

Paul's "Carpe Diem!" – *Ephesians 5:15-16*

Introduction – There are two directions to take these verses. One is to emphasize that we are to be really, really careful, because the days are evil. The other is to emphasize that we are to take advantage of every opportunity because the days are evil. I think Paul has the latter in mind. We are not to disregard the days because they are evil; we are to take advantage of them with the wisdom that is ours in Christ. We pray that God would *"deliver us from evil,"* and we ought to believe that He is regularly answering that prayer through His church in opportunity after opportunity.

The Fifth Walk – Paul has commanded the church to walk in unity (4:1) because they were given that unity in Christ. He commanded them to walk in holiness and no longer like the unregenerate (4:17-24) because they had put on the new man. He commanded them to walk in love (5:1-2) because they had been loved by God. He commanded them to walk as children of light (5:8-9) because they once were darkness but now they are light. Finally, He commands them to walk in wisdom (5:15) and to do so circumspectly (exactly, accurately, diligently).

Got Wisdom? – So, in Christ, we are one, we are holy, we are love, and we are light. Are we wise? Are we wisdom?

You Have Become Wisdom – Just as the church has become "one body," and light to the world, so we have become wisdom. The saved *"...are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God..."* (1 Cor 1:30). The *"treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* that are hidden in Christ are hidden in us as well (Col 2:3). At the very least, we should understand that the wisest choice you ever made was to believe on the One at whose feet every knee will bow – and found salvation. And far beyond that, the scriptures teach us that there is not a problem confronting an individual or a whole society but that the answer is in Jesus.

Walking or Filling with the Holy Spirit – Paul will go on to connect this wise walking with Spirit-filled living (5:15-6:9). To walk in wisdom is to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16).

Praying for Wisdom – Paul prayed for more wisdom for the Ephesians (1:17-18) so that they would know the power that had been given them, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (vv19-21). We saw in that passage that the prayer was not for power but for knowledge of power already given. We are to see the power already in the gospel given to us (Rom 1:16), power already in the faithful to endure sufferings (2 Cor 4:7), and the power to joyfully obey God (Phil 2:12-13). Paul prayed for a revival and for greater knowledge of this power which could only be given by the Spirit. We should pray as well.

Growing in Wisdom – And so, as Christians, we are to be walking in this wisdom and doing so carefully, always seeking the scriptures for how we are to live in any circumstance. We are to be growing in this grace and wisdom (2 Pet 3:18, Prov 2:1-9, Col 4:5-6).

To What End? – And this leads us to his specific reason for walking with wisdom: we are to be *"redeeming the time, for the days are evil."* You find yourself light in the midst of darkness, of life in the midst of death and despair, of love in the midst of self-centered, grasping envy and pettiness. Of course we must be careful that we don't fall into it. But his point is to see the great opportunity you are daily given – and seize it.

Seize the Day! – In some ways, Paul is declaring his own version of "Carpe Diem!" Seize the day! He chose the Greek word *kairos* (age, opportunity) and not *kronos* (minutes, hours) for his phrase, "redeeming the time." His point is "don't let this opportunity pass; take advantage of the very moment God has provided." Jesus said to be *"wise as serpents and harmless as doves"* and so this is not an opportunity for reckless abandonment of God's standards. It is to see every circumstance as an opportunity to turn a situation around with light, truth, mercy and grace.

With an Attitude – Christians can be snubbed as being too narrow or always thinking they have the "Jesus-answer" to every problem. But in fact we do. The Jews required a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we are to preach Christ in every situation, the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:22-24). We are to be like the Psalmist (Psalm 49:5) who sings, *"Why should I fear the days of evil?"* when we have the Answer that will deliver us from all evil. This is why Paul had an attitude that could not be conquered (2 Cor 4:7-12, 12:7-10). *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose"* – Jim Elliot. He also said, *"Wherever you are, be all there! Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God."*

Imitating the Redeemer of this Age – The world was full of sin, rebellion, darkness, and foolish ignorance. What did God do towards this stiff-necked rebellion? *"...while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom 5:8). Jesus Christ seized the day. Paul says, in the wisdom of Christ which is yours, go and do likewise.

Every moment of every day has a redemption possibility in it. Seize it.