

Live As Children of Light **Ephesians 5:8-14**

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. ¹⁰Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, ¹¹and do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention the things that are done by people in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes things visible. ¹⁴Therefore it is said, "Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Dear Friends in Christ,

Maybe you've heard the expression: Nothing good happens after midnight. Why is that? Well, I'm sure a lack of sunlight would have something to do with it. Some like the darkness to hide their sinister misdeeds. That's why people leave the porch light on. If a person had a light shining on them, they wouldn't try to break in. They would stay clear.

The Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of light and darkness to describe how Christians are to live and what they are to avoid. He urges his listeners to live as children of light. It means living a fruitful life. It also means exposing the deeds of darkness.

If Paul's listeners are to live as children of light, they must remember what they once were. Paul reminds them, "You were once darkness." Darkness is a metaphor for moral corruption. Ever tour a deep cave? How did you feel when they turn the lights out just for a moment? You feel paralyzed. You can't move. You can't see a thing. That was what we were by nature. We were completely in the dark. We didn't know the way to eternal life.

But that all changed. Paul writes, "Now you are light in the Lord." All of us have heard the good news of how Christ has saved us. With his suffering and death, he won you forgiveness for every dark sin in your life. By faith you've been brought into living connection with the Lord Jesus. You no longer are doomed to outer darkness. You've been brought to know joy. Now you have a place in eternal life. In other words, you are light in the Lord.

So how shall we live? Paul says, "Walk as children of light." In the dark, we shrivel and die. In the light we blossom and live. Jesus said, "*I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing*" (John 15:5). "The fruit of the light," says Paul, consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth." So we search the Scriptures to find out what pleases the Lord. Because of who we are, what pleases the Lord pleases us.

As we wait for that glorious day to inherit eternal life, children of light live fruitful lives. They strive for what is morally good. They do what God's says is right. They follow completely what is truth. In other words, they reflect their Savior in their life. And God's Word is part of their daily life. In their daily search of Scripture, they discover what pleases God. Jesus once told a group of his followers: You are the light of the world. He didn't tell them you should be light for the world. He didn't say try to light up this dark world. He says you are light. Look at the moon at night. It has to reflect the light of the sun. It may appear full. It may be just a sliver. But it always reflects light from the sun. That's why God made it.

So it is with Christians. We're not here to hide in the shadows of this dark world. We're here to reflect our Savior. We're here to live fruitful lives. It will be displayed in our goodness toward others. Revenge will never be on our minds. Jesus once said: *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist and evildoer. If someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. If anyone wants to sue you to take away your shirt, give him your coat too. Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you"* (Matthew 5:38-42).

But sometimes we fail to be fruitful. Sadly, we often find ourselves back in the darkness of sin. That's why we gladly answer our Savior to come to him. He produced perfect fruit. Was there ever a time he was not good? His life was completely righteous. You want absolute truth? You find it in Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life. And now he displays that perfect life in you. So live as children of light.

Will it be easy, being light to such a morally dark world? Nobody ever said it would be. And while we shine for the world to see our Savior, the light will expose the sinful deeds of darkness.

You hear a noise in your backyard at night. What do you do? You turn on the yard light. You want to expose what is making that noise. In order to live as children of light, Paul tells his listeners, *"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."* That means calling sin a sin. In the verses just before our text, Paul writes, *"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place."* The world will use words like pleasure and entertainment to describe fornication and pornography. Foul language is often used to emphasize your point. A dirty joke can often make someone laugh. Paul says, *"It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."* Those things need to be exposed.

The person caught in such sins must turn. That's what it means to repent. Turn them from their sin to their Savior from sin. Take them back to that strange day when the sun was at its peak and the earth was covered in darkness. God's Son was nailed to a cross to suffer for every sin against every command God gave us. It was awful. It killed him. Before the evening darkness, his friends placed his lifeless body in a tomb. Following the Sabbath Day, before the morning light dawned, some women returned to his tomb to finish the job with a proper burial. But he wasn't there. His body was missing. Who stole it? Heavenly messengers then appeared to light up the darkness. They brought with them good news that he had risen, just like he said he would.

Are there people in your life who are still wandering in the darkness of sin? They may be living a lie that they can just continue in darkness and they'll be just fine. But you are the light of the world. And when you shine your light on them you will expose their sin for what it is. So what is the big scare in our world? Terrorists with military armament that could level a city. A disease that has no known cure? But can you think of anything deadlier than sin? When our first parents brought sin into the world, they tried to do the impossible? They tried to hide from God. Why? Because he said the day you eat of it you will surely die. But God found them. And he did an amazing thing, didn't he? He promised a Savior—the woman's seed to crush the serpent's head. He shaped our world so when the time was just right—when a Roman emperor wanted to conduct a census of his own and send everyone back to their place of origin to register—God brought a virgin girl from Nazareth to Bethlehem. She was miraculously pregnant with God's own Son. He entered our dark world to bring to light God's rescue plan. He would please God in every way possible. He would sacrifice himself for the sins of all mankind. He'd defeat sin, death, the devil—everything that separates us from God. He would rise from death and bring life and immortality to light. You know the story. You cherish it. Now share it.

Easter is less than a month away. There are people in our community, who are still in the dark about what Easter is all about. With a simple gospel invitation to come and see, you may find a sinner who needs to repent. And God's Spirit will use your invitation to enlighten them. When curiosity draws them to hear the Easter message, God will plant faith in their hearts and make them light in the Lord. So reach out to others with invitations to Easter. See how your Lord can use you to bring light to a person still wandering in the dark.

Nothing good still happening after midnight? Try a motion light or simply leave on a light. So many are still wandering in the dark. Let your light shine on them. Let them see your fruits of goodness, righteousness and truth. Expose the sin and show them their Savior. And watch them light up. Amen.