

Ephesians 5, Part 1 (Conrad Bowman) (March 5, 2006)

In chapter 2,

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that He has already done beforehand, so that we should walk in them.

That was in chapter 2.

In chapter 3, this was done and we are pulled together in order that the multifaceted wisdom of God – like a diamond, multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known through the *ekklesia*, the Church, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Then God pulled the Church together in order to use it as a gem through which He would display His full character which had not been done before to those rulers and authorities which are angelic authorities, both fallen and free. That was in chapter 3.

In chapter 4, He ascended on high, and then He went into the grave and when He came out of the grave He brought with Him all of those who were in Paradise, in Abraham's Bosom, brought them out, captive to Himself, freed from death, took those with Him, that's Old Testament saints, and He took those to be with Him at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which is the next place we are going to show up when we meet Him. And that was in chapter 4. And when He did that, He gave gifts unto them so that every joint could supply what the whole body needs in order to function properly. And that puts the spotlight on each one of us, because if we're not in the game, we're the problem, not part of the solution. And that was chapter 4. Okay.

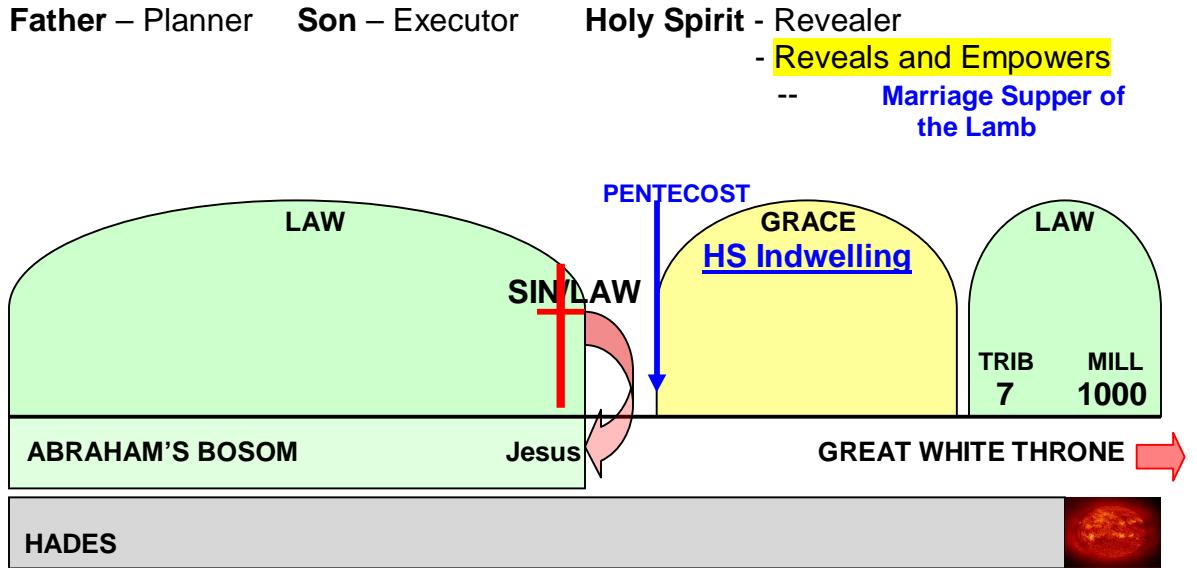
Now we come to chapter 5, and the word "therefore" that starts chapter 5, refers back to the sum total of everything he's written up to this point. Therefore, on the basis of the fact that God has called you as His own, has prepared the work that He expects you to walk in – works, individually, He's prepared, He's done them, you walk in them – because He's done that, because He's supplied the gifts in which you are to operate, as part of the body and building, therefore, he says, "be imitators of God." Paul says, talking of me, he turns right to the Father, and he says, you be an imitator of the Father. Isn't that interesting? He didn't say be an imitator of Christ. He said be an imitator of God, the Father. That's fascinating. The Church today, given its pure choice, and no society to guide us, would love to put the sandals of Jesus on and walk the sands together. That's the

image they have in mind to follow. Yet, we are to be, according to Paul, imitators of God.

