

Sermon on Ephesians 5:8-14 prepared by Jonathan Shradar

Ephesians 5:8-14

In Christ we live a life of light.

(Kids, whisper something you love about your mom in her ear)

Mothers are wonderful, mostly. We love the opportunity to honor mothers as is fitting for a life of following the commands of Christ.

As I was studying the text I couldn't help but think of one of the daily tasks for most moms: waking us up! Calling us to life in the morning...

Some to it with the smell of bacon on the griddle; some do it with a gentle pulling back of the curtains; some do it with the hysterics of "hurry up or you'll be late!"

It's not always easy to wake up - to rise and shine. We want more sleep, but waking up is good, it is where flourishing is found.

Our Scripture for today does much the same work. There is nothing new or earth shattering in this verses but it follows the continued exhortation to the church to live according to their faith. To live a life that matches being rescued by Jesus.

Now the Author, Paul, uses a "brilliant" metaphor to push the point.

We will take it in two brief points this morning, walk as Children of light; and seek the light of the world.

1) Walk as Children of light

From darkness to light - that's a great description of the transfer from a life of sin to a life trusting Jesus.

The case has been laid out already. There is a manner of living which Christians are called to. Seeing Jesus as our truth, moving from theft to generosity, graciousness in behavior and speech, speaking to each other the truth in love, anger doesn't rule us, and as imitators of God we avoid immorality, impurity, and

idolatry. All while empowered by the Spirit of God to build each other up in the church.

Ephesians 5:8 “for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (ESV)

[Darkness” is used metaphorically to communicate a state of moral or spiritual darkness (cf. 4:18), whereas “light” communicates the illumination one receives to live a godly life as a consequence of a relationship with God. The imagery of darkness and light is used by Paul elsewhere (Rom. 13:12–13; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; 6:14; Col. 1:12–13; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Tim. 6:16). Interestingly, Paul does not say that they were once in darkness and are now in light but rather that they were darkness and now are light. They were not merely in a dark environment but were themselves by nature dark (cf. Eph. 2:1, 12). “In the Lord” indicates that the believer’s union with Christ makes the decisive difference in the new state.]

We get this - we know what we were, and what Christ is making us to be.

Light is good. It brings warmth, sanitizes, it is essential for life.

Light promotes life. Plants flourish when we give them light. (*Even our little herb garden comes with a light because it is vital for growth*). Broken bodies heal faster if we can soak up some sunlight. Light awakens too. We have probably all “heard” the sun rise as it awakens nature. Light is also persistent, constantly assaulting the earth and penetrating the smallest opening. The darkest place is not safe from it, as verses 13, 14a make so clear: “But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light.”

I love this picture of morning, of light dawning over the horizon and the steady awaking that follows. This is life in Christ, the dawning of a new day.

Paul even says that walking as children of light is fruitful... generate more good things in our lives.

“Fruit of light” is unique here in the NT but conveys the idea that fruit is produced by the light. That is, once a person receives new life in Christ, God’s power works in that person to produce characteristics found in God himself. As

“fruit,” these virtues are by-products of faith in Christ and are not prerequisites for being accepted by God.”

Light, strictly speaking, does not bear fruit. But here Paul views Christ’s light as reflected through the prisms of our lives and thus producing “all that is good and right and true”—in a word, the fruit of sterling character.

What is good and right and true. What was past was deception, instability, impurity. What is now in the new life is safe, beautiful, trustworthy.

(Sweetness of the Sun Sugar tomato plant - full sun).

So we live the new life because it is this life that produces fruit. It is also a life that exposes the dark. We not only speak the truth we live it and people will notice. While we may face ridicule, our lives as children of light are meant to prove the point. Shows that Jesus is worth it.

Our text ends with what was likely a baptism hymn sung as new believers came out of the water... “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” v. 14b.

This is Paul’s call to the church to avoid sleep walking... going through the motions without purpose. We all have sleepwalking stories.

Had me thinking of Ewen’s sleepwalking. Clearly asleep he will wander around... and we find it funny. But it is unfruitful... could be dangerous.

What is in view here is following Christ fully awake. This may just be an invitation to you, if you have been coasting for awhile, maybe “sleepwalking” in the faith, today is the day to wake up and walk as a child of light.

We live it seeking the light.

2) Seek the Light of the World

Being light isn’t a reference in many other places in the NT. But it is exactly who Jesus said he was.

After claiming to be give living water, after compelling the woman caught in adultery to “go and sin no more” he said this.

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.” (ESV)

“He is everything suggested by the sublime metaphor of light—and much more.”

We are children of this light.

Therefore we “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” v.10.

As those united to Christ by faith, our goal as believers is to please the Lord in all circumstances. To live according to that which is good, right, and true (Eph. 5:9) requires the practical wisdom of applying these ethical standards to particular circumstances.

Not merely individual, but this is written to the church so there is a sense that in community we will discern how the Lord has called us to live. Together studying the word of God which is Christ. Praying. Reminding and together running, or walking, after him.

As you walk as children of light, you are growing up, being brought to maturity, “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” to be just like him.

So that is how we stay in the light, we stay hungry for Jesus and follow him. And it shows.

Dr. Barnhouse 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.”

All so that when the world looks at us they might see him.

It is like the glow in the dark toys we have in the toy box. Adia has a glow in the dark wheelchair. The trick is that these things don't glow on their own, it needs to be in the light to glow when it's dark.

In the same way, you need to be in the light to glow - it's what Jesus wants for you. "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

A glimpse of what is to come.

Revelation 21:22–25 "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. [23] And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. [24] By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, [25] and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there." (ESV)

Arise and shine and give God the glory, Children of the Lord.

In Christ we live a life of light.

Live as Light - changed by Christ, free to live for what is good and right and true - do it.

"allow the full light of Jesus to shine on and through our lives, so that we will radiate the ethics of light in glowing character. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." May we be the light indeed!"

Stay awake in the Light - Seek Jesus together, as you do. Reflect him to the world.

The best of mothers reflect this call to come to life each day. May we hear it and live it by the Spirit, in the brilliance that is Christ.