

Leave the Dark and Walk in the Light!

Ephesians 5:7-14

Reading: John 3:16-21.

Bethany Baptist Church
September 10, 2017

...pray...

Read Gen 1:1-5. *The Bible begins w/an account of darkness & light.*

I don't know what you believe about the *origins* of all things, but you can't miss that *darkness & light* are compelling *spiritual & moral* images.

In the **OT** you read:

Psa 27:1 – *God is our salvation and light.*

Psa 119:105 – *God's Word is a light to our feet.*

Isa 49:6 – *Christ will be a light to the nations.*

Isa 60:19 – *God is an everlasting light.*

In the **NT**:

John 1:9 – *Christ is the true light which enlightens every man*

John 8:12 – *Christ is the light of the world. (His words!)*

1 John 1:5 - *God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

And in **Eph 5:8** the Christian reads: *you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.*

Let's read this morning's text in Ephesians 5:7-14

Here is another new section in Ephesians, and the clue is in **vv.7 & 8**: *therefore ... walk*. And this is the **4/5** appearance of the word "walk" in Ephesians; our *walk* suggests our *lifestyle*.

In this morning's verses, Paul continues to emphasize the difference between the *old you* (4:22) & the *new you* (4:24).

The *old you* was *dark*. The *new you* is *light*.

But *friend*, the *dark* wants you back! You gotta keep *walking in the light!*

Three truths to shine light on the narrow way:

- 1. Nature (vv.7-9). You have a new life to define you.**
- 2. Lifestyle (vv.10-13). You have a new lifestyle to pursue.**
- 3. Message (v.14). You have a new song to sing.**

Trusting in Christ results in *total transformation* – a new nature. It is difficult to picture two natures more *fundamentally opposed* than *darkness* and *light*...

1. In **v.7** Paul begins by issuing a powerful warning: *therefore do not become partakers with them.*

1. He is *waving you away* from the *sons of disobedience* in **v.6**.

i. They are the *bad players* listed in **v.5** – *immoral & impure & greedy* people....

ii. You can spot them by their evil *conduct* (**3**), evil *conversations* (**4**) & their *damning deceptions* (**5**): “*God doesn’t really care how you live...is He really going to send you to hell for having a little fun!?!*”

2. That’s *dark stuff*...that’s a *lie*! God *does care*, and God’s wrath *will fall* on the *sons of disobedience*! So don’t even *think* of becoming their *accomplices*.

2. The most compelling reason to *stay away* from them is that *you are new*.

1. Your *transformation* is the *fuel* for Paul’s *warning* (**read v.8**)

i. *...for...* *you once* were *darkness*. In fact, the apostle’s original explanation is emphatically redundant: *you used to be, once upon a time, darkness...*,

ii. But *now* you are *light*.

2. It’s that picture of *polar opposites*!

i. *Light* is good & *Dark* is bad.

ii. *Light* is truth & *Dark* is the lie.

iii. *Light* comes in & *Dark* goes away.

iv. *God is light* & so *Dark* exists where *God is shunned*.

3. Read Paul's argument carefully! It's *powerful!* It's *essential!*
 1. He doesn't say you were *in* the *dark*...you *were* *darkness!*
 2. He doesn't appeal to the *fact* that you've *come* to the *light* or that you now *stand* in the *light*...this isn't simply about *position* or *condition*...
 3. Paul reminds you that you *are* *light!*
 - i. The Bible teaches: *God is light & in Him there is no darkness at all.*
 - ii. Jesus claimed: "*I am the Light of the world.*"
 - iii. And now, beloved: (9) we are *children* of *Light* & so (8) you *are* *light*. Jesus said (Mt 5): "*You are the light of world!*"
4. Which means your *new life* should *reflect* your *transformation*...(read v.10).
 1. *Light* produces *good fruit*. You won't find a *watermelon* in a *cave!*
 - i. Where there is *light* there is *goodness*. *Goodness* is excellence in *character* which results in excellence in *actions*. *Goodness* is seasoned with *generosity*; it has no *selfish, ulterior motives*.
 - ii. Where there is *light* there is *righteousness*. *Righteousness* gives that which is rightly *due*. To *God* it renders *obedience*. With *men* it deals *justly*.
 - iii. Where the *light* is, there you find *truth*.
 1. The world deals in *lies*, *Let God be found true* (Rm3).
 2. The world scoffs "*What is truth?*" Jesus answers "*I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me.*"
 3. The *sons of disobedience* deceive w/ *empty words*; the *children of light* bear the *fruit of light* & so live in *truth*.

