

Living as a Christian in an Ungodly World

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[0 : 00] It is a pleasure to be here. It's a pleasure for me to work with Pickens First Baptist and the other 28 churches of our association as we spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, not only locally, but throughout the state and around the world.

So I thank you for your part in sharing through prayer and through ministry and through the finances of our association as we partner together to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, I want to take just a couple of minutes to share two or three of the things that we are doing right now as an association that you're a part of, and I just want to share with you a little more detail about it so that you can pray more specifically for what we are doing.

The first thing I want to share with you is our multi-residential ministries. That is through apartment communities and senior adult living communities. Currently, we have ministries where we have been invited into eight apartment communities in the Pickens-Clemson area that we can go and do Bible clubs, Bible studies, share through other ways the love of God with the residents there.

And one of those, Pickens Gardens, we have a weekly Bible study and a church that is doing a Bible school there throughout the summer.

[1 : 31] Our heart for schools is another tremendous ministry, and I'd like to share the numbers there. We have 15 churches that are ministering in 10 schools.

The schools are in the geographical area of our association. That's Clemson, Pickens, and the metropolitan areas of Dacosville, Pumpkin Town, and Six Mile.

So in those schools, we have roughly 7,000 faculty, staff, and students. You multiply the spouses, parents, or children, and we estimate that through those 10 schools that our association is ministering to roughly 20,000 people through our heart for schools.

So I thank you for that. Very important ministry as we reach out in the public schools of our school district to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and the influence and the love that we can have on those faculty, staff, and students.

Also, our senior adult living communities. We have worship services that we're doing in three. Dominion, Clemson Downs, and Heritage of Clemson.

[2 : 54] Now, these are senior adult living communities where it's very independent living, and we are very blessed to be in there. And we are beginning the one in Clemson Downs within the next several weeks.

But in the other two, we're up and going. And Fred Sanford, who I believe is a member here, does the one as Fred here. Oh, there he sits. Okay.

Fred is doing the one at Dominion, and I'm doing the one at Clemson Heritage. And we'll be starting one, Terry Parrish. We'll be doing that one at Clemson Downs.

I share all of that. Between those, we average somewhere, it depends week to week, but, you know, 12, 15, to 16 people a week in each of those as we have our Bible studies.

Pray for those missions and ministries as we're reaching out. As you're a part of that, through the Pickens 12 Mile Association, reaching out into our community, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 0 0] So thank you so much for your partnership, your prayers, and for your support. All right. Let's take our Bibles. Brian said I had two minutes this morning.

I love that guy. I'm just trying to figure out why. So take your Bibles, open to Ephesians chapter 5, verses 15 through 20.

Since my time is up, when you get home, read that. How about that? I'm done. I'm through. My two minutes is up. We're going to be looking at Ephesians chapter 5 this morning, those verses 15 through 20.

And the title, if you will, the theme for the message this morning, what I want us to focus on in our time together, is living as Christian in an ungodly world.

The apostle is writing to the church in Ephesus. And this is exactly what he is encouraging them to do. He is encouraging them because they are living as Gentile Christians in a Gentile world.

[5 : 0 9] It is a world that is not made up of a predominance of people who believe as those Christians believe. And so they are living in a world, in a culture, in a community, in families, in which they have come to Christ, but the majority of their friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and perhaps even family members do not believe as they believe.

If you turn back to chapter 4, verse 17, and this is where Paul begins this discourse that goes through chapter 5, but in chapter 4, verse 17, he encourages them, he says, Say I therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.

Let's take just a moment to develop that verse before we read chapter 5, verse 15 through 20. When the apostle Paul tells them that their friends and their neighbors are living in vanity, he is telling them that in the lives they are living, no matter how productive they may think they are, how successful they may seem to appear, that they are living a life of vanity or of uselessness.

Uselessness. If you take everything in your life and you couple it together and you're told that everything in your life is useless, then what is it that will make your life useful?

This is where the apostle is going to go in a few moments. Their life is useless not because they're not doing good things.

[7 : 1 5] It's not because they are not caring about others perhaps, but their life is useless because it is a life without Christ.

And dear friends, what I want us to grasp this morning in our few moments that we have together is simply this, that for life to have meaning and purpose and usefulness, it must be a life that is in Christ.

That He must be the Lord of our life. He must be our Savior. Now I want to paint a picture very quickly before we delve in any deeper.

You see, there are two types of Christians in this world. There are the spiritual Christians and there are the carnal Christians.

Let me explain. First of all, both have Christ in their life. Now as I share this this morning, the first question that you must wrestle with, that you must answer is simply this, is Christ in my life?

[8 : 3 5] Do I know Christ as my Savior and as my Lord? Have I asked Him to forgive me of my sin, to cleanse me of all of my unrighteousness and to live in my heart?

