

SERMON: To The Glory of God's Grace - Walking with Jesus with Thanksgiving**GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

Today, we will continue in the Book of Ephesians, the Letter inspired by Holy Spirit and written by the Apostle Paul. In my last Message we saw how Paul gave instructions to the Ephesians, therefore, to all Christians, for living the Christian Life. This week we will see more of Paul's instructions for Walking the Christian Walk, which I have titled: **To The Glory of God's Grace- Walking with Jesus with Thanksgiving.**

I want to start with my own thanksgiving to God that He has appointed me the Pastor of OIC. I have been overwhelmed by your acts of love and Tender Loving Care (TLC) to me and my family since we landed in Osaka. The book of Ephesians is a book mainly of encouragement, but , I said before, it is also a book to learn how to wage war against evil. I pray that you dear OIC Saints will be encouraged by my Messages.

But I can not change the Word of God, Paul's words and intentions. On his third Missionary Journey, Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years. In the third year, the city of Ephesus rioted against Paul. He exposed the deeds of Satan, who was hiding in the darkness. Demetrius, a silversmith, spoke in (Acts 19.26) *And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all.* This resulted in a riot where Paul's associates were beaten and Paul's life was in danger. Paul's love for Ephesus prompted his reminding them in this Letter of the spiritual war all Christians are in; but they are *more than conquerors in Christ...but, conquerors must learn to fight!* I am praying that you will be **THANKFUL** that you have learned to be encouraged from the Book of Ephesians and by my Messages to walk Closer to Jesus, and to walk as a Victorious Soldier as well.

Now let us review some of the exegesis and my closing words from my last Message.

Paul had made it clear in the first verses in the 5th Chapter of Ephesians that there are some activities that should never be part of *Living the Christian Life!* In (Ephesians 5.12-14): *12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible – and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said:*

{ Then he quoted a “popular” 1st Century Hymn, inspired by some verses in Isaiah but adding Christ, to help make his Biblical points stick in the hearts and minds of the readers of his Letter }
*‘Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.’*

The songs we sing in OIC Worship Services are powerful in God's hands to form our hearts and point our eyes unto Jesus. The Worship Team is also **preaching God's Word**. Dear OIC Saints, don't take them for granted, but pray for them! **Thank God for them and be blessed!**

The above 1st Century hymn reminds Christians to *Wake up, sleeper*; thus to act and pray against “sloth” or spiritual laziness. As we walk with Jesus, the Spirit reminds us of Jesus' Words, and regarding spiritual sleepiness, in **(Matthew 24.42-44) 42** *‘Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: if the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

Expecting Jesus' imminent and unexpected return keeps us all spiritually awake and is a good prelude to reading the next verses in Paul's Letter, **(Ephesians 5.15-16) 15** *Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* Paul here is admonishing, *Be very careful, then, how you live*, regarding careful and not careless decisions that put one into strong temptations for the deeds of darkness. These deeds are sexual impurity, such as *fornication*, as well as the *occult religions* all around us. *Fornication* is sexual relations with the opposite sex without Marriage. The possible loss of a Christian's Salvation by a life characterized by these sins and impurity is clear in the warning in **(Ephesians 5.5) 5** *For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure or greedy person – such a person is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* If that isn't enough to get a Christian's attention to change behavior patterns, imagine that you are doing the act of fornication, or an occult practice, just as Jesus appears to you in the clouds as in **(Matthew 24.44)**. **Thus motivated, Holy Spirit will help you to obey (Ephesians 5.15-16) 15** *Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* I especially want to emphasize to my Japanese brothers and sisters that *making the most of every opportunity* is not the driven without mercy attitude many Japanese are forced into by this society that stresses “perfection” in all things. Some of you have “kind” bosses and supervisors. **In your Walk with Jesus give thanks to God for that blessing.**

Watchful Christians sense the Holy Spirit's showing them an opportunity. This can be in a new acquaintance, or a needed ministry at the Local Church, or anything Jesus knocks on your heart to whisper: "Go For It!, saint!"

TAKEAWAY #1

Accepting what Jesus taught about His unexpected and thus imminent return motivates Believers to *Holy Christian Living*. This is an attitude from Matthew 24, and irrelevant to predicting the time until His Return. Imagining His return, when you are tempted to sin, should open you to Holy Spirit's help to keep you walking close with Jesus.

