? Why did he do the Philippians 2 thing? Remember the very center of that structure, the biggest emphasis and the point that he might present to himself a glorious church.

This is what pleases God. This is the will of God. This is the reason God sent the Lord Jesus to this earth.

Now, we say, oh, just for us, just for this dispensation? Remember our study of the word ecclesia. In its first blush, in its first application, yes, it's us. We are his body.

We are the church, which is his body, right? But ecclesia goes beyond that. Jesus told Peter, back in Matthew, flesh and blood has not revealed to you that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God. It has been granted to you to understand this.

It has been granted to you. It has been given to you. To those who are outside, it has not been given.

To you, it has been given. Now, have I become a reformed theologian? Is God just arbitrarily throwing darts at the human map and saying, I'll give it to that one and that one and that one and that one? Is there a basis on which God gives this knowledge? Yes. You will seek me and find me when I throw a dart at the human map.

Right? What does the verse say? Say it out loud with me. You will seek me and find me. I can't hear you.

You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. Why does somebody search for a thing with all their heart? It is a felt need.

They're about to launch a new, you know, in my opinion, we don't have enough reality television series yet. I think there's room for more. They're about to launch a new reality series, and praise God, my Verizon TV got disconnected at midnight last night, hit the button on the box this morning just to check, and it says, you know, you need to call somebody.

You've got no service. Eh, all right. Anyway, before it left, I saw a commercial for a new reality series.

There's some mountain up in the Rockies where the lost treasure, the Sierra Madre, I don't know, some treasures up there, 250 people, according to the teaser, have died trying to find this treasure. 250. Well, we're going to send some more up there and camera crews to film their demise, I guess, you know, 251, 252.

They're going to be up there watching these guys flail around. It's not enough to have Oak Island where they keep digging holes to no purpose and find little chips of wood and buttons and, oh, let's go on and spend another million. I mean, now they've got this treasure.

But why do people keep going to the mountains looking for treasure? I'll leave my family behind. I'll quit my job. I'll take my savings and invest it.

These two brothers that are doing the Oak Island, Oak Island has been the biggest crock of fertilizer for centuries. And they fantasize that the Crusaders sailed across the Atlantic and buried stuff there and the Ark of the Covenant is in there and the Holy Grail and, you know, a spacesuit from Martians that landed. And I don't know what all they think is in there, but all they do is dig holes and sloop around in the mud.

And, well, we thought we had a signal with the metal detector, but now it's gone. Well, let's drain the swamp. And they think there's a vast system of tunnels.

Yeah, right. Back in the 1300s, somebody dug these diagonal tunnels and put these mouse traps in place so that if anybody tried to get to the treasure, all of these mile and a half long diagonal tunnels would magically flood. And they put coconut mats in.

I mean, I watched it just because I was flabbergasted at the gullibility of people with money. Millionaires. These guys have spent millions.

And you know what they've got to show for it? They've got a button. They've got a chip of wood. They've got a lot of bills, receipts that they've paid for oil derricks and busted drill bits.

I mean, it's just the insanity of it. But why do they do it? And I'm drawing out this illustration for a reason. Why would you seek? Why would you search with all your heart for this imagined bounty? When I find it, I will do two things.

I will solve a mystery that nobody else could solve, which will make me notable. I will be important. I'll be in the history books.

People for centuries couldn't find it. I found it. And secondly, I will be fabulously wealthy.

These guys are already fabulously wealthy. If fabulous wealth makes you happy, why are they digging for fabulous wealth? Apparently it hasn't dawned on them that it doesn't matter how much fabulous wealth you have. It isn't going to make you happy.

Well, but if I dig it out of the ground on Oak Island, that will make me happy. No, it won't. I am here to tell you it won't.

You can search the world over and think you've found true love. She'll meet another, and it's over. You can supply the sound effects yourself.

So I'm back to the question. Why is it that some people have the knowledge of God? This isn't a hope. This isn't a more or less 61% persuasion.

This is knowledge. You will seek me and you will find me when? When it becomes the most important thing. This is not a swampy hole on Oak Island.