Have I given Him the free sway of my heart and lordship of my life? The second question that you must answer this morning is are you a carnal Christian or a spiritual Christian?

A carnal Christian is the one that has Christ in their life, but He is not the Lord of their life. Instead of the blessed assurance of salvation, salvation to you is simply insurance.

You're hoping to ensure yourself that when you stand before God that you will be allowed into heaven.

But you're not giving God or Christ the lordship of your life day by day. You're not waking up every morning and asking, you know, asking in that time of prayer or meditation with God, God, what is your plan?

[9 : 59] What is your direction for me today? And you're not honestly closing the day by going before God and saying, God, have I faithfully accomplished the task for today that you gave me for this day?

Has my life honored you to the nth degree? Did I do all that you presented the opportunity for me to do?

You see, to be the Spirit-filled Christian, Christ must be on the throne of your life. Not just in the sphere of your life, but in the center of your life.

And you seek to live for Him every day. day. Paul is addressing the believers then in chapter 5, verses 15 through 20, after he has said to them, beginning the discourse, that others have a life of vanity, uselessness.

So you have your Bibles open now. Perhaps I've taken so long with introduction, you've closed your Bibles, but you may open them back to Galatians chapter 5. We're going to read verses 15 through 20.

[11 : 28] See then, he's closing, he says, so see then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise people, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul is addressing the believers here, he is asking, identifying for them how we should live our lives.

[12 : 38] first, first, he says, walk circumspectly. That means careful to consider all circumstances.

A Christian is not to live a life that's just sort of willy-nilly free and to be blown in the wind as long as it's the wind of the Spirit. Christians are commanded here, are encouraged here by Paul to live lives that take into consideration everything around them.

Now, we can spend the majority of our time this morning just laying out for you the things of this world that we experience. But I'm going to let you just in a few seconds let that race through your mind.

The life in which you live, the places where you work, where you go to school, where you hang out, where you shop, all of those things. I'm going to let you just identify those things that are a part of life that you experience and be careful to consider all of the circumstances.

And he says when you do that walk understandingly and make the best of your time.

[14 : 04] one of the things that I am almost I'm to the point that I I don't hate myself but I just I am such a meticulous.

I prepare my days. One of the last things I do every evening is sit down look over my calendar and make sure that I've got the next day just lined out where to be what to do when to do it how to do it excuse me and all of those things it's one of the last things I do every day and then the first thing I do in the morning is I get up and I get a phone call or a message and I go oh my now I've got to change the whole day.

Sometimes I can be that meticulous sometimes I can be that structured but what I have to understand is that what God what I think and what God says may not always click together.

So I have to understand how to make the best use of the time that God has given me understanding that I am to use it to honor and glorify Him.

So this is what Paul is telling the believers this is what he is telling them that are living in communities and in an ungodly world he is saying to them redeem your time it is like this we love to sit down and talk about what is wrong with the world we do it is rotten to the core we love to talk about it we enjoy talking about what others are doing that we would never do that we do not believe in that what they are doing and instead of doing that listen because here is what we are doing according to the scripture we are wasting our time because the Bible tells us that there will always be evil days but evil days create opportunities not obstacles that excites me that excites me let me tell you a little bit about Hartford schools why I am so passionate about it when one of my children was in middle school at a middle school here in Pickens

[16 : 31] County I was asked by the principal of that school to develop a chaplaincy program for the middle school and so a group of pastors we worked on it for some time then I was invited to come to a meeting at the school to present it to some parents and hopefully we would get it instituted in the school when I share it as soon as I finish there's a lady at the other end of the table that looks across the table at me and she says no I do not want people like you forcing your religious belief down my child's throat and you've got to respect that my response ma'am I will be glad to respect your opinion if you will respect mine from that day on basically friends it became a crusade for me to see how we could get

Christian influence into our schools we had a principal when my child was at Six Mile Elementary the principal would always invite me to come to do a career day and I'm just a preacher how many kids want to hear what a preacher does in his life every day no so you know what the principal would do the principal would always put me with the race car driver or the airplane pilot or the astronaut well kids wanted to hear all about that but to hear about those or any one of those they had to then say it to the second half which was the preacher and I would always share what I what my role in ministry as a pastor what it was and I would always end

I did this for about five years I would always end in this manner I would take a copy of my scripture of the bible and I would as I close I would say I have here in my bible when I open it a picture if you will of who God loves so much that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will never perish but have everlasting life would you like to see who that person is every hand would go up yes I said okay I'm going to come I'm going to show you the picture of that person that God loves so much that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life but when I show it to you don't tell anyone else because I want them to see the picture themselves today okay okay that's who would see it first every hand would go up

