

Previously we've worked thru' 1st 4 chapters of Ephesians.

Today ~ we're moving on to explore: **Ch. 5 vs. 1-15**

Years ago, when Anne was teaching 'Bible in Schools'
Occasionally ... she came home and said:

**'The children, were just terrible ... this morning.
I don't want to go back ... to that class' !**

Of course ~ she knew ~ she would go back,
because: next week, **they'd be different**,
And ~ 'more often than not' ~ the kids **surprised her**,
with how much they'd **understood**, and **remembered** !

Then, she came home saying: '**It was great today**'
& wanting to prepare ~ for the next week.

It makes you admire the school teachers, who have
to deal with **some**, quite unruly children, **every day**.
They must find **their 'satisfaction'**
In seeing the children, **changing, & growing**
in their understanding of new ideas.
& saying: '**I've been part of that change** ...
Of helping them to prepare ~ for the rest of their lives'

In a similar way ~ **Paul** never tired of explaining:
how to understand ~ & apply ~ our faith.

It's to **our advantage**, that he was '**holed up**' in prison because he could only **teach** the Ephesians, & the other churches ~ by writing **letters** to them.

Each time we open our bibles:

We can expect to discover **principles** that are **timeless**.

The details ~ talk about specific people in the past.

But **God's principles** ... don't change.

So they **still apply** to us, today !

Let's link our last chapter, with this new one by reading:

Chpt.4, 31-32 & 5. 1

Our '**Key Verse**' this morning ~ is v1:

Follow God's example in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

For any organisation to grow, & be effective, It must be **cohesive**, & have **harmony** within.

If we're **not being kind, compassionate, & forgiving to each other**, within the Church. Then we're not going to behave like that ~ to those outside the Church !

'Follow God's example in everything you do ...'

Who ... would notice the change ? ... If we did ...
Follow God's example ~ in every part of our lives ?
Would our family notice ?
Would our friends notice ?
Would our employer ~ (or employees) ~ notice ?

v2. Clarifies ~ **how** we can do this:

Live a life, filled with love for others,
following the example of Christ,
who loved you, and gave himself as a sacrifice
to take away your sins. And God was pleased,
because **that sacrifice** was like sweet perfume to him.

So ... **how did Jesus ... demonstrate 'God's love' ?**

As we read through the Gospels we see Him ...
mixing freely with people, in a very natural way.
He didn't wear a **bright Orange robe**,
so he'd '**stand out**' in the crowd.
He didn't stand on street corners '**Praying**'
Like the Pharisees often did !

He didn't do miracles, just to make people say: 'wow'
He didn't form a protest group, & wave placards
At some activity ~ he didn't approve of !

He met with the '**common**' people, & provided for their:
Physical ~ emotional ~ and spiritual needs,
And He showed them ... **genuine compassion.**
The people **never doubted Him** ... Because:
He listened to them, & **responded appropriately.**

If anyone had the right to feel **superior.**
Surely ... The Son of God did !

But '**No**' ... **That was not how he behaved !**
He gave his time, in continuous service for others
Every part of His life ~ had a **purpose !**
Namely ... **to obey His Father's will.**
An **attitude of obedience** ~ brings a willingness
for whatever sacrifice, is needed !

Now ... that's not ... a '**Martyr complex**'
but an attitude of ... '**I'll do, whatever it takes**'
As **He mixed with people** on the road, or by the lake
Wherever they were ... **He met their needs,**
Of: Teaching ~ Healing ~ Guidance ~ Warning,
And **sometimes** ~ of Rebuke !

Quite a few times, he said ... **Come follow Me !**
& **set an example of obedience, to his Father's will.**

In **Peter's** first letter he says: (1st Peter 2. vs16 & 21)

v.16. **You are not slaves, you are free.**

But your freedom, is not an excuse, to do evil.

v.21.

This suffering is all part of what God has called you to.

Christ, who suffered for you, is your example,

Follow in His steps.

Paul says: **Live a life ~ filled with love for others,** (5.v2.)

Peter adds: **Christ is your example,**
follow in His steps.

The Romans had no postal service, of course !

So when they wanted to send a letter like this.