This is not some treasure up in the mountains that some guy probably found and spent over a century ago. They actually have found a big hole on Oak Island. And I think long, long ago, anything that was buried there, somebody found it and left and didn't tell anyone.

And all the other guys are, oh, but it looks like somebody was here. Well, yes, they were. And what you're looking for is gone.

Not so with God. You will seek me and find me, not with a casual investigation, not with a sort of impulsive quest, when you search for me with all your heart. You remember our memory verse in Proverbs? My son, if you seek her as silver and search for her wisdom as for hid treasures, then

you will understand the fear of the Lord.

Then you will find the knowledge of God. Not before. It is given to those who seek.

Jesus told his disciples, it has been given to you. Why? These guys left all and followed Jesus. They were looking.

It wasn't given to them and then they came. They came and it was given. Notice the order.

They were down at the Jordan watching John baptized before Jesus ever showed up. Why? They were seeking. They were looking.

These guys are from Galilee. John is baptizing at the Jordan not far from Jerusalem because we're told all Jerusalem came out to see him. They've traveled across the country.

They've gone from California to Texas because they're seeking. And to them it has been given. Now, part of that knowledge is an understanding of the way God has organized human life.

Just as there is authority in heaven, there are archangels. Arche, first, foremost, head of, at the top. What does an architect do? He draws the first plans for the building.

He creates it as the first copy. Everything comes from what he designs, right? Arche, first, proto, prototype, the first type. Well, God has created order and suborder, subordination.

Somebody is a leader, he has subordinates. And it is important for us as we gain the knowledge of God to understand and to step back and look at objectively that it's not about me and how I feel. God did not design this structure so that I could feel good.

God did not design the plan of salvation around the Lord Jesus Christ so the Lord Jesus would feel good and feel good about himself. The Lord Jesus felt bad. The Lord Jesus says, my soul is troubled.

Look at the Lord Jesus at Gethsemane. This isn't making him feel good. He emptied himself and took on the form of a servant.

Why? That he might present to himself a glorious church. This is the will of the Father and the church encompasses, ecclesia encompasses everyone. Yes, it is specifically for our purposes, us and the body of Christ, but Jesus says, to you it has been given to understand and on this rock of understanding I will build my ecclesia.

Knowledge, understanding who Jesus Christ is, what the order of things is, what God's purpose is. That's the foundation on which the called group, a group assembled for a purpose, that's what an ecclesia is. Remember, eccleio, ecclesia, called out for a purpose.

Even in Acts, when the church gets together to make a decision about the disciples and apostles,

should they be allowed to preach or not, they're called together to make a decision for a purpose around a central issue. The called out group for a purpose. Well, God's people in the Old Testament are a called out group for a purpose.

And when Stephen is preaching his sermon, he says, Moses was in the ecclesia in the Old Testament, because that's God's called out group for a purpose. A family is a called out group for a purpose. It's designated.

God knew who would be in the family long before any of us were ever born, generations ago, eons ago. God knew your family. God knew your marriage.

God knew your parents. He knew your children. He knew all of the ifs, ands, and conditions, successions, relations, all of it.

It is a part of his purpose. So when we step back and say, let me, for the moment, set aside how this makes me feel and look at what is God's purpose. And how can I best serve? How can I best function? As an authority and under authority.

That's what this section is about, and we've seen it. So it began back in 522 with the specific illustrations and that beautiful symmetrical structure of verses 22 through 33. Actually, 21 through 33.

And now we pick up in chapter 6 with the second great illustration. The first is the relationship between husband and wife mirroring, reflecting, illustrating as a metaphor of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the called out group for a purpose in this age. And in a wider echo, the called out group for a purpose in every age.

In the kingdom of the father, these dispensational distinctions melt away. And everybody is either one thing or another. Well, in chapter 6, the second one begins.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. And interestingly, when Paul said, you guys be sure and read the Colossian letter, we have a parallel in Colossians chapter 3, verse 20. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Here, obey your parents in the Lord because this is dikaiois. This is righteousness. If you're a believer and you're a subordinate child, then you do your obedience to your parents in faith.

And faith lays hold of righteousness. Dikaiois. Dikaiois as the noun.

So, obey your parents and this is hear and obey. Hupakuo. The straightforward execution of commands.

