

“A New Walk” continues

The Family of God

Ephesians 5:1-21

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Jeff: All right, let's pray together. Our Father in heaven, we do thank You. We certainly praise You. And we ask now that You'll be in our midst as we gather to open Your word. Father, we are thankful for that Word. We realize with ever more clarity and with each passing day that this is the only reliable Word upon which we can stand. This is the only trustworthy Word to which we can commit our lives. And so Lord, we pray that You will enable us to give our ears to this Word that we might hear it, that we might be transformed by it.

Father, as we gather we realize that in this book there are some things that we need to hear, each of us needs to hear. And so we pray that You will help us to hear them and be receptive to them. And we pray, Father, that we will meditate upon them, that we might be different people.

Lord, we pray that You'll not only bless our time together in our study of Your word, but we also ask that You'll be with those we care for and love. And we think about Bruce. We think about him not only in his recovery. We also think about him being isolated these days. We certainly pray that You'll comfort his heart and minister to him. We know that he is a strong individual. And we pray that he would be able to draw down on some of that strength of character that You've instilled in him. But also, and more than that, we pray that You would enable him to lean upon you and draw down on your strength because that's the only strength that's sufficient. Certainly we pray for Becky as she is apart from her husband. We pray that they'll have time together throughout the week on Zoom and different things like that. But we pray most of all that You would heal him and that he would be able to return home.

We certainly pray for Terry Gaab's grandson. Father, we ask, committing him to You, that he would be made well and that You would strengthen him. We certainly pray in the midst of a time like this where the anxieties run high for the family. We pray that You'll bless them as they think upon him, as they pray for him and as they anticipate his recovery.

Father, we certainly pray for Gil and Lisa—Gil especially, as he has been hallucinating because of the medication that he's on for these tumors. We ask, Lord, that You'll take those tumors away. We pray that there will be no need for the medication. And we pray that You'll comfort the heart of his wife. We pray that You'll do these things not just for the good of Gil and Lisa but for Your ultimate glory.

We pray, Father, as we now commit ourselves to You, knowing that we walk through the Valley of Baca even in these days and in the days ahead until we see Your glory. We pray that You'll comfort us and keep us. We pray that You'll surround us with Your goodness and love. And we pray that You'll testify to Your wisdom in the Scriptures, that we might lean upon You in Your providence and know Your tender mercy and care toward us. We ask these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 5.

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Sig Tragard: Can you speak more into the mike? Jim Hamilton is having a hard time hearing you.

Jeff: Yes. How’s that?

Jim Hamilton: Better.

Jeff: Okay; all right.

Jim: Can you repeat the prayer? *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Moving right along. *(Laughter)* Ephesians chapter 5. And Don, do you have it?

Don Maurer: Yes, I do.

Jeff: Why don’t you read the first 21 verses?

Sig: Chapter 5?

Jeff: the first 21 verses of chapter 5.

Don: Okay. Should I wait for the mike?

Jeff: Oh yeah. Do you want to get him a mike?

Don: *“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says:

*‘Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light.’*

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.” This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: All right. So the last time we were together we thought a little bit about some introductory matters. We remembered that the Ephesian church was established in quite a different kind of locale, in some ways very much like our own. And we see how much alike the Ephesian church is to the present day. When you look at these very first verses in chapter 5 there’s a lot here where we could say to ourselves, “Boy, this looks a lot like

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us!” And remember, this is an overview. So we’ll go back and we’ll look at any one of these things that you want to look at.

But what I want to point out to you is that we are to be different from the world. And we are not to be partners with it. And this idea of partnership is captured in the word *koinonia*. And oftentimes you have heard this word in terms of *fellowship*—you know, *koinonia* is fellowship. You’ve heard that numerous times.

I think that part of the problem that has attached itself to that word is the idea of our kind of fellowship that has now been invested in this word. And so our kind of fellowship is showing up a little bit early for a thing like this or setting up a little bit early for church, or maybe staying a little later after church, grabbing a cup of coffee and then enjoying the company of other people. And that’s oftentimes thought of as *koinonia*, that fellowship one with another. And I oftentimes think of that in distinction to what we have here in this word as something like firehall fellowship, right? We all gather at the firehall to get a cup of coffee, and we enjoy the presence of each other. And there is something redeemable about that and I don’t want to disparage that in any way. I think there’s value in it; I think we ought to continue to do it.

