

Sermon 19: We Must Walk as Children of Light Ephesians 5:8-14

Text: Ephesians 5:8-14 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light..."

Introduction:

- **This Saturday is a significant milestone in American history:**
 - **I am deeply grateful to God to have grown up in this richly blessed country.**
 - **Its founding was unprecedented in so many ways, and I hope you will take time to reflect on the principles that shaped it.**
 - **Consider three amazing and profoundly religious statements in the Declaration:**
 - "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights..."
 - "When a long train of abuses...reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security..."
 - "With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor..."
 - **These founding principles were uniquely shaped by an historic Christian worldview.**
 - **Every blessing we have enjoyed in this land comes from His grace.**
 - **As a people far too many of us have treated these blessings with ingratitude and an attitude of entitlement.**
 - **Even Christians who genuinely love their country and its people think more like materialists than Christians.**
 - **In God's providence, this text is the one we will expound on the week American turns 250.**
 - **I hope you will listen attentively to God's word and purpose by His grace to walk as this text calls you to walk.**

- **Our last section of Ephesians had four distinct parts:**
 - **We had something we needed to remember:** We are God's beloved children.
 - **We were called to commit to a distinct walk:** We must imitate our Father.
 - **This walk demands putting off certain things:** We must deny ourselves.
 - **This walk demands putting on the new life:** We must embrace his design.
- **This next section continues to develop this important theme of walking like the people we are.**

Summary: Since God's children have passed from darkness to light, they must walk as children of the light.

Proposition: God's will for us each day starts with walking as children of the light.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: Understand your duty: You must walk as a child of light: **5:8**
 "Walk as children of light..."

- **There are many reasons people fall short of fulfilling their duties:**
 - Discouragement
 - Laziness
 - Ignorance
 - Distraction
- **We must be taught and regularly exhorted to embrace our duties.**
- **Paul's argument:**
 - **You were:** "Ye were sometimes darkness..."
 - Darkness is the absence of light.
 - People in darkness cannot see.
 - This blindness leaves them ignorant and isolated.
 - Their lives are empty because they are separated from God.
 - **But now you are:** "But now are ye light in the Lord..."
 - This light comes from the illuminating presence of God.
 - He opened our eyes
 - He drew us to Himself and opened our understanding.
 - We have life in Him.
 - **Walk as you are:** "Walk as children of light..."
 - There are no valid excuses.
 - There are no valid exceptions.
 - We must walk as children of the light.

Truth 2: Understand your source of power: You do not do this by your own strength: **5:9-10** "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth..."

- **This walk produces fruitfulness:**
- **Fruit is produced by the Spirit:**
 - In the same way sunlight causes your tomatoes to be fruitful.
 - The Spirit illuminates God's word in our hearts and causes it to root in our souls and produce abundant fruit.
- **This fruit has four qualities:**
 - **"Good:"** It is kind, virtuous action.
 - **"Righteous:"** It conforms to God's standard which is rooted in His character and purposes.
 - **"True:"** It is sincere and not tainted with mixed motives.
 - **"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord:"** It has been tested and is verifiably acceptable to God.
- **All substitutes fall short: John 15:5** "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing..."
 - We cannot manufacture fruitfulness.
 - Fruitfulness is cultivated by the Father.
 - It is cultivated in the lives of those who are planted into Christ.
 - This fruitfulness is produced by the internal work of the Spirit.
 - He uses the ministry of the word to do it.

Truth 3: Understand your function in the world: Your life serves a needed contrast in the world: **5:11-13** "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light..."

- **We are called to live distinct from the world:**
 - **5:7** "Be not ye therefore partakers with them..."
 - **5:11** "Have no fellowship with..."
- **God uses this distinction to expose the darkness:**
 - **Two words:**
 - **"Reprove:"** confronting
 - **"Manifest in the light:"** bringing to light what is hidden
 - **The result of this exposure:**
 - **Their works are shown to be unfruitful:** They cannot produce anything of lasting value.
 - **Their works are shown to be shameful:** They demean the sacred.
 - **Their conscience is awakened and they try to hide their actions:** They violate our basic sense of right and wrong.

- **God plants us in this world to function as salt and light:**
 - **1 Peter 2:12** "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation..."
 - **1 Peter 3:15-16** "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear...Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ..."
 - **1 Peter 4:4** "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you..."
- **Three Questions:**
 - Do you live a distinctly Christian life where God has planted you?
 - Do the people you work with and see every day, see in your life a distinctly Christian worldview?
 - Would they be surprised if you invited them to church, because there is nothing in your life that would make them think you are a Christian?

Truth 4: You must resist apathy: Wake up and embrace your calling:
5:14 "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light..."

- **Two possible explanations of this phrase:**
 - **Possibility 1: A blend of four Isaiah references:**
 - **A broken nation left for dead would be resurrected: Isaiah 26:19** "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing..."
 - **Though they had faced God's wrath, they would experience His redemptive grace: Isaiah 51:17** "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury..."
 - **In this new position, they were called to embrace God's original design for them: Isaiah 52:1** "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean..."
 - **When they embrace their true identity in Him, God will call the nations to Himself through them: Isaiah 60:1** "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee..."

- **Possibility 2: An ancient Christian hymn connected to baptismal services:**
 - When someone identifies with the Lord, they are publicly testifying to several facts.
 - First their trust in the gospel.
 - Second, their understanding that they have passed from death to life.
 - Third, their purpose to walk as the person that they now are in Christ.
- **The conclusion:**
 - **God's people must wake up and live like the people they are.**
 - **Whenever we witness a baptism, we are reminded of the essence of the gospel and our need to live as we are.**
 - **We are salt and light, and must function in that capacity:**
 - **Do not allow yourself to become polluted: Matthew 5:13** "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men..."
 - **Do not conceal your true nature: Matthew 5:14** "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid..."
 - **Allow others to see the beauty of genuine Christianity: Matthew 5:16** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven..."
 - **Be a tool in God's hands: 2 Corinthians 4:6** "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."

Application:

- **Christian:** God's will each day is simple.
 - You must remember who you are in Christ.
 - You must embrace your duty to Him in that position.
 - You should be encouraged that you do not have to do this alone.
 - You should remember that He has planted you where you are for a reason.
 - You must resist the temptation to be drowsy.
 - Doing God's will in the little things will leave the lasting impact He has designed for your life.
 - America's greatest need is Christians who will obey this text as a consistent pattern of life.

- **Unbeliever:** God's will for you today is simple.
 - Maybe you are here because a Christian who lives a compelling life invited you to come.
 - Church is weird to you but there is something compelling about what you see and what you are hearing.
 - There are beauty and truth.
 - There are compelling community and moral clarity.
 - You want these things but do not know how to get them.
 - **Repent:**
 - Your sin separates you from God.
 - His standard of righteousness is untouchable.
 - You feel helpless to meet His standard.
 - **Trust in Christ alone:**
 - Christ is God in flesh.
 - He came to go to the cross and to die for your sins.
 - He conquered death when He rose from the dead.
 - He invites you to turn to Him with a humble heart and trust in Christ alone.
 - He promises to save anyone who turns to Him in repentance and faith and calls upon Him for salvation.