Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Walk As Wise**

**Ephesians 5:15-21**

20th Sunday after Trinity

10.17.2021

*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise*. (vs.15)

What exactly does that mean? *It means do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.* (vs. 17) And what is the will of the Lord?

I could ask if you really need to ask that question? Most of you have been confirmed, you know what the ten commandments are. I know you all have at least one Bible at home, maybe more, so I am sure you are familiar with the Word and will of God.

But then again, maybe that is not entirely true. We know that the Christian Life is a daily struggle, we could say it's almost a wrestling match. In fact, if we go to the last chapter of Ephesians, we can learn just how vile a struggle it is. In fact, if we look forward to next week’s epistle lesson from this same letter, we read so rather sobering words – if we do more than hear them, but truly let them sink in.

*Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.* (Eph. 6:10-13)

We are at war! It appears from our daily lives that is Christian against atheist, that there is a struggle between what we as Christians believe and what the world is trying to push as a social agenda. But the truth is clear from Scripture that we are at war with the same one who deceived Eve in the garden, the father of lies, and his minions. It is plainly evident that there are many who travel this hurtling orb enrobed in our flesh who have already succumbed to the temptations of the Evil One.

We must also remember that Satan will not tempt with the truth. We must also remember that in his temptations of Jesus he quoted the Scripture. Yes, he actually misused Scripture when he quoted it, but he did quote it. He disguises himself as an angel of light to try and deceive. And so, we need to be very wary.

There are many claiming to follow Christ, who have been deceived. Some do not even know they have switched sides and are now traitors. By their teachings you can spot them, for they pervert the Scripture. You can see this in their teachings which scratch itching ears, going along with the world, having wonderful excuses as to why they have abandoned the clear teachings of Scripture. They are the servants of Satan as well, so we also need to be wary of them.

We are to walk as wise! We need to recognize falsehood when we see it. But there are also some specific things in our text which we are directed to be about. We are told not to be drunk, but be filled with the spirit. Note, our text does not say that adult beverages are a sin. Drunkenness however is! I do not need to explain why, for you all know how the greater alcohol level increases, the ability to do things we normally would not, including sinful things, decreases.

What about the fact that we are supposed to address one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, making melody with all our heart. We are to give thanks always and for everything to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When was the last time you addressed someone in your family with a psalm, a hymn, or spiritual song? How often do you give thanks to God for *EVERYTHING*? By the way, everything includes the bad things going on.

These are things we do if we are walking as wise. If you notice, it means that God is first and foremost in our lives on a daily lives! Being as familiar with Scripture as you are, you know that, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* (Ps. 110:10, Prov. 1:7; 9:10)

Fear of the Lord is nothing more than knowing God, abiding in His will, and knowing that when you fail to do so, without repentance, there will be consequences of an eternal nature. So, fearing His wrath, we turn from sin in repentance for the forgiveness of sins – trusting in Christ that in Him we are forgiven.

Walking as wise also means that we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. How do we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ? How can I say this nicely? Probably cannot do so, so I won’t try. Simply put, it ain’t all about you! First in your life is God! Second is others – family, friends, neighbors! And finally, you!

What are the needs of your neighbors? Those needs come before your own desires! Yeah, I know, that flies in the face of a number of ways you may have been thought to think.

You probably have built a partial philosophy for life on a few phrases that get you all twisted around from God and your neighbor.

Look out for number one!

Follow your heart!

You are enough!

Do you notice that all those phrases are turned inward, at self? Think of the one thrown out of the wedding banquet for coming in his own clothes, wrapped up in himself. Remember also the words of Jesus rebuking the Pharisees, “what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” (Mt. 15:18-19)

Yes, it is easy to think of self, first. But every single one of the commandments looks at how we live with others.

The first table deals with our approach to God. God is first! We are to fear, love, and trust in Him above all things. It is from this posture that the rest of our life, our approach to others, finds its direction and meaning – this is covered in the second table of the law, how we deal with our neighbors.

God created you – and your neighbor, every single one of them – in His own image.

God enfleshed gave His life unto death as the sacrifice to cleanse you of your failures in both those tables of the law. He gave His life to grant you forgiveness and life.

Today, Rory James O’Connor will begin his walk as wise. It will begin at the font! Notice that his walk does ***NOT*** begin with anything he does. He was finely wrought of God in his mother’s womb. And today, the One who began his life, brought him forth into His creation, will be the one to call him by name and grant him a new life – the life of faith. He begins today his walk as wise.

You and I do not see it, but faith is God’s gift. It is something that even little children have. It has nothing to do with cognitive understanding, it is faith. That is what it means to walk as wise. In the most simple terms, the walk of wisdom is simply faith.

You think faith has to do with understanding, that it has something to do with the mind? You believe that God is the Trinity – one God in three Persons? Explain it so that my feeble mind can understand it! I have tried, and I cannot wrap my mind around it. But, just as I do, you believe it! You walk as wise because His Spirit has changed you heart into a believing heart.

You will in a few moments come to the Table of the Lord. At this table, you will do as Jesus declares. You will eat of His body and drink of His blood. Yes, it will taste like bread and wine. There are many who even deny that it is Christ’s body and blood, claiming that it only “’represents” or “symbolizes” His body and blood. But that is not what Jesus said you are eating and drinking, and He would have been completely capable of doing so if He had desired it to be understood that way.

To “walk as wise” is to trust the Word of Christ. You come to the table to eat and drink, to partake of the body and blood of Christ, and by faith believe that in that meal you have been granted forgiveness and life, you are at peace with God.

Dearly beloved of God, in a few minutes you will walk out those doors. When you do, your walk of faith does not end. In fact, in some ways we might say that is where the walk of faith begins.

Here is where Christ comes to build faith. It is the Divine Service because this is when the Divine serves us, where He visits us in the most intimate way. We are participants in His gracious visitation by which He comes to us again. He forgives us! He fills us with Himself! He is in us and we are in Him.

You walked as wise to come in those doors. You were led by the Spirit to know your failures to walk as wise this last week. Walking as wise, you came in repentance to be forgiven and renewed in Christ.

Walk as wise out those doors. Walk in Christ! Walk as the redeemed of God in Christ Jesus! Amen.