Now, T. Austin Sparks, who is one of my heroes, the Church in Tulsa that posts everything that T. Austin Sparks ever wrote, posted on the web, it's there. You can do anything you want with it, by giving proper attribution. His only stipulation when he gave those things for public use was that they never be used to generate funds of any kind. The total of his works. It was always to be free. You can pick it up from there, you can copy it, you can reproduce it, you can put your own name on it if you want to. All you have to do is give attribution to Sparks for its origination. It costs you nothing, and the full use of his material is there. It's an enormous body of work. It's well written. It's well done. It's scholarly. He was very, very good. T. Austin Sparks said, the letter to the Ephesians is the greatest letter ever written, because it talks to us about position and relationship to God. That's T. Austin Spark's summary of this letter. And I find no grounds on which to dispute that. It's a marvelous remarkable letter. We have gone through it in just a matter of a couple of months. We could spend years in this letter, and never do it justice.

Here in chapter 5 it begins with the word "therefore," which means, because we are children of God, we should be imitators of our Father. That's God the Father, as beloved children. We should walk in love. Who is love? God is love. Okay, by definition. So, we are to walk in Him, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself for us – that's the way we should walk – an offering and sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. That's how Christ walked. Now, we don't want to let that draw our attention away from the fact that we should be walking with God, as imitators of God. This is how Christ did it. Okay. Now this is how He did it, because this is what God the Father did. He loved us enough that He gave His Son, and prepared the way for the Son to walk as a man, just like He prepared the work for us to walk. Now you see what's happening here.

[Depiction on Board]



The Father is here, and has planned all things. Where we saw back in chapter 2, the wheel of His workmanship, His masterpiece, it's the Father's masterpiece to a whole world from one end of time to another. That masterpiece is the Church, right here. In this age. Right here. On this side of the cross. On this side of Pentecost. That's God's masterpiece. That's you. And that's me. It's His masterwork. The best thing He ever did, is right there [Conrad pointing to the Board]. Now you would think he would be talking about Christ in those terms, but he's talking about the Church. And in reality, he is talking about Christ because the Church is the Body of Christ. So the Lord Jesus Christ who is now in heaven at the Marriage Supper awaiting His Bride where the two will be united once again, and they will be one. Isn't that the prayer of John 17? "Father, I pray that they might be one as we are one." I in them. You in Me. You in them. Oneness. That "oneness" we use the word "union" to describe, over and over again, this comes up. We are in union with Christ, whose in union with the Father, and we are one with Him and one with the Father. That will become a physical reality on the ground when we are taken where He is at the Rapture of the Church. That's the end gather of His body. And we all meet Him at the end of this whole plan when we gather together. When is that happening? It's happening now. Ok. The last guy that died in Christ has just arrived. The first guy that died in Christ has just arrived. When I die in Christ, I will be just arriving, at the same time the end gathering is taking place. I see Charles. I see you. This is not new stuff. You've heard me say this before, practically every time I stand up here. Okay. Because it's so dog-gone important. That's what's going on today. Christ is calling, with the Father, his Body together. Is anyone going to be left out? This should drive – this is what has to drive our evangelism. It has to

drive it. Man cannot, by his failure, cause one individual not to come to Christ. Your failure does not equal someone else being lost. That does not happen. Neither does your work affect the salvation of any man. His work affects the salvation of every member of the Body of Christ. By evangelism we are privileged to be on site when that happens. The joy is ours. The work is his. The results belong to the Son. And I realize, when the Rapture of the Church occurs, and His Bride appears, complete. Okay. And that means to change our attitude toward what we're doing about evangelism. We wish to bring it closer to home, because it means that every person with whom you converse, even with casually during the day – every person who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as his own, as best you can tell at this point, is as target of God. We are to be therefore imitators of the Father. What's His attitude toward the world? Not toward the pretty people of the world. Toward the ugly people of the world. Not toward the rich people. Lord help us if He were to put this on the basis of beauty. [Laughter]. We would be in trouble. But He doesn't pick us on that basis. He picks us on the basis of His love. His love drives Him to pick us. Okay? "Why" is the mystery. Why would He pick me? What was the sterling quality in me or you that led Him to say, I need that on my team. No. No, no, no. It doesn't work that way. Bear Bryant did it that way. Okay. That's the way good coaches work. Go out and find talent and brought it in. God brings us because He sees quality that He intends to put into by gifting individuals that He brings to Himself, who understand, that they are not winning the battle on their own. That they are not doing on the basis of their own. That they have been elected to be the delivery vehicle for the enormous, endless assets of heaven.

