



**2023-5783 The Year of Retribution, Recompense, & Payback**  
**Taking Advantage of the Opportunity, Despite the Opposition Pt. 2**

**Sunday Sermon – May 14, 2023**  
**Bishop Steven A. Norman**

**Ephesians 5:15-21 (New Living Translation) So 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. 21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (or the fear of the Lord).**

Overcoming the enemy within me! Everyone who will hear this message, if we will be real with ourselves, know that there is something within, that pulls on us to do the wrong thing, say wrong words, and/or embrace the wrong thoughts.

This thing within, the bible identifies it as flesh. Flesh can create within us **Lust, Fear, doubt, unbelief, and wrong attitude...etc.**

**Romans 7:21-24 (New Living Translation) I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart.** Paul is saying my goal is to do what is right not wrong.

There are many who love God but because of the enemy within, they end up doing wrong.

This enemy can also deceive one into thinking it is ok to move in line with one's feelings.

**23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am!**

If you don't get this figured out, you will find yourself living the life of a miserable Christian.

That power that is within us that Paul is talking about is referred to as the flesh.

**Galatians 5:16-17 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

**24 Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Jesus is Lord~Assembly of Love  
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Paul had figured it out, that the only way to operate in the spirit and have a successful life is living life through Jesus Christ.

Paul found out in **Philippians 4:13** that he “**can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**”.

Even being an apostle of God, the Apostle Paul still hadn't totally conquered the flesh.

So, we see what goes on inside of us has a lot to do with our quality of life.

**Ephesians 5:15-17 (New Living Translation) So be careful how you live.**

What is going on inside of us will decide the decisions we make, that will determine our quality of life.

Apostle Paul knew this, that's why he prayed for the Colossian church in **Colossians 1:9-10 So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding.**

Paul knew the power of praying for one another to have successful lives.

It takes Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to take full advantage of the opportunities in life, to produce what God has called us to produce.

Knowledge of what God wants, what pleases Him.

Wisdom, which is God given guidance and know-how, and then understanding.

**10 Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit.**

God has called us to a life of total abundance, increase, and fruitfulness.

**John 10:10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.**

Notice in **John 10:10** it talks first about the opposition that we will face that will try to keep us from living this type of life.

Because of this enemy Peter advises us to **1 Peter 5:8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.**

**Ephesians 5:15...Don't live like fools...** the enemy is always walking around looking for Christians who live like fools.

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Living foolishly makes us a prime entrée for the devil. He licks his chops when he sees Christian's acting like fools.

So, what does the bible tell us about how fools live.

**Psalms 14:1 Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."**

Or it could say, "only fools make decisions like there is no God.

The enemy is looking for those who only look at the natural in their decision making.

When we evaluate our decision making just on the natural, that's what the enemy is looking for.

What we are actually saying in our hearts, that we have no God who is with us, who can help us and is interested in seeing us prosper, therefore we have to do it on our own.

We must be conscious of what we are communicating to the spiritual world when we make our decisions, when we make decisions according to what we see in the natural world, how we feel, and according to our own natural abilities, the enemy knows we don't have the faith enough to get God involved.

... **but** (make decisions) **like those who are wise**. Make decisions like you have a God, a God who loves you, and wants the best for you, who is always on your side, and He knows all.

Our God knows all, He knows our destined place. **Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning,**