

3-22-20

Sermon: Remember the Test Pattern?

Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-14, CTW- Ps 23

Hymns: 208, 460

Theme: We are called to live our lives as children of the light, the way Christ did. The light He planted inside of us will produce fruit that will please the Father. Do you hold everything that you do up to the light to make sure it will be pleasing to Him, or do you just give of yourself what is pleasing or convenient to you?

## **I. There Was a Time When the Light Went Out**

**A. From Old Testament time until the birth of Christ, there was a time of darkness and no communication from God.** For 400 years, the Israelites wandered around looking for God, but because of their many failings and indiscretions, He was not to be found.

Some continued to follow in faith, and some drifted away to begin worshipping other "Gods." It was a very scary time in our history.

Remember the "Test Pattern" in the early age of television? At the end of the day, 11pm, if I remember correctly, the National Anthem was played and an announcement came on that the programming day had ended. From then on until sometime the next morning, the screen went blank.

Even if you wanted to see another show, you could not. Imagine that happening in these days? With hundreds of around the clock channels, our TVs communicate a never-ending supply of things.

That is the way that Scripture urges us to understand our relationship with Jesus Christ. By virtue of the Holy Spirit, whose job it is to lead us into all things true, we have constant communication with the Father as our reality.

**B. Jesus is the light of the world! It is this truth that we must keep in mind as we study today's text.** Paul calls Christians to be imitators of God. And we imitate God by walking in light.

In Ephesians 5:8-14 Paul teaches us to walk in light, and develops the following outline:

1. We Walk in Light by Exhibiting Light (5:8-10)
2. We Walk in Light by Exposing Darkness (5:11-14a)
3. We Walk in Light by Exhorting Unbelievers (5:14b)

## **II. Walking by Exhibiting Light (5:8-10)**

Paul said in verse 8a, "...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord."

**A. Paul was writing to the believers in the church of Ephesus. Prior to their salvation, believers were darkness.** However, following their conversion to Christ, believers now are light in the Lord.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, American Theologian and a master of illustration, explained it this way:

"When Christ was in the world, he was like the shining sun. When the sun sets, the moon comes up. The moon is a picture of believers, the Church. The Church shines, but not with its own light. It shines with reflected light. At times the Church has been a full moon dazzling the world with an almost daytime light. Those were times of great enlightenment—for example, in the days of Paul and Luther and Wesley. At other times the Church has been only a thumbnail moon, and in those days very little light shone on the earth. But whether the Church is a full or thumbnail moon, whether waxing or waning, it reflects the light of Christ. Our light does not originate with us."

However, here Paul suggests that believers are more than a reflection of the light of Christ. We **actually become** light ourselves.

Read verse 8a again, "...for at one time you were darkness, but **now you are light** in the Lord." That is staggering! Of course, our light is derived from Christ. It exists because of our union with Christ. But not a ray of light comes from ourselves.

Because of our union with Christ, Paul commands believers in verse 8b, "Walk as children of light." Just as Jesus is the light of the world, so Christians are to walk as he walked—as lights of the world.

In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:14a, Jesus said to his followers, "You are the light of the world."

**B. But, in exactly what way are believers "light"?** Paul described the characteristics of light in verse 9, "...for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true."

The phrase "the fruit of light" describes the result of union with Christ. Christ, who is God, is good and right and true. As his imitators, Christians do that which is good and right and true.

Corrie ten Boom tells how during hard times in the watchmaking business, when the family was in extreme financial need, she observed her father and a wealthy customer. The wealthy man had decided to purchase a costly timepiece with cash which would have met all their needs.

But as her father was handling the cash, the customer related that he was buying a new watch because Mr. Ten Boom's young competitor could not fix his old watch.

Corrie's father asked to see it, opened it, made a slight adjustment, and handed it back saying, "There, that was a very little mistake. It will be fine now. Sir, I trust the young watchmaker. Someday he will be just as good as his father. So if you ever have a problem with one of his watches, come to me. I'll help you out. Now I shall give you back your money and you can return my watch."

Corrie watched horrified as she saw the exchange, and then observed her father open the door for the man and bow deeply in his old-fashioned way.

She flew at her father in reproof, only to be herself corrected by her father through his steel-rimmed glasses and his gentle question, "Corrie, what do you think that young man would have said when he heard that one of his good customers had gone to Mr. Ten Boom?"

