

## August 16, 2015 – Sermon Notes, Pastor Alan Smith

### “The Opportunity”

In today's world things are getting crazy! I read where a home owners association took one of the home owners to court because their girl's playhouse is painted purple. There are groups wanting to change the name of the Dixie classic fair because the word Dixie is offensive. The Planned Parenthood scandal, Political corruption, and the list goes on and on.

In our scripture today, the first word we see is “so.” “So” is a small word with many uses.

Today I'm going to substitute the word “so” with the word “therefore.” (for that reason)

Let's look at the scripture:

**15 So (Therefore) be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Therefore be careful how you live?

Let's go back to the first few verses in chapter 5.

**Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. 2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.**

We are to imitate God in everything we do. First we are to live a life full of love. If we as Christians are living that life of love, why are there so many fights in the church? Why are there so many Christians that want to impose their beliefs on others?

I'm not talking about speaking out against sin in our world or speaking out against an injustice that occurs. I'm talking about the little things that someone at some time in history thought was important. The little things that cause a church to be divided: When do the candles get lit? Do we light the left one first or the right? Does it matter?

Too many times we waste time arguing about trivial things. If we imitate God, do you think that our lives would be focused on these things?

We are to follow the example of Christ. He loved so much that He laid His life down. He sacrificed all that He had for those nailing Him on that cross. When Christians are portrayed as bigots, closed minded, hateful people, then there is something wrong with how Christians are acting.

Think about how some of the strong Christians are portrayed. Have you ever heard anyone say anything bad about Mother Teresa? Billy Graham? David Jeremiah? Charles Stanley? D.L. Moody?

Our lives should look something like this.

**3 Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. 4 Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. 5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 6 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7 Don't participate in the things these people do. 8 For once you were full of darkness,**

This is the list of no's!

**but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.**

**10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.**

With all this in our minds we now have to look at verse 15.

**15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise.**

We need to be careful how we live!

The Greek word for careful is ak-ree-boce´ and it means pertaining to strict conformity to a norm or standard, involving both detail and completeness. If we are careful about how we live, it will give us opportunities to show others who God is.

I think of a situation I had on Monday. I had two men enter my office at Valor. One of the forms asks the number in the household. The person applying for help said the gentleman with him lived in the apartment. I had to ask what the relationship is. The answer was spouse.

This gave me an opportunity to share the importance of having a relationship with God. I remember introducing myself as a pastor. Letting them know that even though I don't agree with their lifestyle, it doesn't mean I care for them any less.

We are called to follow the example of Christ. Let's see how Jesus treated sinners.

In John 8, we read a story about a woman caught in the act of adultery.

**10 Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"**

**11 "No, Lord," she said. And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."**

In John 4, we read about the woman at the well. Jesus spoke with her and did not condemn her like the rest of the community. Even those that mocked Him while He was on the cross He asked God to forgive them. This kind of love does not happen by accident. It is on purpose!

**16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.**

To be thoughtless is not doing the things that you know you should.

**18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Don't use the things of the world to lift your spirit instead be filled with the Holy Spirit.

How do we stay filled with the Spirit?

Through singing not only physically but also in your heart. It is through this focusing on God. When we stay tuned into God we will be able to live our lives the way God wants us to.

Stay connected to God and go through life praising and thanking Him for everything.