

Walking In The Light
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Ephesians 5: 9-14
Walk In The Light

We're in Ephesians chapter 5, starting in verse eight. Last week, if you'll recall, we talked about darkness and light. Specifically I tried to explain something of what Paul is talking about when he said "formerly you WERE darkness". This is a much greater reality than most are willing to face. And yet, only in facing this reality do we begin to open ourselves up to receiving the Light of Life.

Paul does not say "formerly, you struggled with darkness". He doesn't say that they were influenced by darkness. He tells the church of Ephesus that they *were* the very darkness itself. The darkness is not something outside of the heart of man. Darkness is the blindness and absence of light that exists *in* the heart of man. In fact, the soul of humanity is the only place in creation that retains this darkness because it is the soul that has chosen to live by the lie.

Why don't we just read this section of Ephesians 5: 8-14 again and then we'll get into it.

Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), **10** finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. **11** And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. **13** But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. **14** Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

So, what is the light? And what is the darkness? The light is nothing more or less than what God sees. It is reality, as it has been established in Christ and given to redeemed humanity. It is that reality shown to the soul in a deep, inner awareness, that makes a person awake to, alive to, conscious of, aware of our true Person, Place, and State of Being – all of which are Christ. Christ is our life, He is the Person of our salvation. Christ our place. He is the land of our inheritance, the provision and habitation that God has given. And Christ is our state of being. That is to say, what is true of Him as the head of the body is true of the members because we share one life, one spirit, one faith, one body.

Light is the profound spiritual awareness and understanding and perception of these realities as it is worked in us by the Spirit of Truth. Light is what God sees, what God knows, what God understands, being shared with us, being shined in our heart, awakening us to the fullness of His day. In His light we see light. Apart from that light, we know only the darkness that is His absence.

When light shines in your soul it doesn't just give you a better perspective, it gives you the perspective of an entirely different Life. When light shines in your soul its

like you are beginning to wake up in a contrary universe. It's not the kind of light that tells you a better way to live. It's a light that shows you that you are, in fact, quite dead...and there's nothing to be done about that. But it's a light that shows you that you also have been given a new life. And that life can be experienced, and you can abide in it, and you can live by it and in it....nevertheless, it is always not I, but Christ who lives in me.

These are words that we can read in the darkness. But they become the experiences of the soul when light shines. Light is the mind of Christ, the view of God, the reality of one new man shown to you in one new light. It is an experience of unalterable truth, revealed by the Spirit who is that truth. You cannot touch it, but you can know it, by participating in it. And the way that you and I participate in what God has done is by walking in the Light that shows us what has been established, and what has therefore been put away.

I'm not trying to choose fancy words. These words are an attempt to describe a reality. Seeing something in the light is always the easy part. Putting that view into words can be a nightmare. It's almost like you're trying to employ dark words to describe light realities. Seeing a sunset is easy. Appreciating it is natural. But describing that sunset to your friend over a cell phone is difficult. Words cannot carry realities. They can only describe them. So I'm not trying to sound clever. I'm just trying to pick a few words that don't totally diminish the reality of God's light.

I have seen only a glimmer of God's light in the face of Jesus Christ...but the glimmer that I possess shines in the darkness that I am and makes an incredible contrast in my soul. I don't know very much in the light...but I have come to know that there is an awesome difference and division between light and darkness. That much I have seen clearly. There is a division that I can see between light and darkness. And that division is an awesome thing. That division is between light and darkness it is called the judgment of the cross.

And that division has grown greater and greater in my view. It's always been the same for God. He's always fully seen this division, but it has grown in my perception. And the more I see it, the more I am both amazed and frightened by it. It's completely independent of man's ideas. It just is. There is that which the light shows to be life, and truth, and real in Christ. And there is much that the light divides from itself and it is darkness.

Remember last week we talked about how God first created the types and shadows of these realities. God said "let there be light, and there was light". And then God divided the light from the darkness. God didn't have to create darkness because darkness was there wherever light was not. But what God did to is that he divided the darkness from the light. He made a division. And this division that God calls night and day, this division that God established in natural, material reality is the prototype, the foreshadow, the type of the division that Paul is talking about in Ephesians chapter 5.

It is this division that God must begin to work in our hearts. Naturally, we don't know the difference between light and darkness. I mean, we know the difference between natural light and natural darkness because we have natural senses. But, by nature, we absolutely DO NOT know the difference between true light and true darkness. You'd think that we could tell the difference, but by natural perception we cannot. In fact, we are full of darkness by nature and we assume that we have light.

To this very reality Jesus came as the only light in the world. About this very thing Jesus said "if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness".

The Pharisees didn't believe Him, and neither do we. We think that just because we're Christians, and because we go to church, and sometimes read a book called the Bible...we think that because of these things that we know the difference between light and darkness. But we do not. Even after we've been born of the light, we don't really comprehend the difference between light and darkness until the light of His Life begins to shine in our heart and make a division. God has to show us the division between His view and ours. And what we will see, if we are willing to face it, is that formerly we didn't merely have some dark ideas. Formerly, we were the darkness that ruled and reigned in our soul.

