

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for January 27, 2019

Children of the Light
Ephesians 5:7-14

I. Children of light escape the darkness (5:7-10)

A. The partnership

7 Therefore do not become partners with them;

- “Therefore”
 - Given the conclusion of Ephesians 5:5-6
 - In light of the outcome and destination of those who walk in sexual immorality, impurity, coveting, filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking—they will receive no inheritance in the kingdom (5:5) but instead the wrath of God (5:6)
- “Do not become partners with them”
 - Ephesians 3:6 “This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”
 - Them = Those who practice the sinful deeds of Ephesians 5:3-4

B. The past

8 for at one time you were darkness,

- Darkness is an accurate description of us before we were saved by Christ
 - Ephesians 2:1-3 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
- Darkness probably includes both the intellect and the will
 - Ephesians 4:17-19 “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.”
- Notice the specific description of our nature before we were born again
- We were not *in* darkness, but we *were* darkness
- Our condition was far worse than we could imagine

C. The present

but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

- Imagery of polar opposites to describe our present nature
- Notice the qualifying phrase “in the Lord” to indicate how someone’s nature can change from darkness to light
- The natural proclivity of mankind is toward darkness
- However, mankind can be transformed to be light
- But this is only possible “in the Lord”
 - He is the One who transfers our identity from darkness to light
 - Colossians 1:13 “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son”
 - 2 Corinthians 4:6 “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
 - 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
 - John 8:12 “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”
 - John 9:5 “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
 - John 12:46 “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.”
- In light of our new nature as light, we must walk accordingly (“walk as children of light”)
 - Romans 13:12-14 “The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8 “For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”

D. The proof

9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

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- The proof of walking as the light of new nature is both virtue and verification
- First, Paul identifies the virtue of one who walks as a child of light
 - As opposed to the conduct of Ephesians 5:3-4, those who walk as children of light will produce different fruit in their lives
 - Paul says the fruit of light is found in three general areas; goodness, righteousness, and truth
 - These are broad descriptions of various virtues that should describe the life of a Christian
 - Paul broadens these virtues even more by stating, “all that is good...”
 - “All that is good and all that is right and all that is true”
 - Of course, these are descriptions of God and His character
 - Since He is good, right, and true, we too must have lives characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth
 - Galatians 5:22-24 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”
- Second, Paul explains the verification of one who is walking as a child of light
 - Paul adds, “and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord”
 - Greek word for “try to discern” is *dokimazo* and it means “to test or examine in order to approve”
 - Paul is saying that children of light will test and prove what is pleasing to God
 - This is a natural result and byproduct of those who are walking as children of light
 - As they live lives of all goodness, righteousness, and truth they will be proving the kind of life that is pleasing to God
 - Romans 12:1-2 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

II. Children of light expose the darkness (5:11-14)

A. The command

11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

- Paul now gives a command to children of light to take a step further in their living
- First, he reviews the previous four verses in saying, “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness”

- Paul summarizes that believers are not to “take part” in the works of darkness
 - “Take part” comes from the Greek word for “fellowship”
- Thus, believers are not to partner with unbelievers in the darkness, nor are they to take part in the works of unbelievers in darkness
- How does one’s interaction with the world look at this point?
 - Some might take these verses to mean that we must stay far away from unbelievers
 - 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. ‘Purge the evil person from among you.’”
 - We are *in* the world, but we are not to be *of* the world
 - In our attempt to live a life of Christ-like behavior contradictory to the world we must not lose our mission to still have compassion upon the world and see them brought from darkness to light
- As opposed to walking as light, which produces fruit, Paul states that the works of darkness are clearly worthless and futile by describing them as “unfruitful”
- Then, Paul gives us the command to expose the works of darkness
 - The word expose is used elsewhere in the New Testament translated as “convict, reprove, or rebuke”
 - This word is used in relationship to both unbelievers and believers
 - The deeds of darkness must be exposed, whether they are in the church or outside of the church
 - Inside the church:
 - Matthew 18:15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.
 - Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”
 - Outside the church:
 - John 3:19-20 “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. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.”

- John 16:8 “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment”
- What is our work in the exposure process?
 - If there is sin or darkness in the church, we must act to help expose that darkness with the Word of God
 - Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness...”
 - What about the sin or darkness in the world?
 - 1 Peter 2:9-12
 - Proclaim the excellencies of Christ and His salvation
 - Darkness (sin) to light (holiness)
 - Practice the fruit of light or Spirit-filled living
 - They might see good deeds and glorify God

B. The corruption

12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

- Paul further explains why we must take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness
 - He describes these works in bold contrast to verse 9
 - The fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true
 - On the other hand, the fruit of darkness is shameful to even speak about

C. The change

13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light.

- Paul explains the process of change that takes place when the darkness is exposed
- First, exposure is only possible through or by the light
 - What is the light?
 - Christ - John 8:12
 - Believers’ good deeds - 1 Peter 2:11-12
 - Word of God
 - Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
 - Proverbs 6:23 “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,”
- Second, exposure is a process of transformation
 - This is not a process for pronouncing condemnation and judgment alone
 - Exposure of the darkness of sin by the Word of God is meant to transform

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- Track the logic of these two verses
 - Darkness → Visible → Light
 - Darkness is not exposed for the sake of laughing and mocking
 - Darkness is not exposed merely for the sake of condemning and judging
 - Darkness is exposed in order to bring restoration, transformation, or salvation in some cases

D. The call

Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

- Paul ends this passage with a call for salvation to all who might still be lost in the darkness
- Paul quotes from a few different Old Testament texts to issue this call to those in the dark
 - Isaiah 52:1 "Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean."
 - Isaiah 60:1-2 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you."
- There is no better way to end this morning's message than to echo the call has echoed here in verse 14
- For the unbeliever:
 - Are you asleep this morning?
 - Do you find yourself comfortable in the life of sin that you are living?
 - I plead with you, wake up!
 - Are you spiritually dead and lifeless this morning?
 - Do you not sense an ounce of desire to live for Jesus?
 - I plead with you, rise up!
 - Let Christ shine on you!
 - He came to earth, died and rose again, not so that you could remain asleep and lifeless
 - He came to give you life abundantly
- For the believer:
 - Are you asleep this morning?
 - Do you find yourself unmotivated to live for your King?
 - I plead with you, wake up!
 - Are you spiritually dead and lifeless this morning?
 - Is it hard to remember the last time you desired to spend time with God?

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