

Intro: In the 1999 blockbuster, *The Matrix*, the Wachowski brothers show us a fantastical world in the future where artificially intelligent machines have taken over the world and are using humanity for the electricity that they can produce. In order for the machines to keep humanity from rebelling they create a computer program of alternate reality that fools humanity into thinking that life is normal. This alternate reality, also called the Matrix, is really and simply the Lie. It is not Real, it is false. And yet most people in the movie believe that the world around them is real. Some humans have escaped the Matrix and see the world as it truly is and are working to set more people free to see the Truth and to fight their true enemies. So goes the story. Now, within this story there is one character, Cypher, who is tired of living in reality. Having seen the real world, he would rather choose to live in the unreal world. In fact, in going to betray the Hero he states it this way:

Cypher: You know, I know this steak doesn't exist. I know that when I put it in my mouth, the Matrix is telling my brain that it is juicy and delicious. After nine years, you know what I realize?

[*Takes a bite of steak*]

Cypher: Ignorance is bliss.

In Ephesians 5:15-21 the Lord is showing us in the words of the apostle Paul, that we are to live in the REAL and not to live as if the Lie were true. We are to be wise, not ignorant, and line up our lives with the reality that Jesus is True and His Gospel is the Truth.

After Paul has expounded on the nature of the Light and that we, as its children, are to walk in it, he continues to admonish us to watch “how” we walk in the light. That is, not in ignorance or living life with our eyes closed to the Truth, so to speak. Rather, with eyes wide open to the Ultimate Things, the glory of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to live with eyes gazing towards the horizon of eternity, with head up and feet solid because the Light of Christ illuminates the eternally REAL things.

At the root of how we walk is the concept of hypocrisy. If we, to whom the eternal and spiritual things have been revealed by the Spirit of God (see 1 Cor 2:12-13 as well as Ephesians 1), then we are to walk in the light of these things. To walk according to the world’s “version” of truth after receiving the Truth is to be hypocritical. To pursue this temporal and fleeting pleasure once our eyes have been opened to the glories of Christ is to shut our eyes in darkness and stumble along like drunk men, wasting our lives and dishonoring the God who revealed Himself and gave Himself for us.

Therefore, let us watch carefully *how* we walk, in wisdom and not in foolish hypocrisy. Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus and the eternal plan of God as revealed in His Word. He has shown to us the Truth in Christ so that we would depend upon Him and trust His Word as we walk in this world, redeeming every opportunity to the glory of Jesus and the brilliant luminescence of the Gospel.

Watch carefully how you walk:

1. Walk in Wisdom

- a. **Do not** walk as unwise
 - i. Foolishly, wasting your life on frivolity and temporal pursuits
 - ii. Knowing the Truth of the glory of God in face of Christ, yet walking as if it were untrue, or merely partly true
- b. **Do** walk as wise
 - i. buying up (redeeming) the time
 1. Taking the opportunity to live and speak according to what is ultimately True
 2. Seeing clearly: the temporal and unimportant fade in priority over the eternal and ultimately significant
 3. *How are we “spending” our time? Are we investing it to redeem these evil days for the glory of God? Or, are we wasting our time pursuing the temporal kingdom and chasing after idolatrous promises of security and pleasure?*
 - ii. because

1. the days are evil (see 6:11-13)
2. We must be redeeming these evil days by living according to the revealed Word of God as our standard for what is True and REAL
 - a. Contrasting the “wisdom” of the world with the wisdom of God
 - b. 1 Cor 1:18-25
 - c. 2 Tim 3:14-15

2. Walk in Understanding

- a. “On this account” (redeeming the times vs. evil days),
- b. **Do not** become unreasoned
 - i. (*αφρων*, that which is out of touch with the eternal truths)
 - ii. “unreasoned” is to ignore what God has revealed about Himself in His Word
 1. In fact, to be “unreasoned” according to Scripture can be deceptively called “reason” according to the world
 2. Do you trust your own perceptions, or that of the Word of God?
 - a. He is the Light which reveals the true reality of things
 - b. As the light reveals what is real, do we shut our eyes or adjust our step?

“I’d have been a better man, if I’d known there were things like these.” - Cabbie in *The Magician’s Nephew*
- c. **Do** Understand (to put the pieces of perception and the REAL together)
 - i. what is the will of the Lord (Jesus)
 1. “will of the Lord” is God’s overall plan, revealed in His Word
 2. It is the Gospel of grace to the glory of God!!

“The doing of His will is not a matter of irrational impulse but of intelligent reflection and action.” F.F. Bruce
 3. Submitting our plans and purposes under the eternal plans and purpose of the Lord revealed in Christ through the holy Scriptures
 - ii. Revealed in His Word as what glorifies God
 - iii. Live like you believe what you say you believe
 1. Gospel?
 2. Eternity?
 3. Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of the world?
 4. James 1:17 – “without hypocrisy”

3. Walk in the Control of the Holy Spirit

- a. **Do not** get drunk with wine
 - i. NOT “avoid wine”, but rather “don’t become intoxicated”
 1. Losing control with Reality and the ability to judge it rightly
 2. Parallel with “do not become unreasoned” or “out of touch with what is Real”
 3. If a person chooses to be a teetotaler, than that is fine, but this verse is not an admonition that all wine is bad (see 1 Tim 5:23)
 - ii. In which is wastefulness, useless, ruination (used of prodigal son)
 1. Wisdom and drunkenness are antithetical
 2. Pr 23:29-32
 3. Psalm 107:27 – “at their wits end” lit. “all their wisdom was swallowed up”
 - iii. Living in the unreal, ignorance or rejection of the True, Good, and Right
 1. Nobody ever called a drunk man “wise”
- b. **Do** Be filled (characterized) by the Spirit