Therefore, be imitators of God.

Imitate your Father. His purpose, the Father's purpose, was to reveal His Son in us to unfold His Son. The Son who gave Himself up for us according to the Father's will.

Now, in verse 2, we are to

Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

You remember, a long time ago now, back in Genesis when we were studying this, God gave them an apothecary formula for the incense they were to use, and for the anointing oil. And He described that, there was to be so much olive oil, there was to be so much myrrh. It had a very specific formula which produced a

very specific odor. And the odor was on everything that was near the tabernacle. Go through the tabernacle and put that oil on everything in there. Take Aaron, dress him up fully in all of his robes, put his mitre on his head, pour that oil on his head, and keep pouring it until it runs down his beard, down his clothes, and drips on the ground around him. The myrrh is very, very fragrant. Now, if you take a small vial of it, took a small drop of it and put it up here, it would just fill the room up. And here comes Aaron covered from head to toe. The air filled with myrrh and incense. There would be no doubt you could tell he was coming a mile off. You know where the tabernacle was, it sat in the middle of the camp. Right in the middle of the camp. And everything in it was anointed. And here comes Aaron, leading in the worship of God. There was no question about what was going on by the very aroma of the place. Do you know what happened to anybody who put together an oil that smelled like that? They stoned him. How protective is God of His instructions and of His presence, and of the purity of His presence. He is extremely protective. He would not allow anybody, anybody, to become, even in the aroma around them, like this priest. He was just incredibly protective of that. That is so instructive to us. He was a sacrifice for God and a fragrant aroma. Not only was He a fragrant aroma, but Christ was an aroma to God according to God's rules. You can't substitute your own work here. That's what the sacrifice was. You have to do it God's way. You have to move like God wants you to move. And offer what God says you offer. You have to smell like God wants you to smell, is what it says. That's complete dedication in being set apart, isn't it? Nothing's left out. He knows you right down to the cells in your body, and that's where He wants, in terms of setting you apart to imitate Him. But – "but" introduces a contrast always – in contrast, do not let sexual immorality or any sexual impurity or sexual greed – because all three of those have to deal with the arena of sex.

Don't let immorality or impurity or greed, even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

You don't even want to be accused of that. I go back to that example we have in front of us today, Tom Delay, Tom Delay. If he's going to call himself a Christian, he needs to conduct himself, not so that he can't be convicted, but so that he should not be indicted. That's what this means. Don't be indicted. Not being "not convicted." But conduct yourself so you're not indicted.

And there must be no filthiness or silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

In other words, we shouldn't take this thing lightly. We should never take our position or our instructions lightly. One of the things that distresses me is the fear of the pulpit assertions that God has given us authority over Satan. So they start to demean the enemy of God, which is foolishness. When Satan opposed the Son of God directly, Jesus never ordered him on the basis of His own authority, did he? He never once did. He cited the Scripture, which was God's authority. Now Christ Himself, would not, out of His own authority, take authority over Satan, but refer him to the Father's authority, how foolish is it for us to attempt to do the same thing (cite our own authority)? We don't put our foot on his neck and hold him down. Or kick him in the backside to get him out of the way. God has given Satan enormous latitude in this world, and that should command our respect. Not respect in the sense of appreciation. But respect of power and authority. And, exercise God given authority in the face of it. Okay? "No silly talk. No coarse jesting, which is not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

This is a strong statement. The covetous means, the man who is not satisfied with what God has done in his life and for him, but who is not content, but needs more of something within the world in order to be content. That man has come to idolize something in the world. Therefore, be content, is the admonition of God. That means be content with what God has given you. Paul said, I've learned how to abound, I've learned how to do without. But, the primary lesson is to be content. To not be content is to idolize that which you demand for the world's goods. No man who does that has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, because if he did, he would understand that everything he needs is laid aside for him.