This is righteousness. The parallel in Colossians 3, 20. Children, obey your parents in all things, meaning in all areas, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Well pleasing to the Lord. How does God act when He is well pleased? This is a phrase that was used by the Father Himself. One of the rare occasions where He speaks directly out loud in the course of human history at the baptism at the Jordan by John of the Lord Jesus.

John says, well, you ought to be baptizing me. And Jesus says, no. Allow it to be this way for now.

Suffer it to be so for now. It is necessary to fulfill all righteousness. This is a subordinate act.

This is an identification ritual. It is an outward sign of identifying with the plan and purpose of God. Jesus begins His public ministry with a picture of entering into death and being raised back out of death.

That's why immersion is so important when you think about water baptism. Everybody standing on the bank, and it was a huge crowd, saw the Lord Jesus. It doesn't make any sense for John the Baptist to picture death and resurrection.

The Lord Jesus has to be the first. He is the first fruits of them that sleep. It is He who conquers death.

And Jesus says, look, John, I don't have time to teach you a Bible class right now. Just do this. It's necessary to fulfill righteousness.

When John hears it's necessary to fulfill righteousness, he doesn't understand why it's not the other way around. But what does he do? He hupakouos. He obeys.

John's in charge. It's John's scene. It's John's crowd.

It's John's river. John's doing the baptizing thing. He could say, look, this is my crusade here.

I'm the baptizer. They call me John the Baptizer. But here you are, and I know who you are.

You're the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. And when I say you should baptize me, that's how it ought to be. I don't really feel like relinquishing my authority.

And if I decide that I'm the one that ought to be baptized, who's going to baptize me? I'm the baptizer. I'm not going to grab my own head and sink myself below. I've been waiting for you so that you could baptize me.

And Jesus says, John, essentially, be quiet. You've got to allow this. This is what's right.

And John says, three bags full. And he dunks the Lord Jesus in the river. Why? Look at the bracket of the Lord Jesus' career.

He begins his public ministry in death, burial, and resurrection in the water of the Jordan. The

water of the Jordan, which first and foremost speaks of the salvation of the Israelites themselves, who came across the Jordan, entered into the sea and out of the sea with Moses, and then came across the Jordan with Joshua, with Yeshua. They weren't delivered when they went through the Red Sea with Moses.

That didn't deliver them. What delivered them into the land of promise? Coming across with Yeshua. Moses is the law.

Yeshua is the promise. And so Jesus doesn't say, John, we've got to go down to the Red Sea and you can dunk me down there because I'm fulfilling the law. That's not the picture.

It's the Jordan. It is coming across into the place of fulfillment, accomplishing the purpose of God. Not just to have a church, but that it be a glorious church, without spot and without blemish.

That it reach its fruition. And in the Bible, salvation and growth to maturity are not separated. They're not two different things.

We'll have a revival, and then we'll have discipleship classes. We'll get you saved, and then at some future time, we'll try to get you along. In the Bible, it is continuous.

One leads to the other. When the baby is born, you feed the baby. You don't say, well, we just push him out the maternity ward and hope somebody feeds him later on.

It's all one thing. So when you have the Lord Jesus in obedience himself, when you have John the Baptist in obedience himself, God's plan and purpose become evident. And it is in ways that often surpass our understanding.

So we have to step back and say, what is the path of obedience? What is the path? I may not fully understand it. I may not see how this is going to turn out, but I will suffer it to be so now, because it is necessary to fulfill all righteousness. Well, this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Do you remember what is said when Jesus comes up out of the water? The voice of God comes from heaven, and what does he say? This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Do you think Paul could have had any part of this in his mind when he penned Colossians 3.20? Children, obey your parents.

Sons, obey your fathers. Have a father who can say, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. This is well pleasing to the Lord.

Your Father in heaven is well pleased when you are subordinate to his commands and to the authority structure that he has put in place. Well pleasing. Well pleasing.

What more could you ask than God the Father in heaven saying, I am well pleased. You are a good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of your Lord.

Well, this is what's at stake here in chapter 6. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. We're borrowing from Colossians 3.20 there.

Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise. The first exhortation, the first imperative here is obey. Obey means this is the perfunctory response.

Here's the command. I do the command. I've told you before, I gave a guy a command one time to dig a hole so he could bury the trash because we were about to leave a position.

And he started digging the hole. I mean, he obeyed after a fashion with his left hand and the shovel just barely hitting the dirt. You know, it was obedience.

But the attitude of obedience wasn't there at all. And the real attitude soon became evident. But he was just sort of dangling the shovel and letting the force of gravity just a few inches into the ground.

Yeah, I'm digging the hole, lieutenant. The second part of this in verse 2, honor your father and mother. There is the obedience.

Honor is an attitude. This is direct your respect toward. Now, just as in the military, it is not the individual and personal merits of the person holding the rank that engender the salute and engender the deference and engender the respectful tone in replying to questions or in responding to commands.

Obedience has nothing to do with the quality of the individual. It is the eagle on the shoulder. It is the double silver bars.

It is the gold oak leaf. It is the single little butter bar. You may be a master sergeant with 25 years in and you've got a butter bar lieutenant saying some inane thing, but the response is respectful.

It is careful because it's looking at the fact that God and the United States Marine Corps have pinned that bar on this wet behind the ears recent college graduate and it is my job to ensure that that rank gets the respect that has been designed into it. Same thing here. Honor your father and mother, not because they're the greatest mother and father that ever lived, although they may be.

That's not the reason for the honor. Honor your father and mother. Why? That it may be well with you and that you may live long.

Who determines what is well with you and how long you stay upon the land? God in heaven. God is well pleased because in honoring your parents, you are honoring him. And the reason you do it isn't because they deserve it or they earn it or they in any way qualify for it, although they often do.

But that's not the reason. Honor your father and mother. Why? Because I really, really love them.

No. Because you're looking to God, who determines your status of well-being and how long your life is going to last. You're looking to God in the same way that that Master Sergeant is looking at bigger things than the quality and worth of the idiot that's standing in front of him spouting off something he learned out of a book.

God preserve us from second lieutenants. That's pretty much the constant theme in every enlisted man's mind and rightfully so. I've been a second lieutenant and I can tell you, it's just thankfully a phase.

And pretty soon you wake up and get some experience. But parents, a lot of times parents, they all have to start somewhere. You don't get born being parents.

You learn as you go and you have a second lieutenant phase and there are areas where it takes us a long time to learn. We may not learn until our kids are grown. And in retrospect we say, oh, should have done that different.

But look, honor your father and mother is a commandment with promise. Paul says it's the first commandment with promise. Who made the promise? The parents? Honor your father and mother and they'll leave you a lot of stuff in their will.

Honor your father and mother and they won't beat you silly with a switch. No, with promise. Honor your father and mother looking upward, remembering who made them your mother and father and who directed that you be born into that family and to those people.

You're looking at God when you honor. It's an attitude behind the obedience. Well, this brings us to verse 4. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath.

Provoke to wrath, you know, your children is inserted in there, but provoke to wrath is one word in Greek. And it is parorgizmo. We saw this word and a derivative.

We did a study of it back in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 26. So we're going to pause here and take our break because we've gotten the subordinate deal first. And notice it was the same back in verse 22.

It didn't say husbands love your wives and do your stuff right and then wives, you know, submit to your husbands. The subordinate gets the instructions first and then the person exercising the authority is addressed. Same thing here.

Children obey and honor. Now, fathers, here's your part. And oddly enough, where the wives are a different set of people than the children, the fathers are the husbands.

So the same guy is getting another dose. It's like strike you on the left cheek and then come back

and strike you on the right. Husbands, you've got to love your wives.

Fathers, who are the husbands, don't provoke your children to wrath. It's the same group, generally speaking. Well, we need to address this.

What does it mean? If you do anything and your child gets angry, you're doing it wrong. What does this actually entail? Well, oddly enough, Paul knew that would be a question, which is one of the reasons he put Ephesians 4.26 ahead of Ephesians 6.4. So we're going to pause and take our break. When we come back, what is parorgizmos? What exactly is that and how do you keep from engendering it in your children if that is the command here? We'll look at that when we come back.