



Sermon – October 27, 2019
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Verses Covered This Week

Ephesians 5:15 – 21

1 Kings 8:27 – 30, 41 – 43

1 Corinthians 3:16

2 Timothy 4:6 - 8

So we are at Ephesians 5 today. I want to read you what happened this last week. One of the religious liberty cases the Supreme Court justices won't be hearing is the issue of Maryland high school student, Caleigh Wood, who refused to take part in a school assignment to write the Islamic conversion prayer that states there is no God but Allah because she believed it directly contradicted her Christian faith. The high court denied the petition filed on behalf of the 11th grader angering one conservative commentator who saw it as caving into the indoctrination in schools and college campuses. Thompson said that one top of getting an "F" in the class, Wood was also made to watch a pro-Islam PowerPoint presentation that denigrated her religion and basically said that Christians are not as faithful as Muslims. Fourth circuit court of appeals, where it now stands because the Supreme Court refused to hear it, ruled in February the assignment did not, to write the Islamic conversion prayer, did not violate the establishment clause of the 1st Amendment. Now I want you to listen to what Paul writes here. 5:15 in Ephesians.

¹⁵See to it that carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, ¹⁶making most, the best use of the time because the days are evil.

Now obviously we live in an evil world. We get that. But when he says the days are evil, he was referencing something that wasn't truly everywhere in the Roman empire. This didn't happen every time. But a number of times it did happen where there was a thing called Emperor Worship. Where basically a little carnival would come to town and there would be a wagon with burning incense, a burning censor, and you were required, all the citizens, to go take a pinch of incense, drop it in the censor, and say two words in Greek, *Caesar kurios*, Caesar is lord. Now the Christians in Ephesus, we know was an emotional town, the Christians refused to do that. Now not every time, but a number of times, refusing to do that they were killed because they could not make the statement that Caesar is lord because in their mind only Jesus Christ is Lord. So we're now living in a day that I really didn't think would ever come to America. But we're now living in a day, so I'm going to be real frank today. We're living in a day when a lot of Christians sold

their soul on the altar, giving up their view of righteousness to put a man in the presidency so we could have Supreme Court justices that are conservative. And those same justices have now said that a girl has to write down allah is god which is a violation of everything we believe in this room. We are now back to where they were. If they were willing to die for the faith, we have certainly got to be willing to do the same thing. And that now is on the way. We are now a people that are not going to be valued and now we're going to be forced to do things we don't want to do. So we're going to have to, like this little girl, say, "No. I'll take my 'F'. I don't care what the school says. I don't care what the establishment says. I will stand for Jesus Christ." That's where we are today. The days are now evil.

Now here's what he says. How do we handle this? We redeem the time. Literally, we make the best use of the time. There are a handful of verses that have really been taken out of context in the Bible. This is one of them. This has nothing to do with time management. Now there are some of you out there that think it does. Some of you have used this verse to justify your detailed lifestyle. You get up at this time, you do this as this time, you do that at that time, when you go on vacation, you can't sit at the beach and relax, you got to have something to do every day. And you justify that. You're the same people that fold the towel a certain way because it's the only way they'll fit in the closet. Now that is not what this means. It has nothing to do with whether or not you manage your time and whether or not you waste 10 minutes or whether or not you play video games. It has nothing to do with that. It is, though, explained by the next verses. Because everything all the way down to 21 is exactly how, as Christians, now listen, we make the best use of the time in a world that is against who we are now. And when we're in a place where a high school girl is not allowed to say in 11th grade, "I will not write allah is god because I believe only Jesus is God." When we've come to that place, we better, as he says, be careful how we walk. So he tells you how to do that. Listen.

¹⁷Because of this, do not become, literally in the Greek, without a mind, but understand what is the will of the Lord.