I'd walk back I'd open my Bible I'd turn it to the child's face and what I had on the leaf there was a mirror as I walked across through that classroom every child saw that the person that God loves so much that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him would not perish was themselves there's a task for us to be doing when they asked Jesus why are you here he did not say to feed the hungry to heal the sick nor to raise the dead when the religious leaders asked him why are you here it was to seek and to save those which were lost and that's the task of the church today to seek and to save those who are lost this is living wisely secondly understand the will of the

Lord be aware of what God wants in every situation verse 17 understanding what the will of the Lord is it is not what you want it is not what I want it is what God wants and it is us pulling together in the same direction with all of our strength with all of our soul and with all of our heart to accomplish that task for years I had a little cartoon that I kept on my office wall on a bulletin board or something and it was four little boys standing around a wagon and the wagon had something in it I don't remember exactly what and they're wanting to move it now it's very heavy because of the load that's in the little wagon so the four boys there's one on each end and one on each side and as they're standing there the next caption says this okay guys on the count of three everybody pull now just take a minute you've got the picture one boy on each end one on each side count of three everybody pulls where's the load go nowhere you're all pulling with all of your strength with all of their might but they're pulling against each other and it goes nowhere body of

[22 : 33] Christ is made up of people that service the hands some that service the feet we all have a different call we all have different gifts that we can put together to form the body of Christ that when he says move we move and accomplishing our task for the purpose of reaching those who are lost and that will be accomplished it is not what you want or where you want to go but it is who you are and doing God's will that brings honor to him verse the passage says in verse 10 if we go back or we learn here that the passage says learn what is pleasing to the Lord it's not about what I want it's about what God wants and being in tune to that third be filled with the spirit the secret to a godly life if you ever ask yourself how can I live a life that I'm doing what I know

God wants me to do and you know I will be less likely perhaps very unlikely to do those things that bring harm to me what is it that I need to do it is very simple it is this secret to be filled by the Holy Spirit of God in the book of Acts just before Jesus ascends he tells his disciples about the coming of the Spirit of the Holy Spirit that will indwell in them that will fill them and will empower them and encourage them man if you're living a life in which you have no power and you're always feeling discouraged perhaps you simply need to be filled with the Spirit of God so preacher don't talk like that I've been a church member for 60 years well

I've been preaching since I was 15 and I still pray for God to fill me with his Spirit daily to just encompass all that I am and all that I'm going to be fill me with your Holy Spirit because I don't want to be filled and let it just lay in there I want to be filled today that I may share it with others and then be filled tomorrow that I may share again it is living a life in which you are filled by the Spirit of God Jesus and the woman at the well in John 14 illustrates that point so beautifully as he is sitting there at the well talking to this lady who believes that she understands all there really is to understand about religion and she may have but what she did not understand was what it meant to be filled with the

Spirit of God Jesus said to her if you knew who I was you would be asking me for the water because he would fill her with the Spirit of God he would fill her with that water in which she would never thirst again I got tired of living a life where I would be pumped up on Sunday mornings and empty by Thursday afternoon I got tired of that I wanted to live a life in which Christ would fill and fill me and I realized the way that I do that is that I live for him and that I ask him every day to live in me when she understood what it meant to be filled with the Spirit she ran back to the town and she told everybody and I believe when we say everybody

I think it meant everybody that had anything to do with her so it was not the church people she went and she told them we're to be filled with the Spirit of God Colossians chapter 3 verse 16 says let the word of Christ dwell in you richly fully as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom seek to be filled with the Spirit of God fourth understanding the importance of worship look what it says in verse 19 speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord I enjoyed hearing this men's group sing but I kept looking for Lawrence Crenshaw up here because I didn't see anybody young enough to be him as I remembered

[28 : 08] Lawrence and I go way back listen I'll tell you this little side little side note very quickly you know why I'm a preacher today you know why because I took piano from Liddell and she told me she said Rick you better just give up music and try preaching and God took that and used it to call me to preach but singing and making melody in your heart oh man I get some of the strangest looks at traffic lights when I'm sitting in town there may be some of you that have seen me and now you're gonna go oh yeah I remember that idiot I love to sing in my car I won't tell you exactly what I drive that way if you don't know you won't know if it's me or not I love to sing in my car and I will turn the radio up not to blast out the people around me loud enough that I can't hear myself sing with them but I love to sing

I love to sing with the congregation I love praise songs I love songs that talk of Calvary I love songs that talk of the blood and the grace of Jesus Christ and his love I love songs that tell me that he accepts me just as I am I love songs that tell me or that encourage me to sing to God and say have your way in my life I love singing the old hymns and the songs I love hearing songs I love understanding the importance of worship worship I feel so regretful and sorry for those who say I don't have to be in church to worship you're right you don't you should worship God when you're alone when you're at home when you're in your car when you're at work when you're doing chores when you're buying groceries at Walmart when the person cuts you off at the corner of Main and Ann