God's view is the Light. My view is the darkness. That is a fact. And the division between God's light and my darkness is more obvious to God than the difference between night and day is obvious to natural senses. However, if we do not bow our darkened heart to Him and acknowledge the darkness, then we will forever refuse to see the light. And if we will not see the Light, then we will never walk in the light, abide in the light, or bear the fruits of the light.

I'm spending some time on this once again this week because, as I have said, all things of truth and growth hinge on us realizing this division. God's view is light. My view on all things, including God, is darkness. And here's the kicker. As though it weren't enough to accept what I just said, Jesus takes it one step further. In one place he says that the light that is in us is darkness. But in another place he says that, for the most part, men love it that way. Men love darkness because their deeds are evil.

What does that mean? What does it mean that we love darkness because our deeds are evil? It means that, because we are evil, there is something that we love about darkness. We love the fact that evil can hide in the darkness and not be exposed. Jesus isn't talking primarily about murder and stealing and fornication. Jesus is talking about all things that man does and thinks and wants...all things that man is given a place to hide in the darkness.

And its not even simply that we're trying to hide these things from other people or from God. Certainly that is true as well. **But the main person that we're trying to hide our evil from in the darkness is OURSELVES.** We need to realize this. We're hiding ourselves from ourselves. We're keeping ourselves from seeing what we are. **You see, darkness is where we like to deceive ourselves.** Darkness is where we feel like we're a good person. Darkness is where we feel like we've got something that is useful to God. Darkness is where we imagine our own relevance and create our own theologies and think that we're righteous, and loving, and spiritual, and smart, and better than the Jones'. And the amazing thing is that, in the darkness, WE ACTUALLY BELIEVE IT. We deceive **ourselves** in the darkness...that's why we love it so much.

The darkness is not just where we hide from other people or from God. The darkness is where we hide from facing the truth about ourselves. It's where we can think whatever we want about our lives our purpose our selves...and there is no light to tell the difference. There's no way to prove anything in the dark. Its one imagination against another. There's no way to convict anyone in the darkness...because there are no witnesses. There's no way to know anything for

certain because there are so many ideas that sound right. In the darkness you can be convinced of just about anything.

And the main thing that we like to be convinced about...the thing that is the most important to us...is whatever we're currently believing about ourselves. Self is always on the mind of the natural mind. And there is nothing more important to Adam than our current perspective of ourselves. Self-love. Self-relevance. Self-preoccupation. That is how we are by nature. That is where our obsession with both pride and insecurity come from. That is why we constantly are mindful of both acceptance and rejection. Self is always the primary issue for the natural man. And the entire world can be in shambles, but so long as we feel good about ourselves...then all is ok. This is why we need and love the darkness. In darkness we can deceive ourselves.

We generally don't really care if a sermon is true, so long as it makes us feel a certain way. We like to feel like we can be something in God's eyes. We like to feel that we can please Him in things that we are good at. We like to feel like he loves us just like Grandma Betty used to love me, even when I was bad. Don't turn on the light, it might ruin my thoughts about God. Just paint me a nice mental picture in the darkness and send me home to think about it.

That may sound harsh, and I'm not trying to be harsh...I'm just trying to expose something. I'm trying to expose the fact that regardless of what we imagine, God has divided the light and the darkness. We can't really hide in the darkness, because He can see us clearly. Nothing is dark to Him. It is just dark to us. And we love it that way.

And the moment that God is permitted to shine the light of His view into our soul, that is the first time we ever begin to see ourselves, or see anything, in the light. Some people think I'm too hard on the natural mind, or the natural man. I'm always talking about verses that say things like "in the flesh dwells no good thing", and "every intent of the thoughts of their hearts were only evil all the time". That reality, the reality of our inherent darkness, comes up in just about every single one of my messages. Why is that? It didn't use to be like that, but everything changed the day that light began to show me what I was. Light began to redefine the problem.

All it took was one flash of light for me to realize that I had been hiding all of my life. I had been hiding in the darkness where all of my imaginations could not be challenged. I had been hiding in the pitch blackness of my own thoughts about God, about Scripture, about purpose, about life. And I liked it that way. But in a flash of reality I saw that I was the darkness where I hid. Self, the natural man, the adamic kind...me....I was the darkness where I hid from the Light. And I had loved it that way because my deeds were evil.

I didn't hide in the darkness primarily because I didn't want other people to figure out how evil I was. That wasn't the main issue. I'm sure that was part of it, but it wasn't the main issue. I hid in the darkness primarily because I didn't want to know what I was. I didn't want to see myself. I didn't want to have God's view of my life, my understanding, my religion, my actions, my heart. I preferred my own.

This may sound a little strange, but it is nonetheless true. To see in God's light is to experience the cross. You cannot separate these two things from one another. They

are the same. To see in God's light is to experience the cross. Why? Because when the light of God's view is permitted to shine in your heart, two things inevitably begin to occur. You can't stop it. It works the same way in every single heart. On the one hand, that which exists in the light begins to be established. And on the other hand, that which is not part of the light is exposed and begins to pass away. It's automatic. The light shines, and you begin to lay hold of what God has done, and you begin to forget what was once hidden in the darkness. This is the cross, my friends.