Let no one deceive you with empty words...

Those "empty words" are the same thing as vanity. It's the same concept as vanity.

For because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Because of idolatry, because they reject the concept, that the inheritance of the saints is a secured asset on our behalf, heaven's stored is in check for us. Having

rejected that, they rejected the Gospel of Christ. And, they are continually the sons of disobedience.

Therefore, do not be partakers with them; for you were formally darkness...

That's another amazing statement. He didn't say you walked in darkness. He said you were darkness. Okay? That was your state before you came to Christ in salvation. You were darkness. Okay? Now understand that. It's not talking about a believer walking according to darkness. It's talking about being darkness.

You were formally darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.

You've become light. Now, if you're light, it's because you've taken on the character of God who is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. Understand that. If you are light, you cannot walk in darkness because where you go, light goes with you. It's the nature of the believer. His character is one of being light, because God is light. You've become one with the Father, who is light. You cannot go anywhere in a dark place but you do not bring that light with you. If you go in a dark place and you notice it continually stays dark, hit your knees, pal. That's the revelation there. You need to question your standing. Because, where you go, light goes with you. Darkness won't like it. It will fight, and a battle is going to ensue right there on site, because you are light. And light opposes darkness wherever it goes. Okay? Now.

For the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them.

Expose them in a negative light, is what's going to happen.

For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by those who are dark in secret.

And again you are reminded, that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Okay?

For all things become visible [in contrast to that, what is done in the dark], all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

So it says, when you who are light encounter darkness, that which it exposes is always God's truth. And that becomes God's truth. That's the way the Gospel expands the parameters of the Church. Are there any questions on that? Because this is almost metaphysical. But it really isn't. It's an illustration in real terms of what happens when light comes in and the way the Gospel expands the parameters of the Church.

For this reason it says – [and then you have a quote] – Arise, sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine in you.

Okay, I'm not going to chase that one, because that would slow us down a little too much.

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.

Because if you order your steps, you want to take care that it's done with the acknowledgment that you are alike and an imitator of the Father, and an imitator of the Father in everything that you do. Now, this is one thing in the soft places of life when there are few challenges. As the challenges increase, I guarantee you it's more and more difficult not to walk in light, it's more and more difficult to keep your head straight while you walk in light. You can order your steps, and the first thing it does is your mental orientation to grace. You lose sight of the fact that God has a constant connection with you, that He powers you step, to step, to step. That's the first thing He does. Appeal to your brother. Appeal to your sister. Appeal to the people who love you. Draw what you call your support group close around you. Those people who know you, who you can trust to be honest with you, who will risk their relationship with you to tell you you're off the center line and beginning to drift. How many people like that do you have like that in your life? I can count the ones in my life on one hand. And my entire life. On one hand. And I've got seven brothers. None of them make the list. You don't do it. They're not going to risk their relationship to me to say, "Rad, what's happening to you? If you're harboring that, you're off the reservation." They're not going to do it. There's too much at risk there. I'm going to tell Mom, I'm going to talk to them, and, you know? Isn't that true? Family relationships impinge on that. So, where do I go for those kinds of relationships?

Where do I go? I go to guys like John. Guys like Phil. Guys like Tom. Guys like those in Mississippi.

We are arriving at the Throne, even as we speak. The need gets larger. You would think as I get older I would be better equipped to handle these things? That ain't so. It's just not so. The older I get, the more holes I see in my armor. And my backside is exposed. Okay? Maturity does not protect you from that. Maturity gives you eyes to see some things, but it doesn't give you the protection that comes with age, that you suppose it does. You know, you look around at the old guys around here and you say, you know, they've got it made. They've got it wired. They've got the answers. They know what the answers are, their note books are full, their shelves are full, and all that kind of stuff. What do you think, Woody?

Woody Laywell. No way.