They had to 'entrust it'~ to someone going to that city,
& trust they'd **faithfully** deliver it ~ **to the right person**

Over in **Ephesians 6** ~ Paul names **Tychicus,**

As the person entrusted to carry the letter we're reading
to the Ephesian Church.

It's likely that some of Paul's teaching in this second
half of the letter ~ is answering questions sent to him,
And probably brought to Rome, by Tychicus.

If, he did **bring** the questions,
Then he'd want to **wait** for the answers ~ to take back.

Paul, seems to be answering questions, about:
How do you live a Christian life ~ in a heathen city.

The **Temple of Diana**, received large amounts of gold,
From people wanting: **good** crops ~ **safe** travel,
better business, or a **favourable** marriage
And hoping to **buy that favour** ... from the 'gods'

Consequently the **temple treasuries** were 'so full'
they acted as banks & money lenders.

Where you could borrow money at interest.

And the temple courts, being much larger than
private houses ~ were used for weddings,
& other celebrations.

The sex industry in Ephesus:
which centred around the **Temple of Diana**,
was so extensive and infiltrated everyday life so much,
that Paul **needed** to give some detailed teaching about it.

Listen to: **chapter 5. vs. 3 – 7**
At first ... I wondered why Paul put '**Greed**'

In with the sexual sins. So I looked up the word:
It means: **‘greed, covetousness,**
& a **strong desire** to get something ~ no matter what
An attitude of: **‘I know what I want, and I plan to get it,**
I won’t take ~ ‘No’ ~ for an answer !

Paul says it’s: **IMPROPER ~ for God’s people,**
To hold such attitudes, because it fails to consider,
God’s will ... and, other people’s disadvantage.
It’s all about ... **self-indulgence !**

v5b Explains that a greedy person is really an Idolater !
Because they put ... **their things ... their importance,**
& their satisfaction ... in the place of **God.**
So **God** ceases to be ~ **their ‘Lord’ ~ to be obeyed,**
& becomes, just a means of getting what they want.

Hey, we’re talking about our **Lord & heavenly Father,**
Not **Ali Baba’s: ‘Genie in a bottle,’ granting 3 wishes.**

v6. Starts:

Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins,

Let’s look back ... to the very first instance,
of being **‘fooled’ & ‘deceived’ !**

In Genesis 3.v1. **The serpent, said to the woman**

‘Did God **really** say:

You must not eat **any**, of the fruit in the garden’ ?

‘Of course we may eat it’ ~ the woman told him,

‘It’s only the fruit from the tree **at the centre of the garden** that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it, or even touch it, or we will die.’

‘**You won’t die**’ ... the serpent hissed.

‘God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil.’

The serpent’s **first tactic**: was to muddle the issue and introduce confusion !

‘Did God really say: **You must not** eat any of the fruit’

His **second tactic** ~ Was to contradict God !

‘**You won’t die**...! God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it.’

Eve was: deceived ~ told lies, and told

God was withholding something desirable !

The facts were first distorted ~ then denied,

And replaced with ‘**false facts**’ !

In all the years since then, ‘**deceit**’ has not changed a bit

Ephesians 5. Vs. 6 & 7:

Don’t be fooled, by those who try to excuse these sins,
For the terrible anger of God

Comes upon all those who disobey him.

Don’t participate - in the things these people do.

We also ... live in a mainly **anti-Christian** world !
Our movies & media ~ make that plain.

Paul wants the Ephesians ... (and us) to be:
discerning & not deceived by ‘the smooth talkers’

To achieve this: **God’s guiding principles**,
Need to be both ~ **Positive & Negative**.
Saying: ‘**Do this**’~ (but) ~‘**Don’t do that**’

Let’s continue to read: **vs8. ~ 15.**

vs 8,9&10 are **positive**. while 11, & 12, are **negative**.

v8: For though your hearts were **once full of darkness**,
now you are full of light, from the Lord,
And your behaviour **should show it.**

In John 8.v12 ~ Jesus says: **I am the light of the world**

The concept of **light & darkness**:

Is easily understood ~ and a timeless illustration:

Of the difference between good & evil, truth & lies.