The cross is God's division between the light and the darkness. The cross is where God judged the world, and cut between all things. On the one side of the cross there is the first man, the first creation, the first covenant. There is the darkness of that entire world. It is all part of the night. On the other side of the cross there is the new man, the new creation, the new covenant. That is all part of the day. The eternal day of the Lord. It dawned in His resurrection, and Peter says it is now dawning in our hearts. And the division that God established in the natural realm in Genesis chapter one is fulfilled and perpetually established in the cross of Jesus Christ. **The cross is boundary of the day. It is the partition between light and darkness.**

And when a human soul begins to see in the light...when the one who spoke into the darkness "let there be light!"...when this one begins to shine in the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, then this partition begins to divide all things in you. The cross begins to judge, in you, between the living and the dead. The cross calls one man alive, and another man dead. And there is no arguing. The cross establishes one seed, and buries another. The cross divides between two creations, and the light will show you are that you are actually of the new. In fact, if anyone is in Christ Jesus old things have passed away, behold the new has come. These aren't nice Bible verses for the Christian calendar. These become the realities that define your soul.

To see in His light is to experience his division. To see in His light is to experience the cross. Light shines and so much is shown to be part of the darkness. Light shines and what remains in the light is part of the light. Christ all and in all. That is what verse 13 says. I'm jumping a bit ahead, but look at Ephesians 5:13. "But all things being exposed by the light are clearly revealed, for everything having been revealed *is* light." You see there's just two things. There are the things that are of the light, and can be seen in the Light. And then there are the things that exist where light does not.

But can you see what I mean when I say that seeing in God's light is the same thing as experiencing the cross. Somebody asks – "how can I die to myself". Well, certainly not by any of your own dark effort. Certainly not by trying to stop being what you are. To die to yourself you must see by His light. To experience the death of the cross you must have the light reveal all that the cross has done, and all that the cross has put away. And when you stand in this light you will automatically begin to die to what is already dead. You will effortlessly begin to lose what God has already nullified.

This is why I always say things like "the truth as it is in Christ starts to become the truth as it is in your soul". And the necessary counterpart to that, the other side of the exact same coin, is that the darkness which is YOU falls away from your soul when it is crowded away and vanquished by the Light. You die to yourself when you

see Who it is that is your life. You die to yourself when you allow the light to push away the imaginations and darkness where you have been hiding. And then, and only then, can you begin to walk in the light. Abide in the light. Walk in the truth. Remain in the light.

This is where Paul goes in Ephesians chapter 5. Since we have become children of the light, let us also walk in the light. And the fruit of walking in the light will be the expression of the light. It's not the "deeds" of the light. It doesn't make you know how to do spiritual deeds. It's much simpler than that. Fruit is that which grows from a seed. Fruit is something that appears on a tree when there is plenty of sunlight. If we walk in the light of God's view, the light of Christ revealed, then the vine bears fruit in us. And fruit, of course, is the increase of the seed.

So Paul says, *Eph 5:9 For the fruit of the Spirit (Light) is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, 10 proving what is pleasing to the Lord.* If a soul abides in the light, the fruit that grows is all goodness and righteousness and truth. Notice he's not talking about religion here. He's not talking about the things that we try to do for God. On the contrary, he's talking about the effects that God has in a soul that sees in His light. When we abide in the light, we are changed by the light. And our lives become illustrations or expressions of what is pleasing to the Lord.

The New King James reads "finding out what is acceptable to the Lord" here in verse 10. That's an alright translation as long as we realize that we're finding out what is acceptable to the Lord because its growing in our souls as we abide in the light. It's not like we're doing a bunch of good deeds and hoping to figure out which ones God likes. That's not what this is talking about. On the contrary, it is like stumbling upon a fruit tree in the middle of a field and having no idea what kind of tree it is. And so you water it and leave it in the sunlight for a given time, and pretty soon the fruit begins to show you what kind of tree it is. The fruit begins to demonstrate just what kind of seed you were dealing with. The fruit proves the nature of the tree.

So then Paul contrasts this fruit of the light with unfruitful deeds of darkness. I don't think his point is to specify specific actions as much as draw a contrast between the source which is darkness. In other words, I don't think Paul has any specific bad deeds in mind here. Somebody might be tempted to ask, "Paul, what are the unfruitful deeds of darkness that you are talking about here?" "Which ones are the shameful ones that you don't think we should even talk about?". But again, I don't think he's trying to highlight any particular action or word, but rather point to the darkness itself that is the unrenewed adamic man. I think his point is that we are putting off one kind of fruit and putting on another because we are putting off one man and putting on Christ.

The light shining in our hearts is always having that effect. If it is truly the light of God, and not just man's perspective on good words or Christian duty or worthy causes. If it's genuinely the light of Christ's life then it is always accomplishing two things. It is establishing Christ Himself as the life and source of all things new. And it is exposing and destroying the darkness where we love to hide. And for this reason, Paul says "awake you who sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light".