But that’s not this term. When you think about the term *koinonia*, it really does have partnership at its root. In other words, there is this idea of investment, personal investment.

So for instance when you have Sig who comes here early in the morning and he says to Don, “Hey Don, I have this great idea. We need to start a business together.”

“What kind of business do you want to start?”

Don: That’s news to me.

Jeff: Yeah, this is something he was going to spring on you. (*Laughter*) And I thought he was going to talk to you this morning about it, but apparently he didn’t. (*Laughter*) And so I’ll leave the type of business to Sig. But Sig was going to spring this on Don.

And here’s the catch. He’s going to say to Don when he does talk to him, “Don, you need to come up with 50% of the capital for this investment. We need to partner in this. I’ll put in 50 and you put in 50, and we’ll move forward with this business.”

And that’s the idea of *koinonia*. There is a real partnership. There is a real investment that’s taking place. And so, for instance, somebody comes into the church and says, “Look, I’m a missionary. And I’m wondering if you’ll support me in this. I’ll go and put in the sweat equity. You put in the financial equity, and then we’ll be in partnership for this.”

That’s something like what you find in the New Testament with Paul and say, the Macedonian church. You know, as he’s out and the Macedonians are giving to Paul even out of their poverty. And that’s the partnership that he described in the book of Philippians. “We partnered in the gospel; we had *koinonia* in the gospel.”

And so when he says in this text “do not have a partnership with these things,” notice what you are not to have a partnership with: sexual immorality, all impurity or covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, crude joking. Sexual immorality, impurity and covetousness have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ. And so those are the things that he’s saying quite emphatically that you are not to be partners with. You are not to have a partnership with those things. And we talked about some of that the last time we were together. Don? Oh Don, I’m sorry. We talked about these things the last time we were together. (*Laughter*)

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Don: I have a question regarding that. Doing the transcript I heard it last week. But in verse 4 where it talks about filthiness or foolish talking, I guess it’s the foolish talking that I have a question about. Those of you who know me well know that I can get silly at times. And I’m just wondering where is that line drawn? I mean, I don’t think we’re to be sour-pusses. I think that Jesus was certainly joyful. And the bible does say that “*A merry heart does good like a medicine.*” So where is that line drawn? What constitutes foolish talking? Where do we need to be careful?

Jeff: Yeah. I think I have a tendency to agree with you. I don’t think that the line is easily drawn. I think that when you think about this, the way that I presented it the last time, for instance, was that there is a clear difference between what we might call swearing and what I put up on the board as profanity—taking the Lord’s name in vain, taking the things of the Lord and using them uselessly. There’s that, and then there’s what we might call vulgarity, which is sort of the general usage of language that we consider to be common or foul.

And then there’s even a step from that. And I described that in terms of kids, guys in high school discovering their bodies and then handling it with that certain kind of immaturity that we all know happens in high school with regard to young kids. And I would say to you that the only thing I would say differently than the last time at this point is that I worked in a factory for about four years. And one of the things that I realized was that I thought, coming out of high school and moving into sort of the adult world, was that things would be different. I thought to myself, these are adults, right?

I’ll never forget. I must have been sort of a naïve kind of teenager because I’ll never forget the first time. I was probably eighteen. But an adult who was probably in his early forties lied right in front of me. I knew that we did that as kids, right? But I thought that once you became an adult with that kind of stuff that you tried to avoid that sort of thing. And this person did it so easily; it kind of shocked me.

But the same kind of shock hit me when I went into this factory and realized that I was now in an adult context with kids that never left the locker room from high school. And I realized in my mind that this is the foolish kind of crude joking and jesting that constantly comes from this kind of immaturity. That was my thought about it. The bishop has something to add.

Bishop Rodgers: I was just thinking about an admonition somewhere about doctrine: debating about endless genealogies. It could be what sometimes happens in churches—that you end up debating forever about very secondary matters and wasting everybody’s time.

Jeff: Yes. Or maybe even matters of *adiaphora*.

Bishop: Yeah.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bishop: That’s foolish.

