

REDEMPTIVE THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**TYLER VELIN | FEBRUARY 13TH, 2014 | EPHESIANS 5:15-21**

Last week we looked at a really redemptive passage of scripture. A passage where we look at the issue of sin, and our tendency for it, but then we see how God redeems us from it. And he does so in a way no one would have ever dreamed up. He says in order to be free from sin, expose it. In order to remove the burden of sin, make it fully visible. Why? Because God's redemption is for sinners. Jesus is for sinners.

This process of Jesus coming, and paying the debt for the sin of our hearts, so that we might receive the light of Christ, this is called redemption.

God saw what we were in sin, and sent Christ as a sacrifice with which to redeem us from our current state and bring us into a new state altogether.

There is a tension when it comes to understanding redemption. Charles Spurgeon nailed the first part of it. Speaking of redemption he said: "Nobody else but God would have ever thought of justifying those who are guilty." Who? Who would have looked at our broken mess and thought, that could be beautiful. Not only did God, think that, but he ordained that he would redeem us.

But on the other hand, God made us in his image, and God is the only true creator. He created, ex nihilo, out of nothing. The joy of being made in the image of a creator God, is that we have been given some of his attributes. We are creative. And the more I think of how our creativity manifests itself in our lives, the more I see that creativity mimics redemption in small understandable ways.

What some people see as dirt and water, a potter can shape it into a beautiful piece of pottery. Ugly tar tainted rocks can be polished into diamonds and sculptures. Random colors, and a tan fabric can be combined to create a stunning and attractive painting. Sand can be formed into glass and used to run computers. Creation is running in a pattern towards redemption. God created us and told us to subdue to world and fill it. To take what is raw, and turn it into something of value.

Hugh Whelchel called this flourishing. In your job, you are laboring for a certain type of redemption. Redeeming work for wages, wages which stabilize the economy and create products which benefit the economy.

But these things mimic redemption. The ultimate redemption is not to turn earth into art, or work into wages. The ultimate redemption happens when sinners are restored and redeemed by Christ. But Paul today is going to show us a way in which we can participate in this beautiful pattern of redemption: **pray**

So remember where we are coming from last week, Paul is slingshotting himself into this passage on the heels of the redemption and mercy we receive in Christ. We have been given the ability to conquer sin, because Christ is Lord over sin. And now... **5:15-16**

Look carefully how you walk.

Don't be unwise, be wise. This is not Paul picking on the no 4.0 students in here. But this is Paul building off of the gospel he just established in the previous text, and this works for us because we know true wisdom is not worldly wisdom.

Look at **1 Cor 1:19-21**. In God's wisdom, worldly wisdom is not enough. So if Paul is not promoting us to become Jedi, sensei, wise men, what is he referring to? What is wisdom.

Job 28:20-28. Wisdom is the fear of the Lord. Wisdom comes from knowing and worshipping God. Why is this wisdom distinct?

Look back at **5:15-16**. Now this is one of those places where the King James language nails the interpretation of this text. It nails it because the King James translation isn't afraid of Biblical themes in their language. Where some translations seek to make it understandable, which is good, you can also lose the weight of the passage.

We can with worldly wisdom make the best use of time. It's called efficiency.

But the most efficient person will still miss the meaning of this text. That's why I love the King James reading:

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

When we fear the Lord, when we understand the weight of the gospel, we become infinitely wise because we have seen the beauty of true redemption. We know seek not simply to make the best use of our time, but we seek to redeem it: that is to turn it Godward.

This word, the word that the King James translates as "redeem" is used four times in the New Testament. Two of those times, Paul uses it in reference to Christ's redemption of us. The other two times he uses it in terms of our redemption of time. This is one instance and the other is in **Col 4:5**.

We are not Christ, we cannot redeem our time in the same manner he has redeemed us. But we can be intentionally redemptive with our time. I would argue that this is the goal of Christians. God has enhanced our vision so that we can see and respond redemptively through the gospel. This is the first point of the text: **Wise Christians Redeem Their Time**

What does this look like, **5:17-18**

How are we to redeem our time, we are to know the Will of the Lord, and we are to be filled with the spirit.

Now Paul plays a little game of parallelism here. Foolishness is contrasted with knowing the will of God, and drunkenness is contrasted with being filled by the spirit.

These are great contrasts. Where foolishness is insincere, trivial, wasteful, a life choice which lacks discernment and care. Knowing the will of God is rooted in discernment, it is precise, and tactful, it is a life of accomplishment and focus.

Drunkenness wears on people who aren't drunk, it is destructive, it is shameful. A life filled with the spirit is other oriented, it is constructive and honor bearing. Where alcohol is a depressant, the spirit is a stimulant.

Where alcohol dulls the senses of the whole body, the Holy Spirit enlivens us.

Now this brings us to our second point: **Redemptive Christians Need the Holy Spirit.**

In one sense Paul is going out of order here. You cannot know the will of God in your life without the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the seal of our salvation, Paul says that in 4:30. The Holy Spirit is a gift that Jesus gave us, which holds, seals, and labors in our salvation.