5. Paul has been dealing with the irrefutable *evidences (fruit)* of your nature:

1. The deeds of *darkness* are found in the *sons of disobedience* (vv.1-6): *immorality, impurity, greed, filthiness, foolish talk, coarse jesting, deception & denial*. Is that you? *God's wrath is coming!*
2. The fruit of *light* is seen in *all goodness & righteousness & truth*. If these are *growing* in you then you are a *child of Light*.
3. John MacArthur writes: *Every person bears fruit of some kind. ... The person, therefore, who does **not** bear some fruit of righteousness in his life has no claim on Christ. **There is no such thing as a fruitless Christian.***

Beloved, you are new - you are light! God calls you to walk as children of light.

Which means you have a new *lifestyle* to pursue (read just vv.10-11).

6. V.9 was a *parenthesis*. Paul issued that radical reminder that you *are light* (8) and then underscored it (9) with the *evidences of light*.
7. But how do you *cultivate* that *fruit*? How do you **walk** as a *child of light*? Our text has **three** simple guidelines: *testing, refuse, & expose*.
8. When Paul writes (v.10) *...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord*, his instruction is tied directly to the command (8) **walk as children of light**.
 1. My translation used the word “*learn*” but a better term might be “*testing*” or “*proving*.” Paul’s original vocab. was based on the process of *assaying* metal to determine its *identity & value*.
 2. “Is this *precious* or *worthless*?” And the *tone* here tells us that we are looking for the *precious fruit of light* – things that *please God*.
 3. These same **2 terms** occur together in **Rm 12:2**. Listen for the similar ideas in these **two** texts while I read from Romans: *And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may **prove** what the will of God is, that which is good and **acceptable** and perfect.*
 - i. In Rom 12 you are *prove* (*assay, test, learn*) the *will of God*.
 - ii. And the *will of God* is *good & acceptable* (***pleasing***) & *perfect*.
 - iii. So what *pleases God*...His *will!* His *ways*, His *decrees*, His *plans*, His *precepts*, His *principles*, His *commandments*.
 - iv. And where do you find the *will of God*....? In the *Word of God*.
 4. So you *determine* what *pleases the Lord* by discovering & obeying His *will* through His *Word*.

9. *Second, you walk as children of light by **refusing** the unfruitful deeds of darkness.*

1. Spiritually speaking: *nothing good grows in the dark!*
2. In **v.7** we were **warned** *not to partner with the sons of disobedience* and here we are **ordered** *not to take part in their unfruitful works.* Paul has cataloged these *deeds of darkness* though-out **ch.4 & 5.**
 - i. Here's just a *sampler: sensuality, impurity, greed, lust, falsehood, stealing, unwholesome speech, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice...* **Read slowly, pause.**

10. *Third, children of light don't simply refuse dark deeds, they **expose** them.*

1. This Greek verb has **two** shades of meaning: *expose & rebuke.*
2. You are *light* and your new life should serve as a *clear contrast* to your *former manner of life.*
3. You are *light* and you need to speak lovingly, but clearly about the *unfruitful deeds of darkness* in order to *expose* them.
4. You are *light* in a *dark world.* The *sons of darkness* want to *deceive & tempt & attack: **rebuke** them w/ truth.*
5. Sometimes *people in the church* begin to *dabble in darkness.* If you know a Christian who is *losing her way,* Jesus says "*go to your brother/sister.*" Be *humble & be careful...but go.*