Sig: There’s another question.

Jeff: Matt has something over here.

Matt Reichart: I like the concept of not partnering with the world. Is that implied here, or is there a specific—

Jeff: Verse 7 I think is where it is. Verse 7: “*Do not become partners with them.*”

Transcriber’s Note: ESV.

Jeff: Do you have a different word?

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Matt: Mine says “*partakers*.”

Jeff: Partakers? Yeah, the same thing; the same word.

Brave Man: Would that have been the word *koinonia*?

Jeff: Yes, verse 7. Don, do you want to follow up on that? Or is that—

Don: No. That’s fine, Jeff; thank you. It’s hard sometimes to draw the line. So what you’re saying is that my cheesy jokes are permissible.

Sig: No! (*Laughter*)

Jeff: In certain contexts. (*Laughter*) I mean, when you’re alone. (*Laughter*)

Sig: Or how about Saturday through Thursday? (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Yes; Saturday through Thursday is good. That works; that time works well for me. (*Laughter*) So we’re not to have partnership with them.

Now why is that? Verse 8 tells us. You were, but now are. And I think this is a pivotal verse in this section. It helps us to understand what it is that Paul has been saying before this. He says, “*For at that time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*”

Now what I want you to understand is this, because this is a concept that I think we need to grasp as Christian people. And there’s a sense in which you were something—darkness. Now you are what? Light.

Now what is he saying? He is saying that the state of affairs that exists at this present moment is this. “*You are light in the Lord.*” And we describe this as *the indicative*. If somebody is using the indicative they are indicating something. They are showing you something about something that is.

And what Paul is showing us about each one of us who profess faith in Christ, he’s showing us that you are this. That’s what he’s showing us.

Now the wonderful thing about that is that he’s telling us something about the state of affairs that exists. But then he says this. Now because you are this, walk as children of the light.

Now think about that for just a minute. We know that our tendency will be to walk in the light, yes. But we know that because we were darkness we will have a tendency to shade into the darkness every once in a while, if not fully to open the door and enter into it. And what he’s telling us then is that you are this. So stop going into the other room, the dark room. Walk in the light. And this is the imperative that we always talk about.

So there is an indicative and an imperative to the gospel. The indicative describes what God has done for us. It’s in the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians. The first three chapters tell us what God has done for us and why we are this. And now because you are this, be this. Here’s the imperative, the command. Be what it is that you now are.

Remember when I was talking to you about my friend? And I said that my friend was being exploited by his dad whose name was the same as his name, and so on, and that he was sending out bill collectors to him? And I gave you this example. I said, “What if the lawyer did everything for my friend?” What if he had changed his name, his identity, his place of location,—you know, everything? What if the lawyer had done everything for him and then said to him, “Now all you have to do is live according to this new identity.”

But every once in a while my friend would hand out his old identity. The darkness would follow him because he would be living according to his old identity. But all he has to do is live according to his new identity.

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Now we’re not going to live according to our new identity until either we’re dead or Christ returns. But the point is that we’re now able to live according to the new identity. Matt has something.

Matt: I’ll wait.

Sig: I’m just going to read this over again. *(Laughter)*

Matt: We have a saying at Pine Valley. “If you know the Savior it will change your behavior.”

Jeff: Yes, once you’re saved.

Sig: Is that too clever or what?

Don: It is good; I like that.

Matt: Good.

Jeff: That’s good. What’s that?

Sig: They say it’s good for children, but it’s good for us too. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: One of the things that I think that we need to keep in mind is this. For instance I think it’s good to have those kinds of very slogan-like things, because they have a tendency to remind us of the deep things that we’re talking about, right? And they give us a handy way to them. So it’s like the five solas of the Reformation. The five solas of the Reformation tell us deep things about the gospel. But they do it in such a way that they’re handy.

Another way to think about this is that Martin Luther used to preach the gospel to himself. He used to preach the gospel to himself by reminding himself of the Apostles’ Creed and the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer and those kinds of things. And he used to say to himself, “This is what I am to believe, and I believe this.” You know, that sort of thing. I think those kinds of things are good not only to remind us of who we are, but also to help us to understand that this is how we’re to live, to live in a different way. So we’re not to be partners with the darkness. We’re to be partners with the light and so to walk in the light.

