



Welcome to Grace Communion International

August 15, 2021

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 111:1-4; 7-10 (ESV)



“1 ¶ Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

3 Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

4 He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful.”

“7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy;

8 they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!”

Psalm 111:1-4; 7-10 (ESV)



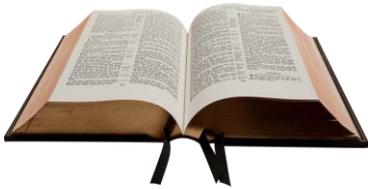
Focus on what it says about God!

Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:15-21 (ESV)

Ann Cumben



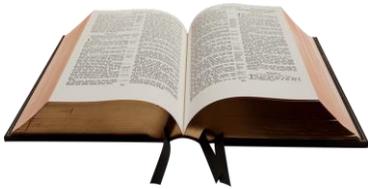


**“15 Look carefully then how you walk, not
as unwise but as wise,**

**16 making the best use of the time,
because the days are evil.”**

Ephesians 5:15-21 (ESV)





“17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,”

Ephesians 5:15-21 (ESV)





“19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,

20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

21 ¶ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:15-21 (ESV)



These Are the Words of the Living God.

Thank You Teaching Us How to Live in the New Life You Have Given Us in Christ.

Amen



In the previous verses, Ephesians 5:3-14, we are told how you not to live, how to live and who we are in the Lord.



“3 ¶ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Ephesians 5:3-5 (ESV)



These are very clear warnings about a wilful and intentional way of life which would bar Christians from entering the kingdom of God.

These warnings need to be heard in this generation just as they were heard in previous generations. They needed to be heard by the disciples of Jesus in the first century. They need to be heard in our present century also.

Jesus came to die to redeem sinners. It would be ludicrous for Christians to think we can continue to live in the old self satisfying the passions of our flesh. Jesus paid the ultimate price as our perfect representative to redeem us from destructive, sinful behaviours. Being both God and man in his one person, being our Creator, by his dying on the cross, paid the price for all human beings. Jesus was not always the incarnate Son but because He is God, he is “eternally God’s Son”. There was a time when nothing existed except the Triune God. God was not always Creator. He always the ability to create within himself but he became creator when he created heaven and earth and all it contains.

We are ransomed, beloved people of the Lord, beloved by God. The Holy Spirit has enlightened our minds to understand these wonderful truths. Jesus, the eternal, the uncreated Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, who became incarnate in our

flesh, is our “Yes”, before God. Being God, he receives us from the God side and being man, he represents all of humanity.

God loves all people but we, in his church, have a special relationship with him as we have received his gift of reconciliation. We receive instructions and an enabling from him how to live in this born-again life.

Anyone who would choose to live in a way, as Paul clearly describes, which completely disregards the sacrifice of Jesus at the cross and the reason for his sacrifice, is in danger of eternal destruction.

God exemplifies what is speaking “the truth in love”. These are warnings of love, so that we will all avoid the pitfall of falling back into the old self, the old life we were called out of.

SCAM
ALERT

(From Pexel.com)

6 “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

7 Therefore do not become partner with them.

Ephesians 5:6-7 (ESV)

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These words of the apostle Paul are to be taken seriously. Jesus told us very plainly that he is the truth. Jesus being God and man in his one person as the one God with The Father and the Holy Spirit, cannot lie. He will never deceive us.

Unfortunately, in our broken world, there are those who say they speak in the name of the Lord and who tell us lies. This would be the subject of the whole sermon. As one example, when we look at history, it is very clear that when religion mixes itself with politics that the results are very negative and destructive. Revelation 13 speaks about 2 beasts: one who represents human government and the other who represents the false church, called the great harlot and Babylon (Revelation 17-19). In Revelation 13, we read, **“11 ¶ Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.” (Re 13:11-12 ESV)**

What the book of Revelation says in Revelation 13 is true today. We just need to look at what happened during the 2nd world war and the unholy alliances between the Nazis and the majority Roman Catholics and the majority of Protestants. Only a minority stood up to say that the 3rd Reich was not of God.

We just need to look at the world today and how the church continues to support and

to be actively involved in politics in the USA. We also see it is so many other country such as Afghanistan, Syria, etc. where religion is mixed with government with disastrous results.

I could give you quotes that prove the point that are hair-raising when considered.

As God's people, we have been called into another kingdom, the kingdom of God. In a sense, we are like refugees living in this world but refugees of a different kind. We are to reflect the life and light of Jesus Christ who is living in us as we indwell in him and he in us by the Holy Spirit (John 14-16).