Conrad Bowman. Doesn't work that way, does it? Just doesn't work that way. The enemy knows where we are. He goes to work on old joints. And old cells. He knows us right down to the cellular level. And he knows how to tweak us. And throw us off the mark. If he can throw us off the mark, he can throw everybody downstream who is watching us off the mark with us. And a great sailboat race. Alright. And he can change the wind on you in a heartbeat. Get you two points off the mark. And you'll miss the stake. Anybody ever been in a sailboat race? Do you know what happens when you miss the stake? Man, add that big figure 8 and that long haul back, and then that blue tack, and set it up all over again, and by then, everybody else is still racing again. All you see is those sticks on the horizon as they disappear. That's the way it goes. Okay?

So, pray for your elders. The admonition there. Pray for your elders. They've got the experience. They've got the experience, and now they need the protection. Pray for elders. There's a reason, so they don't get exposed. You need to be careful how you walk.

Not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time.

When was, by the way, the application of doctrine which it makes of your experience? That's where good wisdom comes in. How do you apply that? Understanding is what you gain by that experience. Wisdom lets you apply doctrine to experience. Understanding is what grows out of that. Through that you understand – so you don't have to do the same thing again. Okay? When

you take the wisdom and apply it to experience and it works, and you learn from that, that this is good, and the next time you have a circumstance you've got your experience to back you up and you move on with that. It's the change of *gnosis* to *epignosis*. Okay? *Gnosis* being the doctrinal facts, *epignosis* being the doctrinal facts tested by experience. *Means* is the place where you store them. So, you put that *epignosis* in your *means*. And that's accumulated in your *kardia*. Right there. It's bigger and bigger.

Making the most of the time because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk on wine because that is dissipation, but [in contrast to that – present imperative] be filled with the Spirit

You do it as a command, you be controlled by the Spirit continually,

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your mind [your heart – *kardia* – which is the organ with which you think, that's what "heart" is], making melody with your mind to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Ok. So there's a pattern for it. We're not to be drunk with wine, because wine takes over and it loosens the control you have over your mental process, it dissipates it, but be filled with the Spirit making melody in your mind – *kardia*. The word "*kardia*" in the Greek is the word for the upper organs of the body, not just the heart, which was the center of a man's thought process. The word "bowels" [*splanchnon*] is the word they used if they wanted to talk about your emotion. So, you don't fall in love with your heart, you fall in love with your bowels. That's not a very romantic picture, but it's incredibly accurate. Okay.

Now think about it now, think about it, the first thing that happens when you see here and she's gorgeous, nobody can eat, nobody is hungry. Okay. You start giving up food, she wants to stay trim, and you're just not interested in food, so you give up food right away, and you have anxiety attacks, and all that stuff. Okay. That's emotion.

Gentleman. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. I love that. I like that. I've seen that one. Good grief. That'll show up in the next outline. Well, that's good. It is, too. That's what it is. That's where your emotions are centered. Up here is where you think. Where the mind is. The word *kardia* refers to that upper body. The upper body, where the brain resides. So,

We speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with our heart to the Lord, giving thanks [out of his heart] for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father, and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

God sanctifies marriage so much. I hard nosed on this one, and this is a very difficult lesson I have to teach. Yes.

Gentleman. [Question and comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. I'm not crazy about that.

Charles Pirtle. Well, Paul says in 1st Thessalonians 5:18, "...in everything give thanks...."

Gentleman. [Comment. Inaudible (about Romans 8:28)].

And we know that God causes all things to work together for the good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Conrad Bowman. All things work together for the good. Don't leave out the article there. It's there. You're absolutely right. Because, this is God's plan for revealing everything that He's doing in Christ. This is the natural thing in revelation that's there. So Romans comes in, "if this is the good." You can't say that this is not good. God revealing Himself through Christ and He's using the Church as the vehicle to do it. So, Romans 8 nails that down. Wherever we are in this plan, Thessalonians 5 comes in and says, be thankful that that's where we are. We find us in this circumstance right here.