We cannot know the will of God in salvation, if we are not filled with the Holy Spirit sealing our salvation. Now, all Christians have the Holy Spirit. You don't earn it when you level up in Christianity, it accompanies your belief and faith. But many of us work hard to ignore the Holy Spirit.

Why is the Holy Spirit essential for knowing the will of God, because in John 16, Jesus says that it is the Holy Spirit who will guide you, and it is the Holy Spirit who will declare to you the things that are Christ's. And most importantly **John 16:10**. The Holy Spirit comes because Christ has gone. He is the way in which we bridge the world between here and there.

Look at **1 Cor 2:12-13**. We seek to understand things through the Holy Spirit. And because those who are saved possess the Holy Spirit, we are held to a standard of wisdom. That is why Paul says, look closely, see to it that you are walking wise because you have been given the freedom and the helper who will assist you in wise redemptive living.

What does the Spirit of God have to do with the will of God, and what does the will of God have to do with redemptive living? Everything.

The Holy Spirit is the best preacher to have ever lived. He can convict, he can stir, he can exalt, he can bring low. But in all his preaching, he wishes to point us to the glory of Christ. And because the Holy Spirit has put in our hearts the glory of Christ, we become motivated for the glory of Christ, and God's will is seen in the glory of Christ. What is God's will for us? The glory of Christ, what does that look like? Go therefore and make disciples of all nations teaching them everything which I have commanded you, and baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit.

What is God's will for your life? His glory! How is that achieved? Evangelism and worship!

And the wise person, through the help of the Holy Spirit, is able to weave those two things redemptively throughout their life.

And because we know God's ultimate goal for our lives, we are able to creatively, and uniquely, bend all things into that path of redemption. You're in school. God has placed you around 15,000 other people who need the gospel. Redeem your time here.

You're studying to be a teacher. How can God use that redemptively? How can you give God glory and promote Christ through your career. How can accountants, forestry majors, math nerds and political scientists give glory to God? By walking wisely.

This takes discernment. This is hard work, but this is what Paul is preparing us for. Walk as wise. Because here is the thing. I know God's will for you: worship and disciple making. That's God's will. Now God's will is greater than that. Because God is sovereign and control over everything, he controls the courses you will study, the jobs you will take, the friends you will make, and the person you will date.

We can know God's will by reading the Bible, we can know God's will through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but I never read in the Bible that I would marry Sarah. I never got a special revelation from God through the Holy Spirit that I would be a pastor. But because God's will for my life is worship and evangelism, a sub-category of that is holiness.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit allows me to resist sin and listen to him. This a huge part of worship. So huge that Paul writes of it in **Romans 12:1-2**. Worship, offering your body, resisting sin, holiness produces discernment.

Discernment isn't a written will, it is an informed choice. God didn't fax me a picture of Sarah, but he did put me in a position where I was in love with a beautiful, Christ-loving woman. He gave me Christian counsel through

people older than me and people who were my peers. People who affirmed this relationship, and I was able to discern that my choice to make a life long commitment to Sarah would ultimately increase my capacity for worship and evangelism.

You see holiness will not allow you to exhaustively know the particular will of God in our life, but it will allow you to properly live inside of it. That's what it means to live redemptively through the Holy Spirit. We make informed decisions about our time, relationships, careers and everything else with a life informed of the will of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. And this life is exhilarating.

This is a life that works. It may not work in my life, but it will work eventually, because God's will always works. Now how do we get that discernment? How can we best be in a position to listen to the Holy Spirit? Where can we best be exposed to impulses and inclinations which expose us to redemptive living?

Through the church: **Eph 5:18-21**

Four things in closing which Paul gives us to help us expose ourselves to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

1.) Fellowship with one another: **19a**

We are to address one another in affirmations and songs. That doesn't necessarily mean that we are to sing to each other, but in the early church, the church would assemble to recite hymns towards one another, and this was for the benefit of the body. We preach scripture to one another, we encourage one another, and God will labor through Christian fellowship by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2.) We worship God through music **19b**

Where the past passage was men to men, this is men to God. God ordained that we worship him with melodies. Think about that when we sing here in closing. This is a way in which we take advantage of the Holy Spirit's gifts, we sing these songs to God. And we sing from our hearts, this is good news for those who lack musical skill.

3.) We do so with Thanksgiving, **20**

4.) We do so in submission to others. We looked at this in community group this week. God labors in his body through the service of the body to the body. We will talk more about his in the coming weeks.

But what I want to leave us with is a challenge: Are you walking wisely? Are you seeing your time in the above mentioned this as ways in which the Holy Spirit labors in us? Because when you can take advantage of that, we learn to discern God's will, and are enabled to live redemptively. We preach Christ, we sing Christ, we affirm Christ, and we live our lives in a way in which the world is jealous of our joy and purpose.