

I trust that everyone is recovering from the snow and it is still pretty to look at, and play in, and all those other things that make it wonderful. As I looked at all the snow I could only think of one song and I had to substitute the word snow and it is this song: Didn't snow children, didn't it snow all night long...

Let's turn our attention to the word of God

Title: **The Love Walk**

Text: Ephesians 5:1-5

We are considering Paul's epistle or letter to the church @ Ephesus! Ephesus located in Asia Minor or present day Turkey.

Now remember the first half of Ephesians is doctrinal, teaching, theology, explanation if you will! This is chapters 1-3.

The second half is practical, application, our experience in this Christian journey. This is chapters 4-6 and this is where we are in our text. We are looking at some principles that we can put into practice, or in other words flesh out in our daily lives. Our Pastor has been emphasizing our Christian duty in the past several Lords Day messages. He has admonished us regarding our responsibility towards the family of God, which is to exercise our spiritual gifts. He has reminded us that we are a body-the body of Christ, and just like the physical body needing every member the spiritual body also needs every member and when one member falters the whole body suffers.

We were also reminded that we are not to walk as the gentiles walk. We are not to be characterized by our old pattern of life but we are to walk in the newness of life and that is the life of Christ. We are to put off the old, and put on the new. At salvation we became brand new creatures in Christ. And do I need to remind you 2 Corinthians 5:17 If any man be in Christ he is a new creature old things are passed away and behold all things are become new (and if you notice be & he are italicized which means they were added so that it would read more smoothly)! It actually should read: If any man in Christ is a new creature, old things... The emphasis is upon Christ and the difference He makes in the life of anyone who will simply trust Him! Do you see that? Let me read it again with its proper emphasis: **If any man in Christ is a new creature....** Now in light of this we learned there were some things to put off and some things to put on!

Now we come to Chapter 5

Introduction:

The introduction in the bulletin reads: The title of this sermon is "**The Love Walk**", and in our text Paul is admonishing the believer to be imitators of God and this entails mimicking the love of God, and this raises a question: Perhaps you are wondering "do we really need another sermon on God's love?" It is a good question and I would answer it this way: Can you comprehend fully the love of God? Have you arrived in your spiritual love life that you can say I really do not need another sermon on God's love? We will never exhaust the subject of God's love and therefore a sermon on God's love is always in order. By the way this sermon will **not** be a theological discussion on the love of God but rather a teaching on how we are to model the love of God in our daily walk.

Let us Pray: In Jesus name open our ears... open my mouth...open our heart...open our eyes...and for that one who may be amongst us today without the savior...

From time to time we here about love songs, love movies, love books, love life, love bug, love letter and even love talk, but in the Christian context there also the love walk and that is Paul's theme in the first few verses of Ephesians 5, and that is my theme today. You know I am glad God's love was more than just a love talk. You see when it comes to love God did more than just talk the talk the talk, he walked the walk! In other words Gods love was not just verbal it was actual.

God's love was a love in action! God said He loved us and He demonstrated that love when He in the person of His Son died on the cross for our sins. Now we are to be imitators of God, and this means mimicking His love but how are we to do it? Let's consider that subject for a few moments!

Now there are three points I want to make today relative to this subject of **The Love Walk** and I will be done.

Three points:

Mandate: Walk in Love

Model: As Christ also hath loved us

Method: And hath given Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling-savor (aroma).

First notice verse one and that will lead us to our first point the mandate, but verse one says: **Be ye therefore followers of God...**

What does it mean to be a follower of God: It means to imitate God! It means to be what we use to call a copycat. Now no one wanted to be called a copycat cat when we were growing up, but it is not bad at all when it comes to being a copycat of God. (Now when I was growing up I used to copycat the Jackson 5. I tried to do their moves, and I even tried to wear some of their kinds of clothes ☺. I tried to copycat a lot of the football players on City High School Varsity football team. I would run like them, throw like them, walk like them. I would even do calisthenics like them. I am not sure how successful I was but I was obsessed with imitating those things. Why? Because they impressed me, and I wanted some of their success to rub off on me! Now we need to be just as obsessed with **God** and we should be obsessed with imitating our **Heavenly Father!**

This word also means to pattern, replicate, or duplicate. In our text it is the **Greek word mimetes**. It is a continuous emphasis meaning becoming more and more like God! And this is the task before us today to become more and more like God, that when someone sees us they might say he or she makes me conscious of God. He or She has such a persona or way about them that I feel like God is in the room. I believe this is what was being said of Elisha by the Shumanite woman in 2nd Kings 4:9 (I encourage you to read **2nd Kings 4** in its entirety this week it will really enforce what I m going to say, and what I am going to say will have that much more meaning but notice she said): **Behold I perceive that this is a man of God which passeth by us continually**. And please notice the word **continually** for it means to stretch, constant, always, daily, continually, perpetual. In other words this was not an isolated, or whimsical, singular thought on the part of this woman; It was something about Elisha that prompted her to say this man's pattern of life is that which prompts me to say this is a man of God; in other words God is with him and He was, and you will see this when you read that 4th chapter of 2nd Kings!

You remember **Peter**; it was said of Peter perhaps in a negative sense, but still it is worth noting that they said “**I can see that he has been with Him**”, why for one his speech betrayed him. Now Peter may have had the smell of fish, and a Galien accent, but still it was something about Peter that caused them to take note that he had been with Jesus! What is it about us that cause people to stand up and take note that we have been with our Savior!

There is a story told of a young boy who had the ability to imitate one of the most famous preachers that God ever used to preach his word and that preacher was a man named George Whitfield. Ben Franklin often went to hear George Whitfield. Ben Franklin was impressed, he was illuminated, he was even humbled and moved to follow, but there is no record of Ben Franklin ever being converted.