I’m going to put a quote up here after this one, I guess. But remember I was telling you the last time about the Ephesians’ Artemas temple, and how part of that was that there was magic connected to that cult. Remember that Love Potion No. 9 was connected to that. *(Laughter)* And so what happens if you walk in front of the Artemas temple? You’ve been heavily involved there. And all of a sudden you end up feeling tempted to go back in there. And I think Paul is saying, look. That’s not a Love Potion No. 9. That’s your temptation to go back in and be a partner with the darkness. And so don’t do that.

Just to kind of show you, this is the quote I had in mind. It’s from John Calvin in his *Sermons on the Ephesians*. And he says that they—certain women—*“are decked out in peacock fashion, so that a man cannot pass within three feet of them without feeling, as it were, a windmill sail streaming by him.”* *(Laughter)*

And I would add, a windmill swirling within him, you know? And that’s the idea of the temptation. That’s the idea of the pull of the Artemas cult. It’s not magic; it’s not an incantation. But in fact it is our own sinful desires seeking to get us to partner with that again. So I just think that’s a helpful thing when you think about it.

I think I told you about this before, about my brother-in-law. Maybe I did; maybe I didn’t. He was in prison for about three years for drug use. He was down in Chester. I went to visit him once and I was sitting in the waiting room with him, and we were just

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talking. He had been in prison two years already. It was a pharmaceutical prison. It was a place where they sort of specialized in drug abusers and helping them to clean up.

And we were sitting there. Again it was about two years, and maybe in his third year. And we were sitting in this waiting room. Do you remember that show that they used to have? It’s called “Intervention.” They used to follow these drug addicts around. And they used to film them. They’d even film them shooting up—that sort of thing.

Well, this happened to be on TV. And the pharmaceutical prison had an area where you could visit with the prisoners, right? “Intervention” was on TV. And all of a sudden my brother-in-law became visibly disturbed. And I asked him, “What’s the matter?” And he told me that watching that person shoot up on TV had triggered in him a real desire. And he was struggling with that at that time.

You know, that was for three years. And then he got out. Just to end the story he got out. And he was clean for almost three years. So he was clean for a total of almost six years, and then started using it again. And eventually he took his own life.

But the idea is that here is the point. Those sinful desires with which we partner can kill us quite physically; they can kill us. And they’ll kill us eternally in hell. And so, you know, the partnership leads to your death; that’s what it does. Yes?

Sig: I don’t want to disrupt the class. But to me that begs a huge question. How can we as fallen human beings truly recover from sin? Because the example of your brother-in-law is huge. I can relate to that with people in my family and a lot of others. I won’t go into the details. But I would think that if God is a merciful and loving God, and your brother-in-law didn’t repent before he died,—

Jeff: He didn’t.

Sig: Well yes; I would imagine. But God would have mercy. I mean, how do you ever fully overcome the power of sin? Now I know the Holy Spirit is certainly capable of freeing us from that. But I’m just thinking. How do we really beat that?

Jeff: Yeah. Well, how we really beat that is this.

Sig: Do you want to dim the lights for a second? (*Laughter*)

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff writes the word *gospel* on the board.

Jeff: Here’s the thing. If we don’t believe that, if we don’t believe that this has the power not only to save us but to transform us, then we’re wasting our time, right? Hey, my brother-in-law rejected the gospel numerous times as it was given to him. So he would be a classic case of the unbeliever who was killed by his own temptations.

But the point is that this is what we talked about the last time. I know men who really believe that no Christian man can overcome sexual temptation in his life; no man can do it. And I’ve been told that when men tell you that they can they’re liars. And I want to simply say, then what good is the gospel? Really, what good is the gospel? If the gospel has no power to overcome this sin or that sin or some other sin, then I’m pretty much done with the gospel. If you’re going to tell me that the gospel doesn’t have power to save and the power to deliver me from sin even in this present life, then I’m pretty much done. I can do something else.

Sig: But could it be that the good news of Christ is that He provides the power in spite of our weakness, in spite of the evidence of our lives as a failure?

