

Walk As Christ Walked

Long Beach Alliance Church • April 19, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

~Ephesians 5:2 (ESV)

1) The Compassionate Grief Of The Holy Spirit

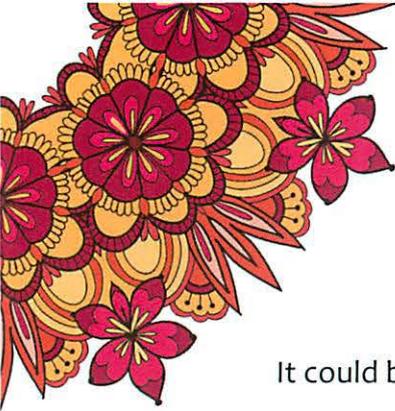
- A) Flowing out of an authentic life of 'putting on our new in-Christ selves' (Ephesians 4:24) is also the difficulty of 'removing our old self-centered selves' (4:22). When our 'new selves' conform to 'old selves' (detailed in 4:17-19, 25-29), it grieves (offends, distresses, frustrates, troubles) the Holy Spirit (4:30). Grieving the Spirit comes from self-direction, numbing ourselves in seemingly sensible ways which exclude the Holy Spirit.
- B) Pastor Tim Keller notes "what the heart most wants, the mind finds reasonable, the will finds do-able, and the emotions find desirable." This grieves the Holy Spirit because we act in opposition to our identity "in Christ." The grief of the Holy Spirit is the type of grief a parent feels when their child fails. It is not grief from being ashamed, but rather a compassionate grief; a grief from knowing we are capable of so much more.

2) Imitating Our Identity Experience For The World

- A) Killing off our 'old ways' (4:31) is incredibly difficult, and is only accomplished through our complete identity of walking 'worthy of our call' in Christ (4:1). The ultimate expression of our union with Christ comes in "forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you" (4:32). Our old selves are undeservedly forgiven (freely saved by grace) for the purpose of forgiving others who are likewise undeserving (freely giving grace)!
- B) Drawing together all these characteristics of life in Christ, the Apostle Paul draws the radical (though logical) conclusion that all Christ-followers are to "therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children" (5:1). In the same manner a child imitates their parent(s), with a sense of awe and adoration, we also imitate God. God's children are beloved by Him, thriving most in a dependent and loving family relationship.

3) Walking A Life Of Sacrifice On Behalf Of Others

- A) Returning to the concept of 'walking' (the manner in which you conduct your life; Ephesians 2:10, 4:1), we are called to "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (5:2). This extends the unity of our relationship with Christ (cf. 4:3-6) to living our lives in the same sacrificial manner as Christ lived (and died).
- B) It is easier to understand why the Gospel 'ruins our lives!' Jesus re-creates our lives (new selves) in every possible manner with the Gospel and provides the ongoing indwelling of the Holy Spirit renovating the interior and exterior of our lives. We are God's blood-bought community of Jesus-with-skin-on ambassadors!
- C) We live as a "fragrant offering and sacrifice" to God (5:2). After God saved Noah and his family, the first thing Noah did after departing the Ark was to offer burnt sacrifices to God, which were a "pleasing aroma" (Genesis 8:20-21). It was not the sacrifice with which God was pleased, but the heart of the one who was making the sacrifice (Psalm 40:6-8). The one who mediates peace between God and man is a fragrant aroma.
- D) Walking "in love, as Christ loved us" means living a life of sacrifice for the purpose of the Gospel, mediating peace between God and those deserving God's wrath. But the aroma of God's children soothes God's wrath. This is obedient living in Christ, lives ruined and re-created by the great Gospel of God for the world!



Growth Group Guide

“walk as Christ walked”
ephesians 4:30-5:2
april 20-24

Ice Breaker!

Think of something you do that is just like your father.
It could be an attitude, an action, or a behavior. Share it with your group.

Looking Up!

Be Imitators of God

What does it mean to be an imitator of God? The following three statements speak of things God did on our behalf that we can imitate. Flesh out what the following ideas mean, including as many Scripture references as you can discover. How can we imitate this?

- He generously gave ~
- The underserving He forgave ~
- The way of life was paved ~

Leaning In!

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit

What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? Discuss with your group the implications of “grieving the Holy Spirit.” In preparation, do a “Holy Spirit” word search in the New Testament: you will find He is mentioned 90+ times. Read a few passages to become familiar with who He is, His role in the church, and in our lives.

Stepping Out!

Walk in Love

What does ‘walking in love’ look like in our cultural context? Where do we look for our greatest model of walking in love?

How does walking in love demonstrate living lives of sacrifice?

How might this impact my friend or neighbor who does not know Christ?

Respond!

Choose one of the three areas we have discussed and decide this week to obey that command. The goal is to not only know what scripture says, but to also be impacted and changed by its power and truth.

This Week In Action & In Prayer!

Pray for God to pierce your heart with questions, drawing you into deep relationship with Him in Christ. Pray for God’s Spirit to provide ‘Gospel Power’ through a deeper knowledge of ‘Gospel Doctrine’ in active engagement with your ‘Gospel Community.’