Next, Paul writes in (**Ephesians 5.17**), *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is*. I have been teaching the OIC Wednesday Bible Study with the topic: "Finding Your Calling." These teachings are focused on **the purpose of your life in the light of eternity**. But *what the Lord's will is* in our current verses points to everyday living such as holy not impure living. There is an appropriate or fitting mathematics term that is limited to nature, not God's supernatural. But, I believe it makes sense with our *Closer Walk With Jesus*: "**The whole always equals the sum of its parts.**" This applies in that your daily seeking fellowship with Jesus will dovetail and merge into knowing God's call on your life. God has frequently reminded me of this, not in my theological and pastoral teaching, but in my daily life. **K.I.S.S...** "Keep It Simple Saint! This praise song from the 1990's helps me:

God, You are my God
And I will ever praise You
God, You are my God
And I will ever praise You
I will seek You in the morning
And I will learn to walk in Your ways
And step by step You will lead me
And I will follow You all of my days

Paul now stresses a sinful behavior that Christians must avoid in (**Ephesians 5.18**) *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

Jesus' first miracle on Earth was making wine out of water to meet his mother's need at a marriage banquet. Reading in (**John 2.1**) *On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'* **4** 'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.' **5** *His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'* **6** *Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for*

ceremonial washing, each holding from eighty to a hundred and twenty litres. 7 Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water'; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.' They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had **been turned into wine**. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, '**Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.**'

NOTE: It was not "grape juice" as **verse #10** makes clear as to a drinkers' sensitivity to the exquisite or oishii taste. The New Testament makes it clear, what was very clear to every Jew faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That is *drunkenness*, not drinking, shames a man, his family, and the LORD. Paul shows that Jesus continues with that TEACHING after His Resurrection. Paul adds the fact that a drunk man has lowered inhibitions to sexual sins, or debauchery: (Thesaurus.com- depravity · dissipation · dissoluteness · excess · fornication · gluttony · indulgence). The acceptance by Paul to wine drinking is also clear in (**Titus 1.6-8**) *An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, **not given to drunkenness**, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.*

PASTOR'S WARNING: If you were subject to the sin of drunkenness before being Born-Again in Christ, you likely should never drink wine or alcoholic drinks again. Your conscience will likely tell you this. In (**Romans 14.22-23**) *22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating {**or drinking alcoholic beverages**} is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.* Therefore, I also say, if you were subject to the sin of sexual lusting, fornication or pornography before being Born-Again in Christ, you must avoid getting close to pornography, including movies and television shows that other Christian men carefully could watch. Know your weakness honestly as you walk with Jesus! Drunkenness is not the only sin that can lead you to backslide into debauchery! **Walk Close to Jesus with Thanks that He saved you from this sinful lifestyle.**

Again, (**Ephesians 5.18**) *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be **filled with the Spirit**.* There are various levels of Holy Spirit's Presence or Filling inside a Christian. Paul is obviously referring here to a total filling as on the first Day of Pentecost after Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension back to Heaven. As the **Gift of Speaking in an Unlearned Tongue** accompanied being filled with the Spirit, some of the listening crowd accused Jesus' Disciples of drunkenness in

(Acts 2.11-17) *11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’ 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’ 14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 “In the last days, God says,*

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

Thus, being filled with Holy Spirit with tongues displays some characteristics of drunkenness. That is emotions of great joy with , at the same time, an inward peace and power, an unction **to tell the world who Jesus is!** Whatever level of filling a Christian receives, that desire to **to tell the world who Jesus is,** is imparted within all Christians. Being “drunk by the Spirit” thus produces much different results than by wine.

In your Walk with Jesus give thanks to God for that He gave and continues to give you more of His Holy Spirit.

(Ephesians 5.19-20)*19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The OIC Worship Team and the congregation lift up music every Sunday to Heaven to God's good pleasure. Christians can share their songs with each other as well. Also *and songs from the Spirit,* as Jesus will often place the perfect song for that exact moment to meet your need, as the Helper keeps you walking close to Jesus. The Spirit also helps us even in our sleep especially when under spiritual attack as in **(Job 35.10-11/KJ21)** *“Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night, 11 who teaches us more than he teaches the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds in the sky?”* And in **(Psalm 22.3/KJ21)** *But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.* Johann Sebastian Bach, the famous Christian classical music composer in the 17th Century said: “All music should be to the Glory of God and the re-creation of the soul.” This statement was written at the bottom of each of his manuscripts! This is still true for music!

