

"Walk in Moral Purity
(Ephesians 5:3-6)

Introduction: As those recreated into the moral image of God, you are to put off the deeds of the old man which is the remaining corruption of your old nature, and put on the deeds of righteousness which reflect God's holy nature. Last week we saw that we are to reflect that nature in having a forgiving spirit and walking in love as the Son of God who laid down His life for us. This morning the Spirit is saying through this portion of His Word,

As Christians you have been called to reflect the holy nature of God in your moral conduct and speech.

- I. Put Off the Immoral Practices Which Were Yours When You Were Dead in Sin (vv. 3-4b, 5-6).
 - A. You Are No Longer to Conduct Yourselves In Behavior that Characterizes the World.
 1. Put off immoral living (v. 3).
 - a. Πορνεία: prostitution, unchastity, fornication, every kind of unlawful sexual relations [BAG 699].
 - (i) We get the English word pornography from it.
 - (ii) It is specifically sexual sin of every kind.
 - (iii) Our country is embroiled in such behavior.
 - (iv) But you are to put it off.
 - b. > ¹ ακαθαρσία: impurity, dirty. Here it is in a moral sense meaning immorality, viciousness, and especially sexual sins [BAG 28].
 - (i) It is the general category from which the previous term is a subcategory.
 - (ii) It means all base and impure lusts [Calvin 21:305].
 - (iii) All sexually filthy thoughts and desires.
 - c. ¹ πλεονεξία: greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness; lit. "a desire to have more."
 - (i) It may seem strange that this is listed among the sexual sins.
 - (ii) But we are to see it as the spring from which these vices arise, namely, greediness [Bruce 102].
 - (iii) Covetousness is equated to idolatry because to covet is to elevate some created thing to the place of God in the affections.
 - (iv) It is a most grievous sin. It is spiritual adultery.
 - d. These things are not to be done among the people of God.
 2. Put off immoral speech (vv. 3-4).
 - a. Further, these things should not even be mentioned among the people of God (v. 3).

- (i) To be named among them meant to be spoken of.
 - (ii) The literal rendering would be "stop letting it be named among you."
 - (iii) Conversation of these filthy deeds of darkness was already being circulated among the Lord's people.
 - (iv) Paul says "stop doing this!"
- b. Furthermore, Paul says to put off **all** wicked speech from your mouth (v. 4),
- (i) Filthiness (*αισχροτης*): ugliness, wickedness, and in the context refers to evil speech in the sense of obscene or abusive speech [BAG 24].
 - (ii) Silly talk (*μωρολογια*): foolish, stupid, or silly talk (BAG 533). The talk which is characteristic of a fool, i.e. frivolous and senseless (Hodge 206).
 - (iii) Coarse jesting (*εὐτραπελία*): "flippant" speech (Hodge 206).
 - (a) Calvin suggests that this is language which outwardly is clean, but which has immoral overtones, or **double entendre** (Calvin 21:306).
 - (b) The speech uttered by the tongue is indicative of the condition of our hearts.
 - (c) The mouth speak with what fills the heart <Matt. 15:10, 15-20>.
 - (d) And James says a fountain does not send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?" <James 3:1-12>.
- c. These things are not fitting to the saints of God.

B. If You Live in this Manner, You Will Not Inherit the Kingdom of Christ and God (v. 5).

1. **If this characterizes your life, you have not entered the kingdom and are not an heir.**
- a. This is not a statement of what they know, but a very strong command for them to recognize the truth in this matter.
 - (i) Literally "knowing, know this."
 - (ii) It is translated emphatically in our language, "Know this with all certainty."
 - b. That every fornicator, and morally impure, and covetous person does not possess an inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.
 - (i) To covet the sin in your heart, is to break the command against these things.
 - (ii) If your heart is filled with these things, Paul says, be assured that you have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.
 - (iii) **As** long as you continue in them, you demonstrate that the life of Christ does not

abide in you.

- (iv) Only those who are in Christ, who have the new nature, who love righteousness, may lay claim to having been adopted by the Father and given an inheritance in the kingdom of His Son.

2. It is because of these acts of wickedness that God's wrath is daily revealed and will fully be consummated.
 - a. Paul says "let no one continue to deceive you with empty words."
 - (i) There were those in Paul's day who said that these were not vices, but constituent components of our nature.
 - (a) Gnostics taught that such things were unimportant because they had to do with the body and not with the spiritual aspect of man.
 - (b) Others believed that since we were freed from the law, we had liberty to sin that God's grace might abound [see Rom. 6:1; Bruce 104].
 - (ii) But Paul says that such words are "empty," or "vain." They are void of truth.
 - (iii) The truth is that these are most grievous sins, and to embrace them means certain destruction.
 - b. It is because of these acts of immorality that the wrath of God continues to be revealed.
 - (i) The wrath of God is revealed each day against ungodliness (Rom. 1:18).
 - (ii) And it will one day be poured out in its fullness against all the wicked at the consummation of the ages <2 Thes. 1:3-10>.
 - (iii) Men are born the sons of **the** disobedience, and **so** are liable to everlasting punishment.

II. Put On the Moral Purity Which Reflects the Holy Character of God.

A. All Life is Lived in God's Presence.

1. Nothing we do is hidden from His sight.
2. All things are open and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
3. If we are hypocrites and deceiving others as well as ourselves, know that you will not deceive God.

B. Therefore, Live A Life Which is Morally Pure in God's Sight (v. 4c).

1. It is not fitting to behave in the aforementioned way, but it is fitting for you as saints to reflect the nature of God in your behavior.
 - a. Saint means "holy one," one who has been cleansed from sin.
 - b. You are to be holy in all your behavior because the Lord is holy.

2. Live as those purified from your former sins.
 - a. We were all born as sons of *the* disobedience, but God has had mercy on us through Christ <1 Cor. 6:9-11>.
 - b. Therefore we are to live in a manner which becomes those making a claim to godliness.
 - (i) Do not practice sexual immorality, but sexual purity.
 - (a) Seek to honor your brothers and sisters as fellow heirs of God's kingdom.
 - (b) Seek to promote their holiness and purity in the sight of God.
 - (ii) Do not dwell on wicked vices, but on holiness of spirit.
 - (a) Let your mind think of pure thoughts.
 - (b) Sanctify Jesus as Lord of your thoughts and make no provision for your mind to be occupied with lustful imaginations.
 - (iii) And do not place anything in your life ahead of your pure and holy devotion to the Holy God.
 - (a) Tear down the idols which you desire more than God.
 - (b) Place God and Christ as your chief loves in this life and the next.
2. And speak in a way that is gracious and full of thanksgiving in his hearing.
 - a. Do not speak of the deeds of sexual wickedness, but exalt in your speech the beauty of holiness.
 - b. Put away abusive and obscene language, along with all foolish talk coarse jesting; rather, let your times of cheerfulness express itself in the giving of thanks (Hodge 206).
 - (i) Give thanks to God for His goodness to you.
 - (a) Thanksgiving is more fitting than bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speech.
 - (b) It is an encouragement to yourself and to your brethren.
 - (ii) Let your words be sweet and full of grace (Calvin 21:306).
 - (a) Instead of speech which only stumbles your brothers and sisters, speak for their edification.
 - (b) Don't let your words lead them into sin, but spur them on into righteousness.
 - (c) Amen! Let us pray.