

Ephesians 5:8-14

Dear Friends in Christ,

Please recall that incident from Scripture of the healing of the man born blind. The disciples thought he was blind as the result of a specific sin. Jesus said, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him." (Jn. 9:3) In other words, the miracles of Jesus shined light on Who Jesus was - and is.

You might recall that the former blind man was put through a real grind by the leaders of the Jews. The man said of Jesus, "If this man (was) not from God, he could do nothing." They (the Pharisees) answered him, "You were born in utter sin (as if they were not!), and you teach us?" And they cast him out." (Jn. 9:33,34)

Jesus was very clear about Who He is and the fallen nature of humanity: "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." (Jn. 3:19) People love darkness.

We're on the journey that must be made . . . .

## THAT WE CAN BE LIGHT

### I. From Darkness to Light.

For one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. (vv 5-10)

We can't escape the reality - the "what we were". Paul writes, "you were darkness." Not just *in* darkness, but "**were** darkness." And with that, to repeat Jesus' words: "people loved the darkness... because their works were evil." (Jn. 3:19) That's the way it was. And that's the way it is!

There's a world out there that will go to death and hell denying that by nature people love darkness. And the Scriptures roar back with this:

The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. (Ps. 14:2-3)

Standing before each here is the fact: "...you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked." (Eph. 2 1-2a) Standing before each here is the great miracle: "But God...because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved..."

Even though we are still treading this earth, still hassling with life's issues and, as God's people, surrounded by some of the most twisted and perverted thinking and actions imaginable - in spite of everything, what we have in Christ is what we might call "a done deal". It's ours! Now! Scriptures say, "(God) raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6) Paul got a glimpse of it. Writing of himself he said, "I know that this man was caught up into paradise...and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter." (2 Cor. 12:3-4) He also wrote, "For in this tent (our bodies which were actually "terminal" from conception) we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling." (2 Cor. 5:5)

Because of this, Paul writes, "...now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true)...". Our lives are dedicated to this further

admonition: “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” As children of light, we say with Asaph, from the 73<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, “You guide me with your counsel (that would be Scripture), and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. (Ps. 73:24-25) Nothing! Do you see it that way?

We have been given the Light of Life - our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul admonishes us ...

## II. Understanding the Darkness.

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. (vv. 11-12)

We are to understand and avoid “the unfruitful works of darkness.” I ask you to listen to this written almost 40 years ago by Dr. Martin Franzmann:

*Children of light, who have become light in the Lord (8), are no longer at home in the murky world of dark, unbridled desire, whether it be sexual desire or the desire for things (3); knowing the love of God...they no longer wage the undeclared war against God which is the heart of our evil desires... They have a clear vision of God’s judgment too; no sophistry can hide the Judge from their eyes (5-6). (Concordia Self-Study Commentary, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979, New Testament Section, p. 190)*

That last statement is very critical and I pray you hear this: Those in Christ “have a clear vision of God’s judgment...no sophistry can hide the judge from their eyes.” Sophistry defined: “subtly deceptive reasoning or argumentation.” A sophism defined is “an argument apparently correct in form but actually invalid, esp. such an argument used to deceive.” (Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition) The argument looks good, but careful examination reveals otherwise! We’re living in a world drowning in Godless sophistries. They flow from televisions, politics, mainstream media, celebrities, our education system. Even those who claim the title Christian are willing to support Godless reasoning regarding family, protecting the life of the unborn, decency, honesty - you name it. The darkness grows!

## III. That We May Be Light. (vv. 13-14)

But look! Our text goes on to say:

But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (vv. 13-14)

Brothers and sisters, Jesus said, “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (Jn. 3:20-21) To do what is true is to confess our sin and trust in Christ as the payment for our sin. The Gospel says His love, mercy and forgiveness are always there. The Third Use of the Law instructs us in our walk with Christ.

Growing darkness does not change who we are and the message and mission Christ has given us. At one time, what our text says applied to us: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Through the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes. We see the love of Christ. We look forward to eternal life. And we know that walking in the light of Christ is to walk away from this world’s horrid, damning, demonic darkness!

I suspect everyone here knows these words of Jesus to His people:

“You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:14-16)

To repeat: “even when we were dead in our trespasses, (God) made us alive together with Christ - by grace (we) have been saved.” (Eph. 3:5) The Great Commission to “Go therefore and make disciples...” (Matt. 28:19a) rests with Christ’s church on earth. People such as you and me. What an honor. What a blessing.

Elton Trueblood was a noted 20<sup>th</sup> century Quaker and theologian, as well as a Chaplain who served at Harvard and Stanford Universities, among others. He said, “Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men, but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs, even in the most modest way, to the company of Jesus.” And British pastor and author Ian H. Murray observed: “There is not the slightest hint in the New Testament that evangelism is the special prerogative or responsibility of office bearers. We are to be burdened for men’s souls not because any office requires it of us but because we are Christians.”

Christ made the journey to Calvary to give us the Light of Eternal life. God has put us in different places not to fill ourselves with this world’s cravings, but to reflect His love and mercy to those in darkness. We pray the Holy Spirit give us strength to witness to the journey He made for the world He so loved!

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent*

*March 11, 2018*

*Ephesians 5:8-14:*

***“The Journey That Must Be Made:  
That We Can Be Light”***

- I. From Darkness to Light.*
- II. Understanding the Darkness*
- III. That We May Be Light. (vv. 13-14)*

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