

“Walk in Light”

August 25, 2024

Ephesians 5:8-14

I. Introduction

Paul began this part of his letter to the Ephesians with the words found in **verse 1 of chapter 5**:

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children.” In my last church, there was a man who repaired garbage trucks. He was a big, muscular man and he walked like one. One Sunday as I sat on the platform, I watched him come down the center aisle and behind him was his 5-year-old son, walking just like him. Children naturally imitate or mimic their parents. As children of God, Paul wrote that Christians should walk in a way that imitates their heavenly Father. The first way we are to imitate God is in His love. As we saw last week, Christians are to walk in love. In today’s Scripture, Paul charged his readers to **“Live or as other translations say, walk as children of light,”** i.e., “Walk in Light.”

In **Psalm 27:1** David wrote, **“The LORD is my light and my salvation.”** God is light. **Psa. 119:105** says, **“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path,”** God’s Word is called light. In **John 1:9** Jesus is called **“The true light that gives light to every man.”** For a believer to imitate God, he obviously must share in and reflect God’s light.

In Scripture, light has two connotations, an intellectual part, and a moral part. Intellectually, light represents truth; morally, light represents holiness. Therefore, to live or walk in light means to walk in truth and in holiness. The figure of darkness has the same two parts; intellectual and moral. Intellectually, darkness represents ignorance and falsehood; morally, darkness represents evil. **Isaiah 5:20** describes those who walk in darkness, **“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.”** On the other hand, everyone who belongs to God must walk in light, both intellectually and morally—**turn to 1 John 1:5-7.**

In today’s Scripture, Paul gave 5 characteristics of walking in light, beginning with the contrast of “What we were” and “What we are.”

II. The Contrast

A. What we were. Paul began by considering what every believer's life was like before salvation, i.e., "what we were." He wrote that "you were once darkness." This is past tense; this is a condition that no longer exists. Before a person becomes a Christian, he is a child of the devil and is characterized by walking in darkness. In [Matthew 12:30](#) Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me." [Luke 16:13](#) adds, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other." There are only 2 possibilities, every person is either a child of the devil or a child of God.

The Bible gives four traits of "spiritual darkness." First, it is the work of Satan. Jesus said in [John 8:44](#) that those who are not the children of God are the children of their "father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire, i.e., the work of Satan. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him." Spiritual darkness, intellectually and morally, is the work of Satan.

Second, spiritual darkness is the domain of Satan. In [Acts 26:18](#), Satan is called the power of darkness; [Colossians 1:13](#) says, "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves." The unbeliever is under the dominion of darkness; Satan. Contrary to the lies of Satan, the unbeliever is totally bound and imprisoned by Satan through sin. Fallen man thinks he is free only because what he wants agrees with what Satan wants. The unbeliever is in Satan's domain.

Third, spiritual darkness brings God's wrath. [Ephesians 5:6](#) says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient." [Romans 1:18](#) says, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness." Finally, spiritual darkness leads to the ultimate destiny of eternal darkness—an eternity in hell. In [Matthew 8:12](#) Jesus said, "The subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The world is unjust, wicked, corrupt, and hopeless. There is constant compulsion to deceive, lie, steal, commit immorality, kill, and to do every other kind of evil. Yet when escape from this darkness is offered through Jesus Christ, many refuse and run away because Jesus' righteousness and goodness reveal their sin and wickedness. **Turn to John 3:19-21.** This is the state of every person *before* he accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, they were in darkness.

B. What we are. Contrasting what they were, Paul then wrote, **But now you are light in the Lord.**" Writing to fellow Christians, Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:9**, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Christians have been delivered from the domain of darkness and all its traits or characteristics. Now as Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5:14**, "You are the light of the world." Because we are "in the Lord," we who were once children of darkness are now "children of light." Now as we imitate our Father, we should walk in light. Paul gave three characteristics or fruit of walking in light—beginning with goodness.

III. The Characteristics of Walking in Light

A. Goodness *Goodness is "love—agape love—in action."* **1 Thessalonians 5:15** says, "See that no one repays evil for evil; on the contrary, always try to do good to each other, indeed, to everyone." In **2 Thessalonians 1:11** Paul prayed "that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." *Goodness*, love in action, is a fruit of light and is also a fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22**.