Jeff: Yes, but what you seem to be saying, though, is that I can be saved from hell. But maybe, because I don’t take that power that’s offered to me, I’ll never overcome sin in my life. And I think that Paul would probably say to you that yes, we have a Romans 7

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life. But if we’re not always striving to overcome the sin that seeks to dominate our lives, I think Paul would say this. I think he would say—and you can see it in Galatians 5—that if your life is characterized by patterns of sinfulness rather than by incidents of sinfulness, you have reason to question whether or not this transforming grace has actually been leavened into your life. You know what I mean?

I mean, the way I read the Old Testament is this. When I look at the Old Testament—and do this sometime. Look at the book of Leviticus, okay? And when you look at the book of Leviticus you’ll find two ideas. We find sins that are unintentional. And the sacrificial system is full of dealing with unintentional sins.

And then you find in one spot, in Leviticus 16, you find that the Day of Atonement deals with high-handed sins. What are those? Those are rebellious sins—intentional, rebellious sins.

Now what does that tell you? I think it tells you this about the Old Testament believer. It’s something that we don’t typically think about. It tells us that the Old Testament believer’s was to be a lot like the Christian life that we think about today—that they had to be holy, and that the sacrificial system really dealt with them as believing people—such that they had all of these unintentional sins that needed to be dealt with, because sin was part of their lives in word, thought and deed. But they weren’t always out there committing high-handed, rebellious sins. It wasn’t like every day the Old Testament believer was going, “I think I’m going to fornicate today, or commit adultery today, or murder someone today.” You know, that’s the way we have the tendency to think about the Old Testament believers. They just did whatever they wanted; they were willy-nilly.

No, the Old Testament believer was trying to live a life according to the law of God and was sinning while he did it. But you know, they were sinning in such a way that they weren’t committing rebellious sins all the time. And so when you get back to Leviticus 16 you get into that Day of Atonement. And the Day of Atonement was when even high-handed sins were forgiven. And the idea was that God forgives even those. But if your life is characterized by this kind of sin then you’re probably missing the gospel point.

But if your life is characterized by this kind of behavior, you see that this kind of behavior is sins of incidents. This kind of behavior is sins of pattern. That’s the idea. And that’s what you find in the New Testament.

And so when you think about the Old Testament believer versus the New Testament believer, you don’t think about the Old Testament believer really being an unbeliever at heart. No, when you think about it, an Old Testament believer is somebody who believes in the promise of the coming of Christ to save. But they have revelation that is given to them in a progressive way. For instance, maybe they live on that part of the progression before the climax comes in Christ. But in addition to that, that means that they also have an experience of believing life that runs parallel to this. So their believing experience is never going to rise above the revelation that God has given. It’s always going to run parallel with it.

Now the only exception to that would be the prophets. The prophets would have an experience that may transcend the believing experience of just the typical Old Testament saint, which is why, when you get to Pentecost, Luke says that “you’re all going to be prophets,” right? Oh, we’re all going to speak about future events? No. You’re all going to have a level of intimacy that was enjoyed by the prophets in the Old Testament that not everybody enjoyed. And that’s the difference. Does that make sense? Do you want to talk

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about that a little bit more? It’s a little far afield from where we were. But I think this is important. Yes, Matt?

Matt: You used a distinction that maybe you can clarify. In the New Testament Jesus said, “When I leave I’m going to give you a Comforter.” So in my opinion we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us all the time.

Jeff: Yes.

Matt: I’m not sure how that worked in the Old Testament for believers. It seemed like it came on and off. So how did they walk in obedience? We have the power of Christ in us, so we have no excuse, although we have our flesh. But I wonder how they would be righteous if they haven’t been indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

Jeff: Well see, that’s the thing where there is disagreement. I think that in order for anyone to be saved they had to be made alive by the Spirit. I think they did have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. And I think that the Holy Spirit gave them an experience that was at a level with the existent revelation that they had. I think there are examples in the Old Testament like Saul, for instance, where the Holy spirit comes upon him and departs from him. But I don’t think he’s indicative of a believer and his believing experience.

Matt: What about Samson? With Samson the Spirit went on and off. But my question is, why would Jesus say that “I’m going to give you a Comforter.” It seems like there’s something new. So I’m just asking these questions.

