

“Walking in the Light”

Have you ever been around someone who is always telling you what to do, or not to do? So much so that, you are constantly on edge – like you’re walking on eggshells – or through a minefield? That’s no way to go through life – always on the defensive – always afraid of stepping out of line.

Well, today our heavenly Father – through His Apostle Paul – tells us what to do, and not to do. He does this – not so that we fear making the next, or wrong step – but so that we may be WISE, not FOOLISH.

To be WISE is more than having knowledge, more than being able to score well on a test – it means putting what one has learned to good use – applying that knowledge so there is a benefit.

St. Paul writes to those who already believe in Jesus Christ. They know about sin and grace – that they are saved by grace, and not by their own works. The exhortation is for them (and for us) to take this knowledge and use it to walk as children of the light – to walk in the way of understanding – to walk in the way of the Lord.

Our days, like Paul’s, are dark day – with evil all around. You see evidence of it – not just in the news (far, far away) – but in your neighborhood, your school, your family – even your own life. There are constant temptations to foolish and excessive living --- BUT YOU, who live by faith in Jesus Christ --- are to live wisely in these days.

“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is,” the apostle says. So, what IS the Lord’s will? Ultimately His will is that all would be saved – that all would know Jesus Christ and His salvation – and therefore, have eternal life.

But that’s a pretty broad definition – especially for someone who is carefully (and maybe fearfully) watching every step they take. In general, we know that we are to trust in God for all things – that we are to love and serve our neighbor – but what does THAT mean for our daily walk?

Dearly beloved, the Lord's will for you is very specific. He has put you in a specific place, at a specific time, and has placed specific people around you. These are the neighbors you are to love and serve – your spouse, your children, your parents – your classmates, your co-workers, your fellow citizens. “Look carefully then how you walk” amongst these people – “not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time ...”

You serve your parents, your governors, your teachers, your pastor – when you understand that the Lord has given them authority to be exercised for your benefit – and therefore, you rightly honor them as God's representatives.

You serve your spouse, or your boyfriend or girlfriend – by leading a chaste and decent life – using God's gift of sexuality in the way He intends, and therefore is “good” for all involved.

You serve your fellow citizens by seeing their needs and providing for those needs. You help them with their physical needs – caring for their broken bodies – helping them to improve and protect their property and income – defending their reputation with the words that come from your mouth.

You serve them by wisely applying God's Law and Gospel to the situations in their lives. If they deny their sin, or try to justify/excuse it – in love you clearly point out that what they have done, or are doing, is “not good.” You help them to see that sin is not harmless – that people get hurt (themselves, and others) – that it separates one from God and leads to death – and so it is a most serious thing.

And when their sin crushes them, cuts them to the heart – when they see their weakness, their unworthiness, and are crying out for help – then you apply the balm of God's grace, clearly declaring all that God has done for them in Christ Jesus – how His blood makes them holy – His forgiveness looses them from the bonds of sin and guilt.

To understand what the Lord's will is – not only for you, but for your neighbor – is of great benefit! Your works of love benefit your neighbor – not just with their temporal needs – but with the eternal blessings that are theirs in Christ Jesus.

As you live and walk with your fellow man – the wisdom of God is manifested – that even though we are all sinners, Christ died for us, and has reconciled us to our heavenly Father.

Of course, we don't have to go very far to realize that we often fail to walk in the ways of the Lord. We ignore the needs of others. We serve ourselves. We live for our own benefit, and not for those whom the Lord has put around us.

And yet, we do not live as though walking through a minefield – fearing that one false step will bring everlasting destruction. Rather, we live as those who are a new creation in Christ Jesus – living in the freedom of sins forgiven, living in the assurance of life everlasting – singing and making melody to the Lord with all our heart, giving thanks to God our heavenly Father for His abundant grace to us in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In our walk this day, Christ our Savior says to you – “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed” for you. “Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.” That is, walk by faith in Jesus Christ – in whom you have eternal life. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.