Many Christians feel discomfort in Thanking God “**for**”, rather than “**in**” all things. These Saints don't want to believe that God does not prevent all attacks of the devil on them as “Beloved Children.” The Greek New Testament exegetes this in **(Ephesians 5.20/MOUNCE)** *giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father at all times and for (Greek-*

hyper | ὑπέρ | *preposition-genitive*) *everything*. Pardon My Greek but the little words in any language are very powerful and we must be clear about what they mean. The preposition, *hyper*, is in the genitive or possessive case. That means the “everything” we give thanks to God **for, must belong to, be possessed by, something or somebody; such as to a disease, to a danger, to a trial, or to Satan.** The word *hyper can also mean:* above, beyond, more than; in behalf of, for the sake of; in place of. I have chosen the two Greek translations to English as: 1) “for” 2) “above.” This exegetes and brings out the English word “for everything” **can not be “in”** as some Christians insist. The sense of lifting the Giving of Thanks to God *hyper*, “above everything” also seems Biblical. Regardless of which meaning of *hyper* you choose from “for” or “above;” it applies to **thanking God for the storms and trials in our Christian walk**, including attacks by Satan. I understand that Christians don't want to imply that God does Evil. I will exegete more on his in Ephesians 6 on “The Whole Armor of God.” We must realize that our challenge in the attacks by Satan, that God does not prevent, is that we believe God's Word in **(Romans 8.37)** *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* We also are challenged under Satan's attacks to believe in **(Romans 8.28/NASB1995)** *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* Thanking God “for” all things as in the song written by Andre Crouch: *Through It All* the lyrics are Biblical and correct according to my exegesis here, and, as Andre wrote:

I thank God for the mountains
 And I thank Him for the valleys
 I thank Him for the storms He brought me through
 For if I'd never had a problem
 I wouldn't know God could solve them
 I'd never know what faith in God could do

Mature Christians have had the Holy Spirit teach them in their Experiential Christianity, as Jesus did with Andre Crouch. I encourage you all take about 8 minutes to listen to his moving singing and inspiring personal testimony on YouTube - Andre Crouch *Through It All* (at a Billy Graham Crusade).

Next, Paul moves into the challenge of submission in, **(Ephesians 5.21)** *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* Every Christian has the Spirit of Jesus inside of them. Christians must be humble with each other regarding suggestions or correction or teaching each other. Reverence is a holy sense of awe toward Christ, the Son of the Living God, who lives in all our brothers and sisters. This is not meant to be an excuse to disregard authority in the Church as we recently studied the **:Gifts of Men and Women to the Church** as in **(Ephesians 4.11-12)** *11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for*

works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. First, *Christ himself* made these **appointments** of these forgiven sinners, saints, now washed in His Blood to equip the Christians, His Sheep, His Body, the local church. There has to be some degree of submitting to the authority of these leaders who are Jesus' Gift to the church, in order for them to equip "Jesus Followers." I described these appointed leaders as "**God's Power in the Church through People.**" in my Message on August 4, 2024.

The Sub-Title in the (NIVUK) version, "Instructions for Christian households," is incorrectly placed before or above (Ephesians 5.21). Christian households are not outside the Church, but within it! All members of the household should be listening to Holy Spirit so as in **(Ephesians 5.21)** *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* The following verses set up the authority structure in a Christian Household or Home. This does not replace seeking to be led by Holy Spirit, not a rule or law, in our relationships in the Home.

The most vital relationship in the Christian home is that between husband and wife. Paul now instructs us in **(Ephesians 5.22-24)** *22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.* Remembering to keep this instruction as within the above verse **(Ephesians 5.21) thus not throwing away "submitting to one another" teaching as we exegete these verses on the Christian Family.**

Here Paul is going back to God the Creator's original declaration of the two Creatures, Adam & Eve, that He formed out of the Dirt, and then out of Adam's Rib. This is where we all had our source, where we really came from. Reading our real History in **(Genesis 2.18-24)** *18 The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' 19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam **no suitable helper** was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, **{in the Original Hebrew- WOW!}** 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman", for she was taken out of man.' 24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. **(Genesis 2.24)** Is obviously sexual union, Marriage. But, what we need to focus on here is God's intended purpose and **how He created Eve's inner being: heart, soul, and mind, as Adam's future (before sexual union) wife.** God created Eve to be Adam's **suitable helper.***

The Amplified Translation gives more exegesis in meaning in **(Genesis 2.24/AMPC)** *And Adam gave names to all the livestock and to the birds of the air and to every [wild] beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him.*