Jeff: Yes. So for instance I think there are different in-fillings for different tasks. And I think that one of the things that we might say about Samson for the tasks that he was to perform was that when the Holy Spirit would come upon him and fill him he would have great strength. And I do believe that we have different in-fillings for different times in our lives. I think that’s pretty clear in the Scripture.

But I also think that what I would say, (if we can say that Samson was a believer; I think he was a believer),--

Matt: Yes.

Jeff: Then I think that when we think about him, we think of the Spirit being or dwelling in him. I think of the Spirit coming upon him is talking about those in-fillings for those tasks. For instance, if you say that the Holy Spirit doesn’t indwell believers, then how do you account for their salvation? If the Spirit makes us alive in Christ, how do you account for their believing life?

For instance you mentioned that “I’m going to give you another Paraclete, another Comforter,” right? For instance, like I said, the intimacy and the joy of the New Testament believer is not the same as in the Old Testament. So when He says, “I’m going to give you another Comforter,”—

Matt: “Who will teach you all things.”

Jeff: “Who will teach you all things,” right. But there’s a sense in which you can think about it this way. The Old Testament believer had to be circumcised in his heart. That circumcision of the heart happened by the Holy Spirit in the same way that a person has to be regenerate of heart today. That happens by the Holy Spirit. But the think the idea of “I’m going to send you another Comforter” has more relation to Jesus being there in the culmination of the covenant, such that He’s saying, “I’m going to give you another Paraclete. It’s not that I’m going to give you something you never had.” But they never did have Jesus there in their midst, right? But He’s saying “I’m going to give you another Comforter.”

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And the idea, when you read Acts chapter 2, is that it’s not going to be like it was in the Old Testament. “That other comforter that I’m going to give you is going to make it such that you have the intimacy that was enjoyed by the prophets per se.” So the other Comforter is that “I’m going to be gone. You’re going to be receiving Him in a way that you haven’t received Him before.”

The other thing—and I’ll just throw it out there—is that Jesus is often saying things like that which have more of a reflection on the disciples and where they were at the time and where they will be. And they have relevance to us, but the relevance is a little different. So for instance in John 13 we oftentimes think about that whole idea of loving one another. “*A new commandment I give you: that you love one another as I have loved you.*”

Notice that commandment just for a minute. You don’t have to turn there; if you want to that’s fine. In verse 34 of John 13 He says, “*A new commandment I give you: that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that You are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*”

And the point of that is that “by this people will know that you are My disciples.” Now we oftentimes think of that like well, of course; we love one another. But the point that Jesus was making at that moment to the disciples was that “people know you’re My disciples now because you’re with Me, right? You’re following Me around all these places.”

You know, they’re with Jesus. Remember in Acts chapter 4 where they say, “These men were with Jesus?” Everybody knew it; they were with Him.

But how is it going to be after He’s gone? How will people know that they belong to Him? It’s going to be how they treat one another. And so that makes a little bit of a difference for us. It’s the same; Jesus is absent from us and He has never been in our midst. The question then is, how do people know that we’re with Jesus? They know we’re with Jesus by how we love one another. And so I think it’s the whole idea of witness that’s really important there, when you think about it. Yes, Don?

Don: The Westminster Confession talks in terms of justification, how both Old and New Testament saints were imputed with the righteousness of Christ. “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness.*” David said, “*Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin.*” And so both Old Testament and New Testament believers had the Holy Spirit in some measure. I agree with you. When He said, “I’ll give you a Comforter,” it’s the Holy Spirit now in greater measure as if Jesus is always with them, which He is.

Jeff: Yeah. So I wanted to say something that you just raised, Don, that I think is important when you think about this. The whole idea of reckoning is important here.

Do you remember in Romans chapter 6, when he talks about reckoning yourself dead to sin and alive to Christ? Remember that? He also talks about it in Philippians chapter 4. In Philippians chapter 4 he says, “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is anything excellent, if there is anything worthy of praise,—think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things. And the God of peace will be with you.*”

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Think on these things. That’s the idea of reckoning these things. Reckon these things true and put them into practice. In other words, when we reckon something, what we’re doing is, we’re taking mental stock in it and saying, “This is true,” right?

