"To Have Inheritance in God's Kingdom, Imitate Christ!"

Ephesians 5:1-7 (vv. 1-2)

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & BIBLICAL CONTEXT

A. **Historical Background**

So many turned to Christ and renounced their pagan ways that some in the city (especially the businesses) started a riot because the gospel threatened their trade. You can be estranged from the citizenship of the kingdom. Now, thanks to the gracious gift of God, they enjoy the spiritual blessings that come from Jesus Christ.

B. **Biblical Context**

The essence of this lesson is to imitate God through Jesus Christ, who sacrificed and offered himself for us. The old way of our life must go and not grieve the Spirit. The way of life for the believer was to be radically transformed by a different lifestyle. This refers to the whole church as the body of Christ and not to a specific church. This was a ministry of reconciliation that only Christ has the power to give. Ephesians thus far would have us to praise God for our redemption (1—14), pray for revelation (1:15-23), get in position as a Christian as an individual and corporately-put off the old and put on the new (2:1-3:13), prayer for realization -to bow on your knees -a prayer for the full blessings of God (3:14-21) and chapters 4:1-6:24 is to put it all into practice as a believing Christian). To have all of this in mind is knowing GOD can/able to do this exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us with Jesus Christ.

II. The Lesson: "To Have Inheritance in God's Kingdom, Imitate Christ!"

1. **<u>vv. 1-2</u>. You and I are commanded to follow God**: Watch what God does, and then you do it. Follow God as dear children! Believers are to follow the example of God's actions. Be an imitator of Christ. He loved us when we were still His enemies as we didn't know better (Eph. 1:15-23). As imitators, believers should demonstrate that type of self-sacrificial love. We are chosen, by the Father, redeemed by the Son and sealed by the Spirit. It is

for this reason, that we pray for revelation. Throughout the Holy Scriptures, we are to try to be like him! Walk in it and follow him. How do you this if you don't be spiritually mature.

Imitators: mimic the gait, speech, accent, and manner of life of another. It means here to imitate God as children do their parents, imitate His acts, words, nature, ways, graces, and Spirit. Imitate (copy/repeat/resemble/mimic).

We are called and purposed to get in a prayer position that we must keep persistently asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, may give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. This is so that we may know God better that we may be enlightened so that the eyes of our heart may know the hope to which he has called us. This is how you get the power to have mighty strength in Him. We petition him with all kinds of prayers as we are asking the Creator Sovereign God, through which everything is under His feet. Now, that's power! Get in position, Saints of God. Put on the new condition by being alive to God and take off the old condition by putting to death every evil thing that may easily hinder us from this rich inheritance. Inherent

The practice of inheritance includes these things: unity (Eph. 4:1-16), holiness (Eph. 4:17-5:21; responsibilities in the home and at work (Eph. 5:22-6-9) and conduct in the conflict Eph.6:10-24)

Now we are getting to know the **practice** of the Christian behavior from chapters 4-6. What does God want… **unity in the fellowship!** We are exhorted to do that and that unity is explained by means of the Gifts being sprinkled upon us: wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues and interpretation of tongues, apostles, teachers, helps, administration, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, pastors, evangelists (I Cor. 12:8-10, 29-30; Romans 12:6-8; and Ephesians 4:11). This unity gives us the purpose of the gifts (Eph. 4:12-16). Each of us have a limited amount of time on this earth exhorting one another to the advancing of Christ's purpose in this world. Jesus left an inheritance of eternal life which he sacrificed and left an odor of a sweet smell to God. That is, God was well pleased with the offering Jesus made. Thusly in the process, we are forbidden to do certain things.

2. **vv. 3-4. Sins are condemned. Walk that walk! Ephesians teaches another thing that God wants…it is Holiness in this life (Chapter 4:22-5:12).** Yes, God sent us things to inherit in this holiness in life – take off the old person and put on the new person. See through spiritual eyes and you

will have the keys to the kingdom. What does God want? Holiness in life which is another practice. How is this done – don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 4:17-5:18 gives us a long list of do's and do not. Why is it repeated here? If you look closer – there are degrees in sin…but sin is still sin. This means that the whole course of your life is going to go in a completely new direction when you ask the Holy Spirit to help you. . It is the Spirit and nature of God. It must manifest itself in a renewed way. Here it is repeated in today's lesson. You just don't do the things you used to do. You used to lie, now you tell the truth! You get angry and agitated, and that's allowed, but you must not sin. You must/got to take off ugly stuff and live as children of light--see last week's lesson and straighten up and fly right – don't harden your heart, stop indulging in every kind of impurity with a lust for more. No more pretense, go ahead and be angry – but don't use it as for revenge! The old way must go!

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit by letting foul, profane, worthless, vulgar come out your mouth, only speech as is good for building up others. What is holiness but to seek to please God. Let all bitterness, anger, perpetual animosity, resentment, fault-finding and slander be put away from you. Got a problem with lust? Get rid of stinking thinking in your mind. Your behavior starts with your thoughts. Wrong thoughts lead to wrong thinking. You are accountable. A breakthrough is wanting to be free, liberated – act differently by thinking differently. Be quick to repent and always be ready to pray---you are right Lord, I have a callous mind, I repent give me a wise heart and a tender conscience. You see God wants us to have a willing heart.

There are commands and common sins which are listed in Chapter 4:17-32 and again here in Chapter 5:3-4. They are called out specifically and how rampant they are. These are the pitfalls we must be aware of and naming them should put a pain in our hearts: promiscuity, filthy practices, taste of gossip-don't talk silly or dirty. Thanksgiving should be your dialect. Don't be taken in by religious smooth talk – religious sales talk! Don't even hang around such people. You were once in darkness, now you are walking in the beautiful light. Imitate the ways of the Christian life!

Your position has changed as a believer. Be aglow in the Spirit. No more stumbling around. Get on with it-the good, the right, the true. You don't have to figure it out, call it out! Don't examine the lurid details of the occult, demonology, the occult and other perverted practices-you are only giving the Devil a foothold. Your position has changed: "**To Have Inheritance in God's Kingdom, Imitate Christ!".**

3. **<u>vv. 5-7</u>. These verses demonstrate and indicate to the believer to renew your mind by saying: "Don't get lost". It appears there are degrees of sin that progressively gets worse. Of such people there is no inheritance in the kingdom of God.** Our minds must be renewed by the Word daily which helps changes our attitudes. Christ offered Himself and so we must surrender as he did and offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, so that we may become a sweet fragrance (Ezek. 20:41). As believers our way of life, whether in public or in private, reflects the validity of our faith and our thankfulness to God. It calls us out on what not to do. It's amazing how specific these sinful ways are.

III. Conclusion and prayer:

Almighty God, Father God, in the Name of Jesus, thanksgiving and praise be to you for calling us to live and practice our new way of life. Right now, I am confessing my sins. We thank you for being so specific in how we should live a life of holiness. Empower and equip us with the power of the Holy Spirit as Jesus did so that we may be serve you and be liberated the more and be imitator in life. We ask forgiveness for our sins as we repent and become increasingly more like you. Come, Spirit of the living God and make us anew so that we can have that inheritance fit for the kingdom! Amen!