

Living by the Spirit

Ephesians 5:15-18

Announce about the men's retreat and share events leading up.

Personal Comments

Today I have the huge blessing of ordaining my son Austin Tucker to the position of Deacon in our church.

Last week I spoke about forgiveness and emphasized that forgiveness is critical to any relationship.

It may appear to you at times that we have the perfect family but that is not the case. We have had our own issues just like any other family. But I stand before you today to say God's grace has always brought us through every trial.

We have had family difficulties and struggles that we have tried to fix on our own but failed miserably. We have learned to trust God and he has always been there to work things out in his time.

I am reminded of Proverbs 22:6 *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."*

We have tried to do just that and trusted God's Word. I stand here today humbled and proud as we ordain my son.

When Austin and Janet were engaged, they attended another church across town. That was very difficult for me. When they were married, I was privileged to marry them but it hurt to do so at another church. Whenever I prayed about this matter, God always reminded me that I should be pleased they were in church and assured me they were receiving what they needed at the moment.

God knew what he was doing. When the time was right, they chose to become a part of our church and it was for all of the right reasons, not because Dad was the Pastor here.

Morgan has finished college and returned to Fairhope, hopefully to stay. She attends our church as well and Pam and I are blessed to have both of our children here.

Learn from my family's experience. Teach, pray, be faithful and whatever you do, trust God!

Preface

I will not preach a typical message on the qualifications of a deacon today. Austin has heard that message on more than one occasion including just a few months ago. In addition, I provided him a copy to read carefully before agreeing to serve as a deacon.

Instead I want us to take a look at the importance of living by the Spirit.

Scripture

¹⁵ *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,*
¹⁶ *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*
¹⁷ *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.* ¹⁸ *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.* Ephesians 5:15-18 NIV

Introduction

Be wise by taking making the most of every opportunity to live for God. And do so by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Notice Paul says not to be drunk on wine but instead be filled with the spirit. Where does this drunk on wine business fit in? Was everyone a drunk? No.

We are to be filled with the Spirit in a way that it affects us as alcohol affects a drunk. It should change our walk and our talk.

1. If you seek the Holy Spirit it will reveal God's truths.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him ¹⁰but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit."

The Holy Spirit leads us in understanding the scripture. It opens our hearts to the meaning and instructs us in how God's word impacts our life. The Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God.

Romans 8:6 says, ⁶"The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace."

When the Bible speaks of "working out your salvation", it is referring to growing in our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. The way we grow our relationship with the Holy Spirit is to seek the Spirit.

2. If you walk in the Holy Spirit it will lead you.

The Holy Spirit searches the things of God and the hearts of man. It searches our hearts and exposes the areas of our life that need to be more Christ-like.

We find ourselves searching for answers to life's challenges. But sometimes we just need to stop and listen to the Holy Spirit who has already searched the answers if we will open our hearts.

One of the marks of maturity in a Christian is discernment, which is the ability to penetrate beyond the surface of life and see things the way they really are. Unsaved people walk by sight and see only that which is before them – surface sight. They are spiritually blind.

The maturing Christian walks in the spirit and is able to understand things from God's perspective and will.

The spiritually blind cherry picks the Bible and only accepts the words of peace and goodwill without ever understanding the concepts of God's purposes. The Christian walking in the Spirit

knows the entire Word of God is the truth by which we should thrive to live our lives.

3. The best way to be emptied of the Holy Spirit is to disobey the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit teaches us and we are expected to obey. We have all heard the saying, "you are never too old to learn new things." This certainly applies to the Christian life. If we listen to the Holy Spirit we will never stop learning, growing and maturing. But we must obey.

Romans 5:32 says, ³²"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Jesus promised in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit would teach us and guide us into truth (John 16:13). Through the Holy Spirit, we learn to understand life from the Savior's point of view. We will learn to have His values and desires ever before us.

There are certain duties and responsibilities that go along with being a deacon. Much is expected of you in your family, church and community. But above all, obey the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit leads, you best listen and obey.

Illus: There are people in this room that the Holy Spirit has said to me, "This is a person sent to you for a reason. They have been trusted to your preaching and you need to reach them.

Conclusion

Illus: Thomas Graves story. Referred by a friend's wife's hairdresser. In a band, etc. Listened to the Holy Spirit and today he is in the ministry. My role was a small part but I was used by God because I listened to the Spirit.