So here's the first thing I do. I need to make sure I understand the will of the Lord. Now there are two wills, right. There's God's will for us individually and then there's God's will that is true for every single person in this room. So, obviously, we're not going to get into individual wills, but we're going to look today, I want to be clear you understand so that we're without any equivocation what it means, the will of the Lord for every single person in this room. All of us are locked under His will in one particular case. Now I want you to go to two verses with me. Go back to 1 Kings chapter 8 when Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple. I want to read you a couple of verses so you understand and then we're going to go back to 2 Corinthians and then go back to Ephesians. But I want us to be clear on what it means for you to be what the will of God is for you. Now listen. 1 Kings 8, chapter, 1 Kings 8, verse 27. Listen to what he says.

²⁷"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You. How much less this house that I have built! ²⁸But do have regard to the prayer of Your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that Your servant prays before you this day: ²⁹that Your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may listen to the prayer that Your servant offers toward this place. ³⁰Listen to the plea of

Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.”

And then look in verse 41.

⁴¹“Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, comes from a far country for Your name’s sake ⁴²(for they shall hear of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm), in other words, the way You bless us, when comes and prays towards this house, ⁴³hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, that they may know that this house that I have built is called by Your name.

So here’s what he says. On the prayer of dedication, he says, “God, here’s what I want. This house that I have built for You is honoring Your name. I want Your name to come out of what people see in this house based on two things. Your forgiveness of us and Your active blessing of us as a nation.” And then he says, “And I pray that when people hear that, that they will be gripped and they will come to believe in You like we do.” So that’s his prayer. I want to be a people that are forgiven and out of that forgiveness, blessed in a way that is visible so that people that do not know You in other nations will hear about You, see what You’ve done in us, and find Your glory and Your person.” You say, “Well that’s fine, preacher, but that’s Israel.” Now got to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 16. 1 Corinthians 3:16. Listen to what he writes. Simple little verse. Remember what you’ve just read; now listen to what he writes.

¹⁶Do you not know that you are the temple of God

As a matter of fact, there were two Greek words for temple. *Hieron*, the whole temple complex. And then, *naos*, the inner circle where the high priest only went in once a year. This is the Greek word, *naos*. You are the inner circle of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you. There’s a shift now. It’s no longer their temple. Now we’re the temple. So His purpose in every life in this room, manifested through individual direction, but His purpose for every one of us in this room is that we are forgiven and blessed so spiritually in a way that people that do not know Him see it and want to have what we have and find His name and His forgiveness in His Son, Jesus Christ. That is the calling for every person in this room. And if we’re going to redeem the time, in a time when days are evil then we have to understand, now I’m going to hammer this when I get to the end. But we need to understand now, ok, it’s not about making America great again, it is about honoring the name of Jesus Christ. That is the agenda and the purpose and the calling on every single person in this room.

Well, how do we do that? I love Paul. Walks right on. Listen to this. Verse 18.

¹⁸Don’t be drunk with wine in which there is excess, but instead, be filled in the Spirit,

Now here’s what he says then. OK. Here’s God’s purpose. How do I do that? Very simple. The wine thing is simply an illustration. And this doesn’t mean, it doesn’t say anything about tee totaling. It doesn’t say you can’t have a glass of wine before dinner. What it does say is you can’t come to a place where the alcohol controls who you are. And so what he says is, there is nothing,

listen, there is nothing to control your life except the indwelling Spirit of God because you're His temple. So as His temple and the indwelling of the Spirit, you're going to allow that Spirit to control you. That's why it's passive. He doesn't say you do something to allow the Spirit to control you. He says, you are filled. You allow the Spirit to do in you what He is trying to do. That's it. You're not controlled by anything. I love football. I get that. I do. But let me be real clear so we get this today. If yesterday's game hits you more emotionally, now listen, if it hits you more emotionally than the end of the service when we dedicate parents for raising their kids to love Jesus Christ and to allow God's purpose to be worked out in their life, if that hits you emotionally less than whether or not Texas A&M won a football game, then you are controlled by the wrong thing in your life. So you need to be filled with the Spirit. "Well, ok, preacher, how do I do that?" I'm going to give you a crash course; real simple. Two things. You have to know your need and you have to believe that He will meet that need. Now He does this in Simon Peter's life.

