

LIVING AS GOD'S LIGHT
Ephesians 5:6-14

Ephesians 3:20 (NLT) *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

REVIEW: *Our lives are to model Jesus Christ and His Kingdom values.*

- In Ephesians 4:17 Paul told us that this means we do not live like the world.
 1. *Put off the practices of the old self,*
 2. *Be renewed in the spirit of our minds,*
 3. *Put on practices of the new self.*

MESSAGE THEME: *Live as God's light in a dark world.*

INTRODUCTION

- Darkness increasingly permeates and pervades our country, culture, and society.
- I do not need to reiterate how dark our country and world are becoming.
 - *Because the darkness is increasing in prevalence and degree, it is easy to find ourselves living in deception – the “Overton Window” principle.*
- In a number of places in Ephesians, Paul makes a distinction between his readers' previous situation with God and their present relationship.
 - In 2:1, & 5 he states that they were dead but were made alive in Christ.
 - In 2:13, he describes them as being far away, but brought near by Christ.
 - And in 2:15, Paul says they were Gentiles, but are now made into new persons by Christ.
 - In our present passage Paul states, *“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”* (5:8a). **This sets the theme for the next section.**
- Darkness and light have long been used in the figurative sense to describe right and wrong, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness.
 - Light describes life, salvation, and righteousness.
 - Darkness is the arena of evil, of sin and unrighteousness.
 - Light is the arena of all that is good, and reveals the wrongs found in darkness.
- Jesus described His people as the “Light of the World.”

Matthew 5:14 (ESV) “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

- Psalm 4 & Psalm 44 declare that God is the origin of light and His presence is indicated by light according to Psalm 89 and Daniel 2.
- Jesus is described as the True Light in John 1:9.

- Jesus described Himself as Light of the World in John 8:12.
 - This took place at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - On the day after the spectacular nighttime celebration known as the “Illumination of the Temple.”
 - Four massive golden candelabra topped with huge torches coming out of bowls that each held 16 gallons of oil.
 - Giant flames lit up the Temple and could be seen throughout the surrounding countryside of Jerusalem.
 - It is with this backdrop that Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world.”

DON'T BE DECEIVED

God does and will judge

vs. 6

Ephesians 5:6 (ESV) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

- Let know one deceive you with empty words.
- Empty words = speech void of substance or lacking truth.
- The evil activity listed in verses 3-5, God will bring His wrath upon **those children of disobedience**.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

- We conclude on the authority of God’s Word that persons who live a sinful lifestyle and is unwilling to turn from it has no inheritance in the Kingdom of God and Christ.
- Those who profess to be Christians, who habitually practice these sins, are self-deceived, and invalidate their profession of faith.

2 Corinthians 12:21; 13:5 (ESV) I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced. . . 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

- If you habitually practice such a lifestyle, you can’t be confident that you are saved.
- Sin is not relative, God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, which means His holiness and righteousness remains absolute.

- When darkness becomes so black, what used to be black to us, can now appear to be shadows of gray, but it is still cold stone black to God.
- We have begun to soften the edges and compromise what God calls and defines as sin.
- A common phrase that *God hates the sin but loves the sinner* soon is understood to mean that *God's wrath will not come upon the sinner, only the sinner's sin.*
- God's love for the sinner is extending grace, providing time to repent. A failure to repent though is storing up judgment of God's wrath.

Romans 2:4–6 (ESV) *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 He will render to each one according to his works,*

- Paul's directive is that we are not to be deceived concerning what is sin, what is God's position on sin, or that God will bring His judgment and wrath on sin, and the sinner.
- In Proverbs 6:16-19 it describes 6 things God hates with a 7th being an abomination to Him.
 - The 6th is a person God hates who pours out lies about others.
 - The 7th is a divisive person who is an abomination to God.
 - In each case it is the person, not merely the sin.
- **One of the Early Church Fathers** said: *"Right is right even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it."*
 - Right and wrong is established by the absolute sovereign and holy God not the consensus of sinful humans.

LIVE OUT WHO YOU ARE VSS. 7-10

Don't Participate with the Darkness vs. 7

Ephesians 5:7 (ESV) Therefore do not become partners with them;

- To "not partner" does not mean to not interact with, but do not participate with them in their darkness and instead be light in their darkness.
 - Do not participate in their worldview, but to live out God's worldview.
- There will always be an effort to seduce believers by rationalization.
 - Seducers will sound plausible, but the Christian must stand strong!

1 Peter 4:2–4 (ESV) *so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. 3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the*

Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;

You Are Light, Live as Light vs. 8

Ephesians 5:8 (ESV) for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light,

- God's people once were darkness, due to our union in Christ we are now light.
- Therefore, we are to live out what we are.

1 John 1:5–7 (ESV) *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

1 Thessalonians 5:5 (ESV) *For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.*

Light's Characteristics vs. 9

Ephesians 5:9 (ESV) (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),

- **The fruit of light are** *goodness, righteousness, and truth.*
 - Good – benevolent, virtuous, generous, kind,
 - Righteous – antonym of lawless; the essence of being righteous,
 - True – unveiled reality; honesty, integrity, reliability.

Seek to Please God vs. 10

Ephesians 5:8–10 (ESV) for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. . . 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

- Learn what is pleasing to the Lord. We should live our lives trying to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.
- THIS IS THE BOTTOM LINE! *Do I please the Lord in every aspect of my life?!*

LIVE OUT YOUR ROLE

vss. 11-14

Don't Participate in Darkness

vs. 11

Ephesians 5:11–14 (ESV) Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

- The people we are to be reaching are in the midst of darkness, which means we have to be in the midst of darkness.
 - Jesus, the Light of the world came into a dark world.
 - Light is of most use in darkness.
- When polls are taken measuring the values and actions of people, that of Christians should be in stark contrast to that of non-Christians.
 - Unfortunately, they are far too similarly aligned.

Romans 16:19 *For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.*

Expose Darkness

vs. 11

- This is a challenge in today's culture, where tolerance is the god of the age.
 - Our culture loves the "open-minded," nonjudgmental, "live and let live" person.
 - Often the morally principled person of integrity is rebuffed and persecuted.
- Yet, exposing the dark actions of the world is an awesome responsibility that requires a special sensitivity.
 - Light has many abilities and, if used wrongly, can harm instead of help.
 - Light can create a warm, attractive atmosphere, or it can shine with an intensity that causes as much blindness as the dark.
 - It can be an illumination that enables us to see, or a laser strong enough to burn through steel.
 - If our intent is to denounce and judge the world, the beam will, no doubt, be intense and harmful.
 - If it is to enlighten and attract, then our expression will be one that enables those in darkness to be drawn into the light.

Don't Give Darkness Time or Talk

vs. 12

Ephesians 5:12 (ESV) For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

- This stuff is shameful, not only the actions of sin but to even speak of it is shameful.
- It goes back to Paul's earlier directive concerning filthy and foolish talk and jesting.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*

Fill the World with Light

vs. 13

Ephesians 5:13–14 (ESV) But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

- Darkness is merely the absence of light. Wherever there is light, darkness can't exist.
- When darkness is exposed by the light the light has the potential to restrain and transform evildoers.
- Light can expose the ugliness of evil, therefore bring conviction of their sin, and the repentant come to faith in God.
- A believer who has committed "deeds of darkness," is to wake up and rise from the dead since he was involved with the deeds of evildoers.

APPLICATION

1. **Live Holy** – Be Light
2. **Be Light** – Shine
3. **Shine** – Attract People to God