Most crime is committed ~ under the cover of darkness !

When the **identity** of the criminal,

Is more easily **concealed** ! ...When it's not,

We say it was committed: '**in broad daylight**'

Meaning: ~ 'With dangerous arrogance' !

The Jews had a law that: **No court cases were to be held at night.** They had to be held in the daytime, so that **anyone** could attend, and listen, to the proceedings.

Therefore, the trial of Jesus by the High Priest, in the middle of the night, was **against** their own rules and was then ~ **concealed** from the people !

Before the Ephesians, were Christians...

They'd often **concealed** things: from the tax collector, & **concealed** things: from their wife or children, or neighbours ~ or employers.

Hoping to deceive them, into thinking they were better, than they really were !

**v8: For though your hearts were once full of darkness,
now you are full of 'light' from the Lord,
And your behaviour should show it !**

So it's not just a matter of ... trying to be different,
But of **remembering** ... we've chosen to be different.
Because we've chosen ... to be changed by God !

If ... someone could switch off the sun !
Switch off 'our source of light' for 3 months,
The **moon** would have no light to reflect.
So our only natural light ~ would be **starlight** !
Our crops wouldn't grow, & all plant life would die,
all round the world. And shortly, with nothing to eat,
The animals ~ and then, we ourselves ~ would follow.

Light is essential,
for plant growth and fruitfulness, in the **physical world**.

In this **spiritual application**, (in v9) **Paul** says:
**For this light within you, produces only
what is good ~ and right ~ and true.**

**Goodness ~ righteousness ~ & truth, are
Principles, that we must apply, to every part of our life.**

v10 says: Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.
How ? By applying God's **principles:** to our lives
& **demonstrating them**, by our actions.

In **v11:** Paul begins to explain the **negatives:**
Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil & darkness
Instead, rebuke and expose them.

Spiritual fruit, has a direct impact, on our life &
Character. ~ But it also effects, those around us.
By the way we behave ~ towards them.

So v11: Is **not** about conducting '**witch hunts**'
or **searching** for the sinful habits ~ **of others !**

It's about **us ... & our separation ~ from sin !**
Paul is saying:
'You've **chosen** to break from your old ways,
Now keep up the good work, **maintain the separation**'

Perhaps you've met people,
Who are so **concerned about** offending God,

'**That the Joy of the Lord**' is swamped,
by them worrying ~ about **small issues** !

More often ~ we meet people:

Who compromise their Christian testimony:

By not being careful ~ **to recognise evil & avoid it !**
vs13,14.

As we **apply** God's light to a situation.

We develop **a growing understanding:**

Of where to draw the line ~ between right & wrong.

The contrasts of ~ **light** and **darkness**,
are largely between ~ '**right**' & '**wrong**'.

Whereas, the contrasts in **v15:**

are between: '**wise**' & '**unwise**'

They may be ~ between **right** & **wrong**,

But they can also be ~ between:

What's just: '**OK**' ~ and what's: **the 'Best'**

v15. Is the 4th time in our chapter,
that Paul has described how we should live:

v1. Follow God's example in everything you do,

v2. Live a life filled with love for others

v8. Now you are full of light from the Lord,
and your behaviour should show it.

v15. So be careful how you live,
not as fools, but as those who are wise.

A father, who genuinely loves his children,
Sets them a good example, & teaches them to follow it.
Human fathers aren't perfect, **but** our heavenly Father is

v1: Follow God's example in everything you do,
because you are his dear children.

v2: Paul says: Live a life filled with love for others.

Peter adds: Leaving you an example,
that you should follow in His steps.

Our God, **is a God of love**. Live, a life of love

Our God, **is a God of light**. Live, as children of light

Our God, has **wisdom**, far beyond our comprehension.

Live, not as fools, but as those who are wise.

These instructions ~ will be no more effective than
'**New Year Resolutions**' ~ **Unless** we allow the Lord,
To provide his **power**, to cover our personal inadequacy

John 14.v15 Jesus speaking: If you love me, obey my
commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will
give you another Counsellor, who will never leave you.

It's the Holy Spirit living **in us** ~ that **enables us** to:

'Follow God's example'