B. Righteousness The second characteristic or fruit of walking in light is righteousness. Righteousness means rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before all men. It's really how we live before God and before man. *Righteousness is right acts before God and man.* **Romans 6:13** says, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness." **1 Timothy 6:11** says, "But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue

righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.” 1 John 2:29 adds, “If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.”

C. Truth The third characteristic of walking in light is truth. In contrast to the deceptive, hypocritical, and lying ways of the old life of darkness, the Christian should be known for his honesty, reliability, trustworthiness, and integrity as he walks in light.

These 3 characteristics—goodness, righteousness, and truth—are “the fruit of the light.” Without fruit there is no evidence of the life of God. A Christian can fall into sin, and when he does the fruitfulness of his life suffers. Righteous fruit cannot flourish in the midst of sin. We need to confess our sins to God and not wallow in poisonous sinfulness.

The Christian life is only healthy when it is growing. Philippians 3:12 says, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Turn to 2 Peter 1:5-8. To accomplish this, to grow as a Christian, Paul wrote in verse 10, “Find out what pleases the Lord.” And to find out what pleases God, one needs to study His Word—2 Timothy 2:15 says, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

IV. A Command

Paul then gave a command: “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness;” i.e. “Have nothing to do with sin.” We cannot witness to the world if we do not go out into the world; and we cannot go far into the world before coming in contact with all sorts of wickedness. But we are never to compromise God’s standards or give sin an opportunity to take hold in our lives. Jesus ministered to tax collectors, prostitutes, and other sinners, but remained sinless. We are to “Have nothing to do with sin” To compromise God’s standards is to weaken our witness as well as our character. Paul was saying that when walking in light, no act of unrighteousness is permissible. Christians, who are to produce the righteous fruit of light, are to have nothing at all to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness. Christians are to be in the world, but not of the world (John 17:13-14). Paul emphasized this in his letter to the

Corinthians—turn to 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Paul was more particular in 1 Corinthians 5:11 where he wrote, “But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. With such a man do not even eat.”

V. The Commission

But Christians aren’t to “light a lamp and put it under a bowl” (Matt. 5:14). So, Paul gave a commission to all Christians: “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.” This is the commission: Expose sin. Through their conduct and character, Christians are to bring God’s light into a dark world. Sometimes just living a Christian life—walking in light—exposes the darkness and sin around a Christian. The light reveals the truth and exposes the true character of things. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men” (Matt. 5:16). This is why the unsaved person stays clear of God’s church and the Bible.

Sometimes the example of a Christian’s life will be enough to stop selfishness, unwholesome talk, and falsehood. Simply refusing to participate in some sinful business or social practice will be rebuke enough. Sometimes, though, a silent testimony won’t be enough. Jesus said in John 15:22, “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now however, they have no excuse for their sin.” And for this reason, men hated Jesus, the light of the world, and some will hate Christians as well. But failure to speak out against and opposing evil things is a failure to obey God. Believers are to expose sin in whatever legitimate, biblical ways are necessary. Love that does not openly expose and oppose sin is not biblical love. 1 Cor. 13:5-6 says, Love “is not rude, it is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrong. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth.” James 5:19 adds, “My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” Just as bearing fruit is the responsibility of every Christian, exposing and opposing sin is the responsibility of every Christian.

Paul gave a caution or warning about dealing with the “unfruitful deeds of darkness.” “For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.” One needs to be careful how he exposes the filthy things of darkness; sometimes he may unconsciously advertise and promote sin. Some things are so spiritually disgraceful and/or dangerous that they should be sealed off not only from direct contact but even from conversation. They should be exposed only to the extent necessary to get rid of them.

VI. The Call

Finally, Paul closed this section with a challenge or call to Christians. Christians are no longer comfortable or sleeping in sin. They are no longer walking in darkness and death. Just as water baptism has testified, believers have been raised from the dead to a new life through faith in Jesus Christ. The darkness of the grave is past, and we are now walking in the light of salvation. Salvation is the beginning of a new day, and Christians ought to live as those who belong to the light, not to the darkness. This is Paul’s call to every Christian: “Walk in light not in darkness.”

VII. The Challenge

Micah 6:8 says, “And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” So, what about your walk? Do you walk as a child of God? What kingdom does your life—your actions, your words, your thoughts—represent—the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of light? Are the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth evident in your life? Are you growing in your Christian walk? As you look back over the last month or year, have you really grown? Are you walking in light? Are you the light of the world? Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” “But now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” (Ephesians 5:8). Proverbs 4:18 says, “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.” Can this be said of your life?