**WHO WE WERE AND ARE NO
LONGER**

“for at one time you were
darkness,

WHO WE ARE NOW IN CHRIST

but now you are light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light”

Ephesians 5:8 (ESV)



Paul does not mince any words in describing who we were in the past. Before accepting Jesus Christ’s human reconciliation on our behalf, we were dead with no hope. Even if the sacrifice of Jesus was complete at the cross, our sins forgiven and death defeated, we did not benefit from his sacrifice because we did not have any idea what Jesus Christ had done for us.

Who we are in now in Christ: Once we received the gift of grace, the unmerited gift of Jesus’ forgiveness, our status changes completely. We become “light” not on our own but light because of our being included and united in Jesus. Everyone is included in Jesus, but not everyone is reconciled to Jesus. We become reconciled with Jesus and with God when we place our faith and trust in Jesus for eternal life. Jesus has lived a perfect human life for all of us. He has lived vicariously for all. Reconciled to God, we trust in his faithfulness. He is our faith. We participate in His faith as he is our High Priest, our perfect representative in heaven. Our faith doesn’t save us. Only the incarnate Jesus has perfect faith. We trust in his faithfulness for us.

God reveals himself as one God in 3 distinct persons. When we say Jesus, we also say God. God cannot be divided. The 3 distinct persons indwell one another in love yet remain distinct, the Bible tells us. God is Spirit completely different from who we are. Consequently, being physical, we cannot project how we are in our physical existence on God’s spiritual existence. God is completely different in his being than we are in our

being.

There are countless heresies that deny who Jesus is. One just needs to do a google search on the different types of heresies.

How are we light?

We are light because our life is hidden in Christ. **“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col 3:3 ESV).** God lives in unapproachable light. Therefore, since Jesus is God, he also lives in unapproachable light. Here is what Paul says describing Jesus, **“15 ... he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.” (1Ti 6:15-16 ESV)**

Our old self has died. When we look at physical self, we see a sinner. When we look at the life hidden in Christ, we see through the eyes of faith, a new self, blameless and guiltless united to the perfect heavenly man who is Jesus but who is also God!!

Since we are light in the Lord, we are to walk as such as his children.

This is miraculous - a miracle performed by God. It is a revelation from God because we would never think such a thing on our own. Our identity has to be revealed.

Do we see ourselves from God's point of view or do we continue to see ourselves from this world's point of view?

What is of most importance is how God sees us. As we grow in the maturity of Christ, we will begin to see ourselves more and more as who we are in Christ. We will accept in humility how God sees us. We will grow in confidence. Our way of life and behaviours will completely change.

As the apostle Paul writes, **‘Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!’ (Ro 11:33 ESV).**

Rather than making us arrogant, we are humbled by this truth because it is the act of a loving, gracious God, Jesus in our flesh, who has given his life to give us his life through his resurrection from the dead. Looking at ourself, we know we do not measure us to God's holiness and sanctity. It is only in Christ and through Christ we can have those qualities. Jesus has become for us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (1 Cor. 1:30).

Carefully walk.



**“15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,
16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.
17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”**

Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV)



Notice that Paul says that the days were evil back then. We do not have to look far so see that our days are filled with evil at this time.

- Just think of what is happening in Afghanistan right now.
- Or of the on-going war in Yemen which began in 2015 because of the on-going conflict between Shia-ruled Iran and Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia. where 80% of the population is in need of humanitarian aid. (Bing search)
- Or again of the people living in the underground tunnels in New York City.
- Or people stealing water in drought stricken California to grow marijuana plants.
- Or the residential school crisis here in Canada, etc..
- The high number of homeless people living in our Canadian cities,
- The list could go on and on....
- Covid 19 is on the increase again.
- The weather is wacky.
- In our life time, we have never seen major ice-melts as we are seeing now with the threat of ocean rising at dangerous levels, etc.

This world has always had problems that we humans cannot fully overcome. The only true hope we all have is the hope of the fullness of the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns.

So how do we walk carefully to make wise use of our time?

Paul writes about 2 commandments (next slide)



1. Do not get drunk with wine which is debauchery.
2. Rather be filled with the Spirit which implies:
 - speaking to each other with Psalm hymns and spiritual songs,
 - *singing* and making melody to the Lord with your heart
 - giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ

Ephesians 5:18- 21 (ESV)



1. As God's people, we are not to abuse alcohol or any other substances which cause us to lose control of both mind and body. In other words, we are not to mess our minds with mood-altering substances. For example, we are not to seek escapism from the reality of life by alcohol or chemical means.

Jesus is our wisdom. God wants us to use wisdom because certain drugs are legal and given for medicinal purposes. He has given us minds to be able to discern what is good and what is not. Again, all the standards are found in Jesus. We are to seek him in all that we do. He is our wisdom.