When you go home today I want you to take a Bible and just process Simon Peter. Because he's what Jesus is trying to do in your life. Now Simon Peter was the guy, I don't know how to say this, if I'm in school with him, and this is prior to being a Christian, I hate him. He's always got his hand up. He's just. So you see this interesting thing that Jesus does in his life. Peter is successful, then he fails, then he's rebuked. For example, first thing, Jesus walks on the water, remember, Peter says, "Hey, Lord, can I come out?" Jesus said, "Sure." So he succeeds. He walks out a little while, James and John look at him and say, "Big wave, Peter!" Looks down, starts sinking. Jesus picks him up and rebukes him for his lack of faith. He succeeds, he fails, he's rebuked. Later on, they go to Caesarea Philippi. He's got the disciples alone. He says, "Hey, what are people saying about me?" "Well, some say You're Elijah, John the Baptist risen from the dead." Lay out all this stuff. "What do you say?" Peter: "You're the Christ, Son of the Living God." Jesus confirms that. He even brags on him. He says, "Blessed are you Simon Bar Jonah. Flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven." So what does Peter do? He looks at the other apostles going. Then Jesus says, "Boys you need to understand what that means. I'm going to be rejected, killed, and raised on the third day." Peter is back with his mouth. "No! Lord, that is not going to happen to you!" "Get behind Me, Satan. You do not savor what God wants." He's successful, he fails, he's rebuked. Come to the end of Jesus' ministry. Last night. He says, "Guys I've got to tell you something. They're going to nail me and you're going to run. Nothing can be done about that." Peter, "Lord, all these other guys may run, James may fail, John may fail, listen, I'm not running." "Peter, before the rooster crows in the morning, you won't deny Me just once, you're going to deny me three times." "No, Sir. I'm not." Does he succeed? Absolutely. When they come to get Jesus, big mob, Peter jumps in front of Jesus, draws his sword, takes a swing, cuts the ear off of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. He's ready to go to prison and to die. Jesus says, "Get the sword up." Picks up the ear, puts it back on him, rebukes him, and now they leave. Sure enough, long night, Peter hears a rooster crow, realizes he's just cursed Jesus. The Bible actually says two things. That he looks up and the Bible says that Jesus, who's been beaten all night, turns and looks at Peter. His eyes meet Peter's eyes. And the Bible says, Peter wept bitterly. And now there's another episode. Sea of Galilee, post-resurrection, Peter and Jesus. Jesus says three times, why three? Because he denied Him three times. He said, "Peter, do you love Me?" "Lord, I love You." "Ok, then I want you to feed My sheep." "Hey, Peter, do you love Me?" "I love You." "Well, then I want you to feed My sheep." "Peter, do you love Me?" "Lord, You know everything. You know I love You." "Good, then I want you to feed My sheep. Oh, and you're going to die in a way you hate, but you're going to make it." So what He

does in that little conversation, He says two things to Peter. He doesn't castigate him for his failure. What He does do is say, "Look, you know now you can't do it. But you equally know now I still have your back. And the reason I still have your back is because for the first time not running your mouth because you know you can't do it and I have your back precisely because you know you can't do it." What He does in the life of Peter is what He does in all our lives. His intent is to bring you and me to a place where we say, "Jesus, I cannot live this Christian life." And I'm telling you, it's not hard, it's absolutely impossible to do everything that Bible tells you to do. But in the power of the Spirit, I can. So what he says is, I want you to come to a place all of us in this room, you will never be filled with the Spirit, and let me be clear, you're not filled with the Spirit because you go to church, you pray, you read your Bible; those are things that occur after you're filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is when you realize you can't do this, but that He will back you in your need. So when you believe you need Him and you have Him, His Spirit comes alive in your life. And when His Spirit begins to come alive in your life, He corrects you, He controls you, He directs you, He speaks to you, He confirms you, and now there is a spiritual reality that is visible even to people that hate Jesus. So he says, "Here's how you do it." Don't let anything control you, but be filled with the Spirit. Now look at the next thing. Verse 19.

¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Now here's the next thing he says. I want you to worship together. Now he's not saying, when he says speaking to one another, he's talking about a Sunday worship. He's saying we're speaking to each other as we sing to the Father. That's clear. This is not a musical. Some goofy thing where you're walking down the middle of the street and start singing out loud. I don't know who came up with that idea, but that is just ridiculous. But, so that's not what this is. It's not a musical. You're not walking out in Bryan going, "Hallelujah." That's not what it is. Good, huh. So that's not what it is. What it is is that we're speaking to each other in a corporate worship as we sing to the Father. You say, "Why do I need that to redeem the time?" Are you kidding? If you're that 11-year-old girl, 11th grade girl, whose just been told she's going to get an "F" in class, if you don't think it helps her to come to a church in a corporate setting and sing to her Lord with other people, you don't think that confirms for her that what she believes is right? We can't redeem the time without each other. And while we're one this; psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. It doesn't matter what the style of worship is. It matters who the Savior is. And when the style is more important to you than the Savior, you don't get it. And I understand, don't send me an e-mail. I understand. There's music I hate. I get that. When I was in college, I'm going to get killed over this, I don't care, I'm gone. So when I was in college I'd do revivals Friday through Sunday night. I had a '68 Volkswagen bug. Vrrrrr. It went 68 tops. I had an AM radio. The only thing you could get driving home on Sunday night on the Natchez Trace in Mississippi was the Chuck Wagon Gang. I have no words. You put a cat in a commode, close the lid, flush it, that's what they sounded like. Horrible. I'm driving home Sunday nights going, "Oh, please, something other than the Chuck Wagon Gang." I hated the music, but they sang about Jesus. I don't care if you hate the music or not. I don't care if you like the style or not. It's not about the style, it's not about the flavor, it's about the death of Jesus Christ. So quit worrying about the style because I guarantee you when that little girl got punished at school and she went to church and everybody gathered around her and loved on her and sang to Jesus, it pulled her in. And then he says:

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

Next thing you do is you live a life of gratitude. Well, why does that have anything to do with this? Because if you're bitter at God over the way your life is, you can't ever redeem the time properly. So you're not going to be bitter at Him. You're going to honor Him know matter what happens in your life. Because very simply, you know a couple things. You know, based on Romans 8, the Holy Spirit's praying for you, something good will come out of it. You know, based on James 1, that this trial will deepen you spiritually. You know, based on Hebrews, that Jesus Christ lives to intercede for you every single day. And none of us had it as bad as Paul. And when you come to the end, you know this is true.

⁶the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I've fought the good fight, I've finished the race, I've completed the race, I've kept the faith; ⁸remains for me now the crown of righteousness, which was given to me in that day by the Lord, the righteous judge, but not only to me, but to every single person who loved His appearing.

If you love the fact that Jesus came back, then I guarantee you, when you die you get blessed for every single thing you faced in this life that you didn't like but that God allowed because it blessed who you are. Then he finishes with what we will go into next week.

²¹submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

And from that statement he will talk about us in this room, and we're going to spend a few weeks on this, building a holy marriage. So listen. Days are evil and they will not get better. I don't care you think you put in office. Men don't change cultures. If God wants the culture changed, He'll do it. So our job is not to freak out about the culture. Our job is to walk in our purpose by being filled with the Spirit, corporately worship together, giving thanks to God, and making sure our homes reflect the glory of our Savior. You see that? There's not a thing in there, not a thing, about fixing your broken culture. There's everything about living out His glory in a broken culture so they see your Savior.

Father, Your word is amazing, convicting, edifying, encouraging, redeeming. Anybody in here that right now does not know You, speak to their heart and let them surrender to You today into the call of Your Spirit to the blood of Jesus. For those of us in this room that have answered that call, You speak to them about being a part of this fellowship. And, Father, if we just need to be here and respond to You, let us do that regardless of the size of this building. Honor this moment. I ask You that in Jesus Christ name.