

Sermon Series: Why Do I Need the Church?
To be used with: We Strengthen One Another
Sermon Title Possibilities: Bowing Together
Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-21

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Why Do I Need the Church?*” this sermon encourages us to strengthen one another to walk in the Lord’s light, to walk after the Lord’s will, to walk under the Lord’s control, and to walk with the Lord’s fear. This text teaches us that saints should walk together, think together, and submit together.

Introduction: Ephesians chapter five speaks to Christians about being followers of God (v.1-7), being fruitful for God (v.8-14), being focused on God (v.15-17), being filled with the Spirit of God (v.18-21), and being faithful to God in our family-roles (v.22-33). In our passage, the Holy Spirit speaks to us about our sanctification (v.8-10), our separation (v.11-14), our concentration (v.15), our maximization (v.16-17), and our orientation (v.18-21).

The Lord wants us to reflect Christ in our Character, separate from corruption, focus on the Lord’s will, make good use of our time, and submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the fear of Christ.

1. Let’s Strengthen One Another to Walk in the Lord’s Light. (v. 8-14)

The apostle tells us that we are no longer in the darkness. We are children of the light and we ought to live as children of light. The light that is in the Lord is manifested as goodness, righteousness, and truth. These graces are called the fruit of the Spirit in other translations. Goodness describes our labor, righteousness defines our lifestyle, and truth determines our logic. We strengthen one another by releasing the fruit.

We also strengthen one another by resisting the flesh. In (v. 11-13) Paul tells us not to follow after the practices nor the people that are shameful to even talk about. Friend, your godly lifestyle will help others deny the works of the flesh and be devoted to life in the Spirit. Finally, we strengthen one another by reflecting the character of the Father (v.14). Paul says that if we would wake up and rise up, then Christ would shine on us and through us.

2. Let’s Strengthen One Another to Walk after the Lord’s Will. (v. 15-17)

In these verses we are exhorted to review our lifestyles (“Pay careful attention, then, to how you live”), to redeem the time (“making the most of the time, because the days are evil”), and to regard the will of the Lord (“understand what the Lord’s will is”). The context of the local church and the up close and personal

context of small groups gives us the community and opportunity to get the accountability that will help us stay consistent in these three things.

We need the prayers and encouragement of other believers to help us stay focused on the Lord and stay faithful to the Lord. God uses saints to encourage, equip, and edify other saints. When we disconnect from the local church, we rob ourselves and others.

3. Let's Strengthen One Another to Walk under the Lord's Control. (v. 18-21a)

This is the most definitive section of Scripture on being filled with the Holy Spirit. Let me say quickly: Being filled with the Spirit has nothing to do with us getting more of Him. Being filled with the Spirit has to do with Him getting more of us. To be filled with the Spirit means to live under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Many things change when a Christ is filled with the Spirit, but the first three words in (v.19-21) are clues to some of the main things that change. Your speaking changes, your giving changes, and your submitting changes when you are continuously being filled with the Holy Spirit. This passage calls for biblical fellowship, personal worship, and reverential submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Let's strengthen one another to live Spirit-led, biblically-based, and Christ-centered lives.

4. Let's Strengthen One Another to Walk with the Lord's Fear (v. 21b)

While verse eighteen (being filled with the Spirit) may be the hinge of our passage, I think verse twenty-one is the crux of our passage. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit (v.8-13), being focused through the Spirit (v.14-17), and being filled with the Spirit (v.18-21)—is another way of saying submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. How you see Christ will determine how you serve Christ. How you see Christ will determine how you submit to Christ. If Jesus is LORD—and He is—then we ought to reverence Him. We ought to go about with a weighty respect of Him. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and we ought to live our lives in light of His rule in the earth and His reign over our lives.

Conclusion: May the Lord help us to strengthen one another to live in the Lord's light, to live according to the Lord's will, to live under the Lord's control, and to live with the Lord's fear. Let's do as Proverbs 3:7 exhorts us to and be not wise in our own eyes, fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

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