

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Share God's Word Share Christ's love
And do it now!

Aug 19, 2018

“The bread and butter of the Christian” Walk with God - Ephesians 5:15-21
by Pastor Dave Goehmann

Be careful! You may remember hearing that from your parents when you went somewhere by yourself for the first time. You may remember your parents say that as you venture out into a busy place. When I was growing up we had a dirt road that led out to some woods. We would go out and climb trees and do other dangerous stunts that my mom would probably cringe at if she had known. Instead she just gave us the warning as we went out to play. Be careful!

Verse 15 of chapter 5 says those same words. Look carefully then how you walk. It warns us that the days are evil so we must think carefully where we will step and what we will do. Sometimes as Christians we wonder how we should live and what we should be doing. What is the bread and butter of the Christian life?

We know what not to do, as we know not to break the ten commandments. We know these in this brief summary, Don't change

religions, Don't swear, Don't skip church too much, Don't get in trouble, Don't murder, don't cheat on your spouse, steal, lie, or be greedy.

But what should we do? Well, we should be careful to do these three things that Paul gives us to do in this brief passage. You can use these things as a way to live your life. It is kind of a how to for life. Not really a self help book, but a God help book on how to live.

First of all we should make the best use of our time as possible. We should think about how we can be good stewards of time. We could take part with most of our time being spent on entertainment. We could spend most of our time addicted to this or that. We could spend most of our time with our own personal concerns.

But what about everybody else? What about our children? What about our friends? What about our neighbors? Our society has become more inward focused than ever. Neighbors don't just stop and chat like they used to. People aren't concerned about each other as much.

So now we have an opportunity. We might strike up a conversation with a stranger. We might meet someone who needs to hear about God. We might be able to help someone else with a physical need. We need to be careful that we are not missing these opportunities to do what God wants us to do.

Ephesians 2:10 says that "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Did you hear that part, God has these opportunities prepared in advance. He has it planned out for us how we can use our time. He knows what good works he wants us to do already in advance.

The days are evil, and some might be discouraged by this fact. We might complain that the world is going down the toilet. We might become apathetic about what happens around us because it is just so far gone anyway.

But yet again that presents an opportunity for us to use our time for good. It can depend just on our outlook on life. One teen says, "I'm too young, there is too much peer pressure. I can't serve God." Another teen says, "All my friends are wondering what life is really about. They want a cause. They want something worth living for. What an opportunity to tell them about God's plan for their lives."

One single person say, "I'm so lonely, I really would serve God if he would give me a spouse." Another single person says, "How can I help, I have more time since I don't have a family. What can I do that married people would find difficult to accomplish."

A middle age person might say, "You have no idea how much responsibility is on me, family expectations, work expectations-I have nothing left to give." Another person says, "I am at the peak of my strength. If I order my priorities right, I can make a real difference!"

Secondly we should be careful to do God's will.

God wants us to wrestle with what He wants and make goals according to what would best serve him. He wants us to plan, to make calculated decisions, and to inquire of him on everything.

The way to seek God's will is exactly how Jesus did. In the garden he prayed not my will but yours be done. Once Jesus could separate what would be for his earthly benefit from what would be for God's benefit, He could move forward with God's plan, however difficult it may be.

This passage teaches us then to first be careful with our time, second be careful to do God's will, and third it says be careful to be filled with the Spirit.

This final piece of wisdom may be the hardest of all. We may ask ourselves "how do I fill myself with the Spirit?" Thankfully Paul tells us how. He says address each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. Hmmm, that kind of sounds like worship. I mean not only do we worship God, but as a

community we "address" each other and communicate together that God is good.

There is a parallel passage that is similar in Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

When you come to church are you being filled. And that can mean when we attend Bible Study on Sunday mornings as well as when we study God's word at home or throughout the week.

We have some other things that fill us with the spirit. We are always giving thanks for what God has given us through Jesus Christ. We give thanks at meals, throughout the day, and even in times of difficulty we remember that we always have the spiritual gifts of Christ.

We are careful to be filled with the spirit when we from day to day remember we were baptized and are raised with Christ because of the forgiveness of sins. When we don't walk in the way God would have us walk. When we fail to look out for opportunities, fail to follow God's Will, and fail to be fed with His Spirit, God assures us that His Spirit can still forgive us and let us go forward with the basics in the Christian life.

We are filled with the spirit when we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Christ submitted his whole life to The Father's will and submitted his entire self to you on the cross. We live in that same spirit as we submit our lives to others.

This is what his Spirit urges us to do. All three then go hand in hand together. Be filled with the Spirit, Follow God's will, and watch out for opportunities. Do all of the above all at once or in any particular order.

A good example of all three is found in the story of none other than the Wise Men. When Jesus was born, there was the opportunity of a lifetime to go worship him. They first discerned that it was God's will for them to take the trip and worship God's king. They traveled however far they needed to, because they understood this was a once and a lifetime trip. Then the end goal was to be in the presence of God and be filled with his Spirit in that place.

The Jews and others who were around Bethlehem, thought nothing of it, even though the shepherds proclaimed it all over town. Many just ignored the opportunity for one reason or another. Wow, they missed out.

So there you go, are you wondering what to do and how to live? Make the best use of your time, do the Lord's will, and be filled with the Spirit. It's the bread and butter basics for the you in Christ. Amen.

