

The Epistle to the Ephesians

“United by a Moment”

Full of What?

Eph. 5:15-21

People need a vision, a plan, and fuel to get there.

A. A Vision Needed

“Wake up” – many are living without a purpose – or for a temporary purpose such as comfort, lands, stuff, temporary pleasure, earthly families etc. God says is foolish – for this is short-term and passing away.

Wisdom is taking principles of Scripture and learn how to apply them in your life. (Not just blindly following rules). Love takes more thought than law. How can I use this day, this situation, to bring honor to God – to advance the kingdom; to build community and relationships etc.? The wise person lines up their priorities with God’s priorities (Matt. 6:33). Our time here is short – our life is a vapor.

Because the days are evil – we, as children of light, can make a difference.

B. Know God’s Will

How? The plan ... know God’s will. What does God want? Most people ask, “What do I want?” It is trusting that God loves us, is good and all wise and knows what is best for us.

God’s will is clearly revealed in Scripture.

God’s will is that you know Him (1 Tim. 2:4) – to be saved. Read John 6:28-29.

God’s will is that you are filled with His Spirit.

God wants you growing and maturing (1 Thess. 4::3)

God wants you to be a blessing to society (1 Peter 2:15)

God’s will is that you suffer (2 Tim. 3:12, 1 Peter 4:19)

God wants you to be thankful (1 Thess 5:16-18)

God wants your focus to be the eternal kingdom (Matt. 6:33) (What about my hopes and dreams?)

What about Jesus’ hope and dream – for building the church through the church by means of the gospel?)

God wants your focus to be outward – making disciples as a community (Matt. 28:19-20)

God wants you to live out your gospel identity in community (Eph. 2-4 etc.)

Make the most of every opportunity. Once they go by, they are gone. Do whatever you need to do to maximize your life for the advance of Jesus’ Kingdom.

C. Be Filled by the Spirit

The fuel for this mission is the Spirit of God Himself. Wine won’t fuel you for this mission. It might unwind you and help you forget your troubles, but it won’t fuel you to make the most of every opportunity.

Scripture has both a positive and negative view of wine. It is a wonderful gift from God to His people (like sex) but we must be careful how we use it.

The amazing part of Christianity is not just that God will go with us and be alongside us, but that God actually comes to abide in us. We have His presence in us. To be filled is to be controlled by the Spirit of God in us.

The image of filling comes from the sailing ship – vessels heading for a destination. Is your sail set so the wind can fill the sail and propel and empower you to move toward the destination? The Spirit is blowing – just get your sail up.

Let's look through Ephesians to see how this teaching in ch. 5 is the culmination of what he has said earlier about the Spirit.

First, you must have the Spirit of God – you can't be filled with the Spirit if you are not a Christian. (Eph. 1:13-14) In Jesus we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian, you have the Spirit of God – there is nothing magical you need to do to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given by Jesus to every one of His redeemed children.

Eph. 1:17 tells us the Spirit opens our eyes to reveal God in and through Jesus so we can know Him better. So the Spirit instructs us and informs us so we can get to know this God who saved us better and better all the time... so we can have a relationship with this God.

Eph. 2:18 – tells us we have access to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit enable us to pray – talk to our heavenly Father. Talk to God about things.

A relationship is not one-sided as far as communication goes... read the Bible – submit to it – obey it - see Col. 3:16... the parallel passage. Fill yourself with the Word of Christ. Remind yourself of the gospel of Jesus. Preach the gospel to yourself. Think through the gospel. The Word of Christ – what Christ has revealed to us – in the Bible, where there are promises, truths, and amazing revelation that should cause your heart to swell for the living God. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God in you as a handle through which He will turn you.

Eph. 2:21-22 – talks about the Holy Spirit knitting a people together in community – a new humanity for the mission of displaying God's glory and the fame of Jesus' name into the darkness.

This is how you set your sail. The Spirit works through the teaching of the Scriptures, through prayer, through relationships as God works through the gifts of others etc. In this way you will make progress through God's Spirit. You don't need to stand under your sail and blow. God will show up and the Spirit will fill the sails and move you along.

The result?

Singing in your heart – expressing our joy in the gospel. We sing to God and we sing to each other – reminding and encouraging one another God-ward. The question is not: Do you have a voice? The question is: Do you have a song?

Giving thanks always (humble, trust of God) The circumstances might be difficult – but if your ultimate goal is Jesus and His glory and His mission and purpose, then you can be thankful for anything that brings you closer to Him..

Application:

Think about how you spend your time. Are you purposeful in using the hours God has given you or do you let your circumstances dictate your actions?

Is God's will reflected in how you spend your time?

What are some activities we probably spend way too much time on?

Are these qualities manifested in your life: Encouragement? Gratitude? What does that tell you about your spiritual state?