Do you think that the name of the Lord would be honored? As for the money, trust the Lord, Corrie. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and he will take care of us.”

That is a powerful Christian example of all that is good and right and true.

Finally, in order to encourage believers to walk in light by exhibiting light, Paul says in verse 10, “...and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” The phrase “try to discern” (dokimazo) means “to try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve. It has the notion of proving a thing whether it is worthy or not.”

In other words, as Christians exhibit what is good and right and true, they will, as John MacArthur says, “give verification or evidence that they are who they claim to be, children of God and of light.”

### **III. We Walk in Light by Exposing Darkness (5:11-14a)**

Paul said to believers in verse 11, “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.” This is an echo of what Paul wrote in verse 3, “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you.”

In addition, this view is strengthened by what Paul said in verse 12, “For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.”

**A. What unbelievers DO is darkness.** Christians must not do what they formerly did. Nor must Christians take part in any way in the unfruitful works of darkness. Christians must instead expose them, that is, Christians must expose the unfruitful works of darkness.

But how are Christians to do that? How do we take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness and yet still expose them?

Amy Carmichael was born in Ireland in 1867 and became a missionary with the Church of England. She went to India and opened an orphanage and founded a mission in Dohnavur. She served in India for 55 years without furlough and wrote many books about her missionary work there.

However, what is less known about Amy Carmichael is the difficulty she had in raising support for her missionary work. She wanted to go to India to expose the temple prostitution of children in India. But, because of the Victorian sensibilities of the time, it was impolite for her to mention the horror that thousands of children faced.

Thankfully, Amy was committed to exposing the unfruitful works of darkness. She eventually did raise the money and did expose the unfruitful works of darkness.

**B. And that is what Christians are still called to do today. We are to walk in light by exposing darkness.**

Sometimes we do that simply by our presence. I remember joining a foursome for golf one day. They were telling stories and using profanity.

At one point we got on the subject of what our occupations were. Imagine their surprise upon finding out that I was a Pastor! After that no one used any profanity. They did that because they knew I was a Christian. So, sometimes Christians expose darkness simply because of our presence.

**C. However, at other times we must speak up.** When unbelievers say things that are contrary to God's truth, it is appropriate to correct them and explain God's word to them.

For example, it is common to hear people take God's name in vain. They will say things like, "Oh God!" Or, "For Christ sake!" Remind them that they are violating the third Commandment not to take the Lord's name in vain (Exodus 20:7).

Ask yourself this question, "If not me, then who?" Our resource for exposing the unfruitful works of darkness is the word of God.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." That is why Paul said in verses 13-14, "But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light."

Actually, a better translation for verse 14b is, "for it is light that makes everything visible." So, verses 13-14 would read as

follows, "But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible."

That is why it is so important for Christians to know God's word. It is the light of God's word that exposes darkness.

#### **IV. And Finally, We Walk in Light by Exhorting Unbelievers (5:14b)**

Paul said in verse 14b, "Therefore it says, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' "

Some commentators say that these words are part of an early Christian hymn. That may be so. It is also likely that these words were adapted from Isaiah 60:1, which reads, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

##### **A. These words are prophetic and find their fulfillment in none other than Jesus Christ.**

"O sleeper" describes every unbeliever who walks in darkness, produces "the unfruitful works of darkness," and is unaware of his lost condition and tragic destiny. That is why we who walk in light must exhort unbelievers to "awaken"!

**"Arise from the dead"** is the exhortation to repent. It is an appeal to the unbeliever to turn from the dead ways of sin.

**"Christ will shine on you"** is the good news of the gospel that God has provided a remedy for every sinful who person who repents of sin and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners.

John MacArthur tells the story of a great fire in Edinburgh, Scotland, in which people hurried to exit the building through a passage that led to the street.

They were almost safe when a rush of smoke met them, blowing into the passage from the outside. Instead of running through the smoke, they entered a door into a room that seemed safe. But soon all the oxygen was exhausted and they all suffocated.

If only they had seen the light they might have lived.

**B. Brothers and sisters, we are called to imitate God by walking in light.** And we walk in light by **exhibiting** light, **exposing** darkness, and **exhorting** unbelievers. Let us make a commitment to do that every day so as to reflect the light of God that is in us.

He has no end of the day sign off. **HIS** light always shines!

May that be true for every one of us who professes faith in Jesus Christ, the light of the world! Amen? Let Us Pray...