11. Paul explains the reasons for *testing, refusing & exposing* in **v.12-13 (read).**

1. *I sprayed weed killer on my gravel driveway last week. The label on the bottle had all kinds of warnings:*
 - i. **Mix** carefully. **Watch** where you point the nozzle. **Wear** all kinds of protective clothes. **Rinse** thoroughly when you're done. ... **Don't** lick your fingers! ☺
 - ii. *That stuff is **toxic!***

2. There are *spiritually poisonous substances*, too. Almost *any* level of exposure is *dangerous* – even simply *speaking* of these *dark deeds* is *disgraceful*.
 - i. Paul had a very *similar, careful tone* back in **v.3 (read)**.
 - ii. Beloved, be very *careful* **what** you *mess* around with & **who** you *hang* round with... *If you don't take sin seriously, sin will take you - seriously!*
3. But beloved, if you will *walk in the light* then it will be *evident* what is *fruitful* & what is *toxic*. **V.13** - *All things* (good & bad) *become visible when they are exposed by the light*.
 - i. Turn w/ me to **John 3:19-21**. (The *Light* is Jesus, cf 1:9.)
 - ii. Jesus says that **light** *illuminates & separates* good from evil.
 1. *Light* points out the *good*, so you can determine what *pleases the Lord*, and ...
 2. *Light* exposes & drives out the *bad*, so you can stay *spiritually safe*.

And while you walk in the light, you have a message to share, a song to sing!

12. In **Isa 60:1** God makes a lovely promise to His people: “*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*” **2X**

1. Bible teachers speculate that the *early church* embraced the promise & wrapped in a *hymn*.
2. And now Paul is *singing* that *hymn* as we close: **read v.14.**

13. *That’s the gospel, beloved! Do you see it!?! Do you hear it!?!*

1. *Awake, sleeper!*
 - i. Have you ever read one of those stories of some poor soul whose *house catches fire* in the night and they *die* in the *dark* in their *bed*...?
 - ii. This is the gospel’s *call* to those who *sleep* in *darkness* to *wake up* and *come out*. It’s a *call to repentance*.
2. *And arise from dead.*
 - i. Paul has already explained (2:1) that the unbeliever is *dead* in *his trespasses & sins*.
 - ii. But the gospel promises that God can give *life* to the *dead*. It’s that *glorious juncture* in 2:4 – **But God**, *being rich in mercy, because of the great love w/ which loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, caused us to be alive together w/ Christ.*
 - iii. It’s like Jesus, calling at the grave *Lazarus*: “*Lazarus, come forth!*” *The man who was dead came forth*...
3. *And Christ will shine on you.* This is the gospel’s promise: The *One* who is the *Light of world* delivers *sinners* from *darkness* into His *marvelous light*.
 - i. And by faith in Jesus, we not only **come** to the light, we not only **walk** in the light, we **are light**!

Where are you, this morning?

Are you still sleeping in the darkness? Immoral, dishonest, angry, lazy, careless, foolish, loud, proud, indifferent, deceived...?

Maybe you like to point to some kind of *spiritual event* in your past – *confirmation, sinners prayer, baptism* – but there is **no fundamental change**.

V.14 is a *promise* that it's **not too late to wake up!**

The Bible teaches that God lovingly *sent His Son, Jesus*, to become a man & *die* for His people.

He didn't *deserve* to die in any sense: Jesus was God which means He was *sinless & perfect*.

The *reason* He died on the cross was to *pay the penalty* for sins, a *sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God*.

God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

You can know that Jesus' *payment* is **your** *payment* when you *believe* that the gospel is *true* & you *trust in it to be true for you* – i.e. you put all your *hope* in Him.

The only means that God provides for you to be *forgiven & made new* is to *look to Jesus & place all your hope & trust in Him*.

There is no other name given under heaven by which we may be saved.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved.

Awake sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

...pray...