Street you still should worship God in all aspects at all times of your life but you should never forsake the assembling of yourselves together in God's house to worship together to share in the excitement and the voices and the smiles and the hearts of those who sit around you and to know that they are too enjoying being in the presence of the Lord understand the importance of worship singing from your heart daily and then finally verse 20 giving thanks always for all things unto God giving thanks and understanding I read a story several years ago a guy was writing his testimony as a sailor in the United

States Navy and he was sharing in one of the stories how he would always he was always telling others of how thankful he was to God for everything that he had for everything that he received he would give thanks he said I want people to know I'm thankful to God one day they sit down for a mess and as he starts to eat he takes a bite of his meal and as he takes it he just sort of spits it back out and the spoon throws it down and says that's some of the worst food I've ever tasted well a big burly commanding officer sitting across the table from him in mass who is known for his colorful language looks up and he says well because right before he took a bite he gave thanks then he throws it down and it's not good the big burly officer across the table looks up he says didn't you give thanks for that meal and the sailor said yes I did the big burly officer says then shut up and eat it how often do we give thanks to

God and then what we've just given him thanks for we allow it to become something that's in our way something that we say you know I would be better off without than what God has given to me we're to give thanks to God and understanding and everything for I want you to understand this morning and have the opportunity to talk with someone just yesterday in Engels about this the will of the Lord is that difficult situations that happen in your life will draw you closer to him we do not like difficult situations we do not like to think when something goes wrong I'm a

[33 : 51] Christian life is supposed to be perfect no it's not God never promised you a perfect life he just promised that he would always be there for you in life that he would stick closer than a brother that he would never leave you nor forsake you that he would give you the strength daily to live he never promised perfection here and so the difficulties of life draw us closer to him in Galatians chapter 3 let me be sure I'm right here excuse me let me back I'm not exactly sure that's where I wanted to go should have prepared a little more one minute more

Paul wrote this oh foolish Galatians having begun in the spirit you are now continuing in the flesh that was their issue they had come to Christ they had professed faith in Christ they had the way out the door if you will they just went back to living the same old life they may have even tried to change their way of living but they tried to do it without Christ you can't do it that way you can't profess to be a Christian and live like a Christian and live in the glory of God and in the leadership of the Holy Spirit you can't do it just by professing you have to work at it and you have to ask him to go with you every step of the way we've got a six month old grandson his parents our son they're missionaries overseas they'll be going back in a couple of months we've been blessed to have him here for the last four months or so but as he's growing he's over six months now this morning

I walked by his little play area when he looked up and saw me he just grinned so big and Papa's heart just melted and ran to the floor and I leaned over the side of the little play area I said Ollie come to Papa he's not big enough to crawl yet he's trying but he can't do it but when I finished and I stood up I just thought to myself oh how many times has God said to me or you may think how many times has God said to you just come to me just come to me and I believe that he's issuing and extending that invitation this morning the Holy Spirit may be speaking to multiple people in this congregation and the

Holy Spirit is saying don't continue to live in the flesh and to profess faith in Christ but live your life in faith and obedience to Christ without faith Hebrews 11 verse 6 tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God are you struggling are you waking up some mornings realizing that the day before you did not live as you wanted to you did not live as you know God expected you to because you did not depend upon him let me back up and ask this are you here this morning and you're tired of living the life you've been living it's gotten you nowhere it's given you nothing but heartache and trouble and defeat and you're here this morning and I want you to know that I can introduce you to someone who can give you victory in your life every day and that person is Jesus

Christ the son of God the savior of the world he wants to live in your heart in a moment when we have our invitation if you would just come forward I'll be glad to share with you how you can ask Jesus Christ into your heart and to know him as your personal savior perhaps this morning you would come during the invitation and just pray at the altar I know this isn't a traditional father's day message but the message is to all men all women all young people to all that has ears to hear let them hear God has called you and set you aside for a purpose may you find that purpose so that you may find the joy in living in Christ even in an ungodly world let's bow together father we thank you for your word that encourages us your word that just lifts us to places we've never even imagined being because it's you father if there's one here this morning that has never experienced the joy of your salvation may this morning be the time that they come to know

[40 : 31] Christ we this church invites them to come and to receive Christ father may others who feel the calling of your Holy Spirit just come to the altar and pray to thank you for life to thank you for your direction to thank you for your strength in them to thank you for your salvation whatever that prayer may be may they come husbands and wives families father you know the hearts you know the needs your Holy Spirit is telling them right now how to meet them we let you do your work in Jesus name amen