And sometimes, have you ever been in that situation where you’re not sure if you can actually believe it? You have to sit down and you have to say to yourself a few times that this is actually true, right? Maybe it was when you married that woman. The day after that wedding you said, “No, no, no; this is true.” That’s what you said, right?

Sig: Today I say it.

Jeff: Right; today I say this. Yes, this is true. This is true. (*Laughter*) Right? And you reckon that to your account. You say, “This is true, or that’s not true.” This is the idea of preaching the gospel to ourselves; taking mental stock of it.

And so we need to let all that Paul said in the first three chapters sink in, because Paul is saying to us that this is what God has done for you. This is what you now are. And sometimes you say to yourself, “I can’t believe it.” No, no, no; that’s not the response. I believe it. And because I believe it I act upon it, because it is true.

And this is the thing that we need to be careful of. This is where the Roman Catholic Church would say to us, “You guys have a fiction, this whole idea of imputation.” This is where we get the imputation of Christ’s righteousness; this is the word for it. Christ’s righteousness is reckoned to us, it’s imputed to us.

It’s at this point that the Roman Catholic church says, “You guys have a fiction, because all you do is that you click your heels together and say, ‘I wish it were so, I wish it were so, I wish it were so.’ And it’s not so because it’s fiction.”

And what we say is this. It is not a fiction because it is true that Christ reckoned me. He imputed His righteousness to me, so that now when the Father sees me He sees me as righteous. And we say, “Well, what’s your answer?”

And they say, “Well, the sacraments infuse grace, they pour grace in. They infuse grace that I might” (and here is what chapter 16 of the Council of Trent says), “that I might work for”—and they even use the term—“merit my salvation before God.” So there is the infusion of grace by the sacraments that I might work for my salvation. And so when I get to the end of my life I’ll merit salvation before God.

So with the Roman Catholic Church it begins with sanctification and it culminates with final justification, because what? I’ve merited it through the infusion of grace, the ability to work and so merit my life before God. That’s the difference.

And they say, “We’re not talking here about a fiction. We really believe that grace is infused or poured into us, such that we can work for this in the end.”

And that’s not what we’re saying. That’s not what Paul is saying. Paul is saying that there is an imputed righteousness that’s given to us here by Christ, in Christ, that we might put these things into practice. Well, I’m going to end there. But do you have any thoughts or questions or comments before we leave?

Don: Jeff, with Rome it’s not even so much that it’s necessarily at the end of your life. You might have to spend thousands of years in purgatory. So you have to—

Jeff: Well, you will. I mean that’s the point, right? You’re not going to get in on the basis of—I mean, this is just the way they have it, right?

I think I’ve shown you this before. Here’s the idea of heaven above the line and hell below the line. When the baby is born they’ll say, “You better get that baby baptized because that baby is totally in hell.” But once they receive the grace of baptism grace is

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infused into them. When they die, boom! In that moment they might go to heaven, right? Because at that moment, at the moment of their baptism, they have a complete in-filling of God’s grace.

However, they live. And they say no to Mama, and they do other things. And as they say no and they do these other things they lose the grace that was given to them in baptism. However, there is the sacramental life. And so the sacramental life is that I go through Confirmation. And when I go to Mass I get a little more grace.

But as I sin, what? I lose grace. So it’s this constant battle—up and down, up and down, up and down. And if I commit a mortal sin I drop below. I’m all the way down.

What do I do? Do I come back and be baptized? No, I can’t be baptized. The Roman Catholic Catechism says that I must do the second plank of justification. I do penance. I creep back above the line through penance. And as I creep back above the line and take the sacraments in the sacramental life, I try to get up there.

But the bottom line is that on the day of my death I have a lot to pay for yet. And I’m going to purgatory to pay that off. And that’s the idea. The idea is that Christ did not wholly pay for my sins. I’m going to have to pay it myself in the end.

And that is a terrible gospel. That’s a pathetic gospel. If you ask me, if I were looking for a good news gospel, this would not be it.

Bishop Rodgers: Sign me up!

Jeff: Sign me up! Anyway, is there anything else? No? All right, let’s pray.

Father, thank You for this day—the time You’ve given, the life that we have in Christ, for the time that we have to open the Scriptures. Father, bless us and strengthen us. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)