Now George Whitfield did however lead many to a saving knowledge of Christ, but there was this boy who just happened to be black and George Whitfield was white, but this boy had the ability to imitate George Whitfield. They said he was so good that he was able to imitate him in his gestures, in intonation, in diction, and even verbatim in his sermons. On one occasion the crowd gathered and they insisted that the boy imitate George Whitfield-**give us some George Whitfield!** The boy did exactly that, he gave the crowd exactly what they wanted and he preached a sermon of George Whitfield’s impeccably:

What do you think happened? Many were converted, and it is said that revival broke out in the town emptying the taverns, and the crime and reveling in the streets desist-all because of the preaching of a little boy who imitated George Whitfield! Now if the preaching of a little boy imitating George Whitfield could turn a town upside down what would happen if we took seriously this word: Be ye imitators of God!

Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children: Now is this important? Absolutely; in fact this may well sum up the whole duty of the child of God, because if we get this right everything else will fall into place! So we are to imitate God! I hope you get the point! Your talk, your walk, your goals, ambitions, your desires, the choices you make and choose not to make, simply put in everything you are to follow God or imitate Him! Now I must admit that we cannot do this in our own strength so if we are to truly mimic God it will be through the power of the Holy Spirit!

And with that we come to our first point. Now Paul wants to be more specific in how we are to imitate God so in verse 2 he says: **Walk in love!** This is the mandate! **Walk in love!** In other words this is not a suggestion, this is a **command!** I chose the word mandate but if command suits you better you can insert that word in your notes because that is what it is a command: **Walk in love!**

This is also a verb! It speaks of action! Doing something, and that’s what biblical love is it is not a noun; it is a verb, an act, doing, moving, acting. In other words biblical love is not and please do not miss this: It is not an emotion, it is not a feeling, it is not passive-it is acting, giving, selfless activity on the part of someone else not expecting anything in return; and that is biblical love!

Walk, and this speaks of your manner of living, your conduct, your behavior. The text says your conduct or manner of living should be in love! Now what is the love walk? What does it mean to walk in love? This takes us back to verse 1 for in verse one Paul says be ye therefore... Now when you see a therefore you need to ask yourself why is it there for?

And this takes us back to Ephesians 4:31 and 32.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Now this is what characterizes the love walk! It is void of bitterness, and wrath, and anger... It is a walk of kindness, tenderness, and **forgiveness**! Forgiveness this is critical to understanding Gods love that we are to imitate!

And this brings us to our 2nd point: The model-As Christ hath loved us!

This was the life of Christ He forgave: On the cross he said Father forgive...In his model prayer in Mat. 6 He said we are to forgive our debtors, as we have been forgiven. He told the disciples they are to forgive and forgive and keep on forgiving unlimited number of times. God forgives and we are to forgive! This is the love walk!

Love forgives! How does love forgive? Let me give you three ways:

1. The forgiven act is never brought up before you by the one who has bestowed the forgiveness
2. The forgiven act is never brought up before others by the one who has bestowed the forgiveness
3. The forgiven act is never brought up by the person bestowing forgiveness to himself or to God-
Now this is forgiveness! When it is forgiven it is done, and that is love!

The love walk forgives, the love walk is kind, and for other characteristics of the love walk read 1Corinthians 13, and 1 John 3 and 4.

And that brings us to our third point:

The Method: And hath given Himself an **offering and a sacrifice** to God for a sweet smelling-saviour.

Love not only forgives but love also gives. God gave in John 3:16, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Love gives! Too many are looking for a love that they can get something from! God's love gave and did not look for anything in return! In fact there was nothing that we could give to God.

There is a song: *What the world needs now is love, love, love!* That is a lie; if we existed on the world's definition of love we would destroy ourselves! Why because the worlds definition of love is selfish. I will love you if you give me your love in return and when that selfish love fades, so goes the love life. If God loved us that way we would have all gone to hell!

I will love you if you are appealing to me, and when the appeal goes so goes the love.
I will love you if you will meet my needs, if you will take care of my kids, if you will stay off the booze, or if you keep me in the financial status I have become accustomed to? That is not Gods love and that is not the **method**. There is no giving, no sacrifice in that love!

So what is the **method**? I can think of no better place to turn to than John 21:15-17? Let me **read** that text.

Three points I gather from this text:

1. How much do you love God? Does God have to ask you three times? We know Peter denied His Lord three times and perhaps that is why Jesus asked him three times, but I think a more significant point is this perhaps **the measure of our love for the Lord is seen in the degree to which we serve the Lord**, and in this we all fall short, so we can't be hard on Peter, because perhaps we need to ask ourselves what if the Lord would have addressed that question to us numerous times. And maybe we did not deny the Lord, but there were times when we should have spoken up for the Lord and we chose to shut-and this is just as bad as denying Him!
2. I see also in the text that our love for God may be measured in our service to those that we love the least. It does not take much to love those that are nice and good to us. It does not take much to love those that we know will receive our love, but how about those that are not so attractive. How about those who will not say thank you and who may not necessarily receive our love at all. We are to show love to them as well. Feed the lambs, feed the sheep, feed and feed to all and to whomever that God brings into your paths.
3. My last point is that love is sometimes very tough! Peter was grieved when Jesus asked him a third time do you love me and this tells me that love will not always be easy for love takes **sacrifice** and perhaps the Lord was driving home this point: **Peter are you willing to pay the price?** This may cost you something and our Lord went on to tell Peter that it would cost him; in fact it would cost him his life to serve the Lord! Look at verse 18 and 19.

Our love for the Lord is rather easy in the USA but that may change, and what if it does? Do you love the Lord? Then walk in love!

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