- i. (see parallel verse in Col 3:16, “let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...”)
- ii. The Holy Spirit fills us up with the Truth of Christ’s Word (Promises, Admonitions, Statements of Reality)
- iii. The HS reminds us of the Gospel, filling us up with the promises of Christ stamping them upon our hearts
 - 1. You may have heard, or been taught, that being filled with the Spirit meant things that made no logical sense (speaking in foreign tongues, for example) but this not the sense here
 - 2. Parallel with understanding the gospel deeply and putting together how the TRUTH revealed by God in Christ impacts the way in which we live
 - 3. It is the deep, deep, joyful dependence upon Jesus Christ and His glorious atonement of our sins and his making us righteous before God. That is REAL, eternal, true, good, and right!
- iv. The Holy Spirit’s work:
 - 1. Sonship – John 14:16-18; Rom 8:16
 - 2. Teach the words of Christ – John 14:26
 - 3. Peace – John 14:27
 - 4. Testifies of Jesus – John 15:26
 - 5. Empowers the believer’s testimony of Jesus – Acts 1:8
 - 6. Speaks the Truth – John 16:13; 1 Cor 2:12-13
 - 7. Intercedes for us in prayer – Romans 8:26-27

4. Four results of Being Filled with the Spirit:

- a. Speaking
 - i. To each other = praise!
 - 1. See 1 Cor 14:15-16 – speaking and singing must be with the mind, not merely with the emotions
 - 2. At the same time, it is joyful and from the heart, meaning it is not merely true in fact, but true in dependence and action
 - ii. Psalms = Word of God in Scripture, often sung with stringed instruments, but more the words themselves
 - iii. Hymns = truth of doctrine put into memorable, repeatable form, whether sung or recited
 - iv. Spiritual songs = word from which we derive the term “ode”, songs relating to the spiritual Truth, singing in the joy of the gospel as opposed to the “joy” of wine may be the possible contrast drawn here
- b. Singing and Psalming – Singing songs and psalms
 - i. Bring filled with the Spirit results in heart-felt, God-focused, Christ-centered, worship
 - ii. “with your hearts” or “by your hearts” rather than “in your hearts” which may imply the lack of sound, which the context is clear we are to be heard
 - iii. Our praises and our songs are to be sung to the Lord from our hearts
- c. Thanking
 - i. Thanks goes to God the Father through the name of the Son (Lord Jesus Christ)
 - ii. Our thanksgiving is to be offered up, as everything else in the Christian life, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
 - 1. He is the power, glory, and honor forever and ever
 - 2. We stand “in Him” to the praise of the glory of His grace
 - a. Great Exchange in the Gospel

- iii. Very Trinitarian (v20)
 - 1. Filled with the Spirit
 - 2. Thanksgiving through the Son
 - 3. Worship to the Father
 - 4. Also in 1:4-14,17; 2:18,22; 3:4-5, 14-17; 4:4-6
- d. Submitting
 - i. "to each other"
 - 1. Being filled with the Holy Spirit results in humble servanthood and submission to each other to the praise of God
 - 2. To give great respect to each other
 - 3. Middle form = "submitting yourselves"
 - ii. Out of the fear of Christ
 - 1. "awe, fear, reverence"
 - 2. Our mutual submission to each other, being filled by the Spirit, is due to our awe or fear of Christ Himself
 - a. He is the Lord of His church and therefore, each other
 - b. He is the "only-begotten" Son, we are the adopted sons
 - c. He is the glory of God in whose face we gaze
 - iii. Any submission to each other is dependent upon the filling of the Holy Spirit

Conclusion:

Let us resist the urge to continue to live as if the darkness still reigned and as if Christ had not come. This is the season where we celebrate the brilliance of the light of the glory of God in the face of His Son, Jesus the Christ! There is no better time than today to open our eyes and step out into the glorious light of the revealed Word of God.

Let us together do all within our power and your means to find access into the presence of our great and glorious God and to discover at all costs who He truly is. He has shown Himself through His Word and by the power of His Spirit. Bask in His glory and let His great grace overwhelm you. He is great and greatly to be praised! Let us repent of our sinful brokenness often in light of His holiness. Let us rejoice and be glad, for He has come down to redeem us from His own just wrath and to bring us into His Kingdom and His family! Rejoice, O people of God, for Your God is a great God, a merciful God, who keeps His promises and rules from His throne from all eternity to all eternity. The Creator, the Righteous Judge, the Merciful Savior, the Powerful King, the Wise God. Know Him as He says He is for "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3)

And let us walk in the light of this Truth! If you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins, then you belong to Him! He holds you secure in His powerful scarred hands and He will never let you go. Live like it's true! God is your Father, dwelling in the unapproachable light of holiness and you are his child of light. Live like it's true! Fear not, anxious people, for God is your Savior and by the blood of Jesus Christ you are no longer condemned. Live like it's true. See the Truth and obey Him. Walk in the light of the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, praising Him to each other through songs and submission so that He will be glorified now in these evil days. He is worthy of our praise for by His blood He has ransomed for Himself peoples from every people group on the earth. To the praise of His glorious grace.