Now comes Paul in Ephesians and he says, Ok, here we are, we realize we're right here, here's where we are, and man, this is tough. –Yes, but you give thanks for it. Because God through that circumstance is going to reveal something of Himself and something of His Son and something of our relationship new to me today because of where He's put me and what He's giving me today. And, my circumstance is not different than yours. We're really in the same boat here. Okay? We're in the same boat. It's more difficult to do this – when that thing He's given you borders on prosperity. If it spills over into the area of excess, it's just about impossible for you to remember to give thanks for that, because you've got to find a place for it. You're stuck. You're not unlike the guy with the bigger barn. Right? Now, some of you have just gone through a downsizing, with a smaller apartment, whatever. And what we heard in this class, although it was "I've got stuff I've got to get rid of. I have too much stuff." Right? It's exactly the opposite. How easy was it for you to get up in the morning and say, thank the Lord today because I've got to give up that stuff. It wasn't the first thing to hit your mind, was it? No. It wasn't. You've got to make choice. You've got to make some choices. You know. Brenda said to me yesterday, it was late, it was the end of the day, she just blessed by socks and kept me up half the night, she said – we're considering the possibility of selling the house and what-have-you, and moving into smaller quarters – we talked about this stuff, and she said, "books." [Laughter]. Wasn't that sweet! I'm glad she's not here to hear this. She said, do you really want all those Clancy's? I said, honey, Clancy's are a drop in the bucket. That's like 24 inches on one shelf. We've got to talk about rooms full of this. Stuff. Good stuff. You hate to give up that "stuff." But you've got to do it. God gives us these choices. He gives us these choices to move us where He wants us to be. We are custodians of it. That's what this is about. It's about recognizing in our life where we are in God's plan and purpose. We can't lose sight of the fact that where we are, grains of sand in a concrete wall a trillion miles high. He knows everything of us and where we are, and we can't lose sight of that. Because He's given us the assets and the reality and the knowledge and the wisdom to stick in that small stuff while He finishes the wall. Explorer is blazing out in the universe millions of miles away, and they send a signal that takes months to get there that turns it around and takes one last picture of the earth. And Carl Sagan called it, "The Small Blue Dot." Because when they took the picture, you saw the Milky Way, almost as just a little ribbon of haze. And right in the middle of it you could barely discern the Small Blue Dot. And, you got the picture that trillions of stars galaxies scattered around. And that far away, that little piece of man-made trash took that picture and kind of pinpointed us right there. How small, how small, small, we are. And yet, the God who created us, knows us by name. Who knows the hairs on our head. Who knows the cells

in our system. Who knows how it all works together. And in the middle of that, He knows where Conrad is, and where everyone is, and where Phil is, and where everyone of us are through His plan of revealing Himself and His glory through the Son that He loved. We are to imitate Him in every step we take. It's hard to wrap our minds around it. It just really is. When working on 2nd Timothy, I went to the internet and I downloaded a picture of the Great Wall of China. And it's a marvelous picture. It's taken from the top of a mountain, and it shows that huge enormous wall disappearing over impossible terrain. And that was born on that Small Blue Dot by little bitty men that didn't speak English, and dressed with funny hats. And He put that thing together. It's amazing. It's amazing. The enormity of projects, and the smallness of the earth we occupy. And yet, we serve a God who is so personal that He knows us intimately. He never loses track of us. He never loses sight of where we are and what we face, the emotions we feel, and the way we react to things. And we are to imitate Him. Not anything He's made. Not anybody else that He's made. We are to imitate Him. Does the magnitude of that demand just wash over you like it does me? I can understand Paul saying, be imitators of me. That's one thing. Okay? I can understand that. And I would rise to the challenge of that. But, when he writes the Ephesians and says be imitators of God the Father. Take that phrase and put it down and think on that for a week. Just meditate on that for a week. You be imitators of God the Father. It is staggering in its implications. So, we're going to stop here. And, we can take off on this next week. And questions or comments?

Tom Butler. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you.

Any other comments? A rare moment for this class. [Laughter]. Thank you so much.

[This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others. This particular recording was extremely unclear, and therefore is not including in the audio section of this site].