Therefore we see that God's plan for harmony in the Family is the wife being a **helper**. In the Family, in the Church Family, and even in secular business, it is obvious that any worker who refuses to submit to the authority over him destroys being a **helper or helpful**. In America the Women's Liberation Movement {Women's Lib} has led many women to become successful in business, yet miserable, and they don't know why. It is not from success in business, but for carrying their business authority home with them against their husbands. This destroys the harmony and, often, even the Marriage relationship itself. In **(Ephesians 5.23-24)** Paul is declaring God's authority structure: *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.* Like all of God's Word, the Bible, this is more than just a rule. The context or scene is a Marriage where Jesus is on the throne of hearts of the husband and wife. The more the wife shows God her willingness to submit, the more the husband is led by the Spirit to make co-working and cooperation more frequent than the need for the husband to express his God ordained authority. It should be infrequent that he must do this for both the Husband and Wife are *Sons of God*, for **(Romans 8.14/AMP)** *For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* But when agreement does not come, the Christian wife must submit to her husband as she must submit to the Lord Jesus. Her refusal is committing a sin against the Lord!

Husbands want submissive wives who are also free to express their own opinions in Marriage decisions. A husband sensitive to the Holy Spirit can hear Jesus' instruction to Submit, in this particular case, to his wife, for she has heard My, that is Jesus,' desire. This makes marriage an exciting Adventure with Jesus..and, oh yes, many times marriage is just hard work. But Jesus, who is in the center between the **Two of You**, makes it worth it all! You might remember that recently we sang a song led by the Worship Team, "It Will Be Worth It All When We See Jesus."

TAKEAWAY #2

(Ephesians 5.21-24) 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. This may be the most difficult Bible verse in the Newer Testament to obey! The authority of of Jesus' appointed Leaders for His Church must be included in the application of this verse. Nevertheless, it is an overriding command in the Church, and also in Marriage; where God has commanded: 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord, and, 24 wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Marriages without this Biblical Authority Structure

are not what Christ wants, and lack the power of the Holy Spirit to influence the Husband and Wife's union and the children in that Marriage.

Paul then gives the husband God's instructions in **(Ephesians 5.25-26)** *25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.* Jesus' requirement for the husband is also very difficult. Husbands are called to have an attitude of *gave himself up for her*, that is being sacrificed for the sake of his wife, who at the same time is submissive to the Husband's authority. This is clearly the picture of Jesus, God in the Flesh, in relationship to His Bride, the Church. We submit to Him, and He died for us!

Pardon my example, but I know sports, especially soccer and baseball / *yakyu* are important to many Japanese husbands as with American. So, let us imagine a Japanese husband says :”I love you. I would die for you! “ “Oh, my love,” the wife answers. “Oh, Would you turn off the Los Angeles Dodgers' game for a minute as I need you to move this heavy frying pan for me?” “ Sorry, I can't now.... Ohtani coming to bat!” The American Christian husband would be watching the New York Yankees with Aaron Judge coming to bat.....same answer! **Does this sound like *just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*. If we cannot love our wives sacrificially in the *little things*, we will not love them in the *big things*!**

TAKEAWAY #3

Christians husbands must keep Jesus' Sacrificial Death in mind as they love their wives, *just as Christ loved the church*. Until they have been nailed to a Cross, their job is not done!

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. in (1 John 4.10.)

We have come full circle, or back to the beginning of this message as I wrote in **TAKEAWAY #1: Accepting what Jesus taught about His unexpected and thus imminent return motivates Believers to *Holy Christian Living***. And now , in **(Ephesians 5.25b-27)** *just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* **Mission Impossible: Living The Holy Christian Life is only made possible because Jesus died for us to make us His Bride, His Church.**

Jesus washed us *by the washing with water through the word*, and “we are Holy.” The Bible says we are...God says we are...So **WE ARE HOLY. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift, JESUS! Walking with Jesus with Thanksgiving.**

But, the best is yet to come, for (Ephesians 5.27) *and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* Jesus will present us

all to His Father in Heaven before His Glorious Throne as His Holy Bride on the Day of Our Redemption, *the redemption* (*apolytrōsin* | *ἀπολύτρωσιν*) *of our bodies*, in (Romans 8.23/MOUNCE). Give thanks to the Risen Lord, OIC Church. We will rise too, His Holy Bride, and be presented *without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish*, by our Husband, Jesus, to our Father, God.

Walking with Jesus with Thanksgiving as His Holy Bride now and Forever!

Let Us Pray...

REFERENCES

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