The Bible is also clear that using alcohol in moderation is not sinful.

We all know the multifaceted problems the abuse of alcohol and drugs cause.

2- we are to be filled with the Spirit

We can certainly speak to each other with Psalm hymns and spiritual songs when we come together to worship God. Singing is a very important part of our worship service.

Singing is a wonderful gift that God has given human beings. When the apostle John was given a vision of the throne of God, he saw those who had conquered the beast and his image and the number of its names, standing beside the sea of glass with

harp of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of the God and the song of the Lamb saying, **“3 “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! “Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!” 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (Re 15:3-4 ESV).**

As we read through the Bible, we find so many places where God’s people are worshiping God in song.

Examples: **“Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.” (Isa 42:10 ESV)**

The word song(s) is found 87 times in the OT.

God sings rejoices over his people with loud singing! **“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.” (Zep 3:17 ESV)**

3- giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I like what Klyne Snodgrass says in his commentary on Ephesians. (The NIV Application Commentary Book 10) (p. 311). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

Thanksgiving. The second mark of the Spirit, thanksgiving, is given only perfunctory attention by most Christians, but it may well be the most important activity we do. As several people have pointed out, sin is basically ingratitude, and in Christianity, religion is grace and ethics is gratitude. The giving of thanks is the first act after the recognition that we are not independent creatures but people who owe allegiance to God and have been blessed by him. We need to affirm that all we are and have comes from God. Only then can we live lives of response to grace. The practice of thanksgiving is itself transforming. It is difficult for a person to be thankful and spiteful at the same time. It is difficult for a person to be thankful for his or her spouse and at the same time to be desiring another person—not impossible, but difficult.

Ephesians 5:20 asks that we always give thanks for everything in the name of Christ. Christians have sometimes felt compelled through texts like this to be thankful even in a tragedy, such as the death of a child. The result has been heartache for themselves and others. Surely such reasoning pushes the text beyond its intention. When the Bible uses “all” or “every,” we must ask whether it is meant with or without qualification. Paul’s intent is not that we are to be thankful for evil or tragedy. John Stott is correct in saying “everything” in verse 20 is hyperbole.⁴⁸ We are not asked to thank God for evil. Rather, we are asked to live out our awareness that all of life, even the “bad,” is lived out under his control and in relation to him.

4- Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

The apostle Paul compares the church to the body where each part plays its role. For

example, the body cannot be just an eye, a leg, or a heart. The body needs all the other parts to be able to function properly. In other words, as God's people, we are to look after the well-being of one another united to Christ, the head of the body, the church.

The reason we submit to one another is out of reverence, worship, and respect for Christ. We do it because of Christ.

Mutual submission implies love and sacrifice. It implies being concerned for the well-being of another.

Mutual submission does not mean being a doormat. For example, Jesus being the greatest servant, also exercised leadership in love when he corrected Peter for discouraging him to go to Jerusalem and be killed by the Jews and the Romans.

The apostle Paul exercised loving leadership when he corrected the apostle Peter for acting in a hypocritical way. As we read in Galatians 2, before certain men came from James from Jerusalem, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself from them, fearing the circumcision party. His example let the Jews to act hypocritically along with him. Even Barnabas was led astray by this hypocrisy. Paul corrected him openly.

Submitting to one another does not mean that in a marriage, the wife is to submit to an abusive husband or a husband to an abusive wife. While doing counselling, I have seen both, men physically abused by their wives but mostly wives being abused by their husbands. A Christian does not have to submit such abuse.

Living in our world, there are times that we need to appeal the human laws and the court to defend ourselves. For example, the apostle Paul was brought to Rome to be judged because, in his defence, he rightly claimed that he was a Roman citizen. This saved him from the Jews who desired to get rid of him for good.

There are exceptions to submitting to one another in the church. For example, if a brother or a sister sin, we are not to participate in his or her sin. Apart from these extreme circumstances and I sure there are others, being in the Spirit means that in the church we will be able to submit to one another for the well-being of the other out of reverence for Jesus.



Depending on the Lord to walk wisely.



Just like a child, Jesus holds up in our walk with him.

The child may hold on to his or her mother as he learns to walk but it is the mother who has the tighter grip as the child learns. The child is proud to take his or first steps but it is the mother and father who make it possible.

It is Jesus who makes it possible to walk wisely. We hold on to him. We depend on him!

Let us praise and thank God in prayer and is song!

Benediction

Ephesians 6:23-24 (ESV)



“23 Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.”

Ephesians 6:23-24 (ESV)

