Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Living in the Light
Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-14
Code: 1933

Take your Bible with me, would you, and turn to Ephesians, chapter 5, and we'd like to look at verses 8 to 14, this morning – Ephesians 5, verses 8 through 14. Let me read this text so that you'll have the setting, and then let the Spirit of God speak to you as we share thoughts from it.

Ephesians 5:8: "For ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'"

Let's pray. Father, as we look at this passage we pray that You would be our teacher. That not a human voice would be heard, and not the thoughts of a human mind, but the very voice of God, in the mind of God, transmitted by the Holy Spirit, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His name we pray. Amen.

Now, as you know, we are studying the walk of the new man. The book of Ephesians presents to us the pattern for Christian living. The first three chapters - who the Christian is; the last three, how he lives, how he acts, how he functions. And Paul here, in chapters 4, 5 and 6, gives us a clear, concise, and careful outline of how we are to behave as new creatures. How Christians are to live in the world. And if we were to sum the thing up, we could probably sum it up in two great statements that are made. Chapter 4, verse 1, is the first one, where he says: "Walk worthy." In other words, that we told you the word worthy means to balance it off; let your living balance off with your identity. If you're a new creature in Christ, then walk that way.

And then in chapter 5, verse 1, he says: "Be followers of God," or "imitators of God." Now there you have the two key things in Christian living. Walk worthy, and imitate God. Those are kind of the heart of what he is saying. If you're going to walk worthy of your calling, you're going to have to walk in the way that God would walk. And of course, the example is in verse 2 of chapter 5: "Walk in love as Christ loved us." Christ becomes our pattern. So we are to walk worthy, and imitate God, which means we are to pattern our lives after Christ. He walked worthy of who He was, and He is our pattern of God. So we are to be like Christ. It goes all the way back to that.

All the way back to Romans, chapter 8, where Paul says that “The ultimate goal for the believer is to be conformed to the image of His Son.” It goes back to 2 Corinthians 3:18: “Whereas we gaze at the glory of the Lord we are changed into His image.” It goes back to 1 John 2:6: “That he that says he abides in Him ought to walk as He walked.” It goes to the ultimate goal of 1 John 3:2; “Someday we shall be like Him when we see Him as He is.” So we are to be Christlike. That is the essence of walking worthy. That is the essence of imitating God, to be like Jesus Christ.

Now, this has many facets. If we are to walk worthy and imitate God, if we’re to be like Jesus Christ, it is a humble walk. We saw that in chapter 4, didn’t we? It is a unity walk. We saw that in chapter 4. It is a different walk. We saw that in chapter 4. We don’t walk as a Gentile walks. It is a love walk. Chapter 5, verse 2, that was our study last time. And today we find it is a light walk – a light walk. Next week we’ll see it is a wisdom walk. But for now, it is a light walk. If we are to imitate God, pattern our lives after Christ, and walk worthy, then it says, in verse 8, we must “walk as children of light.” We must walk as children of light.

Now what does light mean? What are we talking about? Very important, if we are to live in light we have to know what light is. Now, let me tell you very simply, light is a symbol in the Bible, and it is a symbol for two things, two aspects. First of all, it is used from the intellectual side, and secondly, it is used from the moral side. Intellectually, light refers to truth. Light refers to truth, intellectually. Morally, light refers to holiness. So it is the intake and the output. It is the truth and the life. Living in light, then, means living in truth and living in holiness. Receiving the truth and living a holy life.

On the contrast, darkness intellectually refers to ignorance, and morally refers to evil. And you find this all throughout the Scripture. In some places He talks about light, the writer of the Bible does, and He means intellectual knowledge, truth. In other places he talks about light, and He means moral behavior, holiness. Sometimes the Bible talks about darkness and it means their minds are darkened. Remember back in chapter 4 of Ephesians? Other times He talks about darkness and He means the deeds of darkness, moral evil. So light and darkness is a contrast both of truth and behavior. Now, let me give you just a brief illustration of this. In Proverbs – and we could never touch every scripture because so many deal with it, but in Proverbs 6:23 you’ll see what I mean.

“For the commandment is a lamp and the law is light.” Now, here it is truth that he’s talking about; he’s not talking about deeds, he’s talking about truth. God’s truth, God’s Word is light, intellectual truth, knowledge. In Psalm 119:105, it says: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” And that’s the same idea. There you see light as truth, light from the intellectual side. Now, you see it also in 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, and the apostle Paul again is talking here about light and darkness. He says he’s talking about lost people in verse 3, and then lost being the antecedent, he goes to verse 4: “In whom” – that is the lost people – “In whom the God of this age has blinded the minds to the light of the glorious gospel.”

So light is knowledge, darkness is being blinded to knowledge, blinded to the gospel. Verse 6 says the same thing; that “God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. The light has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Light is knowledge. And darkness means ignorance, lack of knowledge, no knowledge. We saw, in Ephesians 4, where Paul says that the Gentile’s mind, or the pagan mind, the unregenerate, unsaved mind, is darkened, blinded. In Romans 1, it says the same thing: “Their foolish heart was darkened.” So light, intellectually, means knowledge, and darkness, intellectually, means ignorance, a lack of knowledge.

Morally, you have behavior. Sometimes light and darkness speak of holiness and unholiness. For example, in Isaiah chapter 5, to give you one illustration, verse 20, it’s a very graphic one: “Woe unto them who call evil good and good evil.” Boy, is that a sermon for today. “Woe unto them who call good evil and evil good, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put the bitter for the sweet and the sweet for the bitter.” And the point is he compares good and evil with light and darkness, and he’s talking about behavior. So sometimes the concept of darkness has to do with behavior. In Romans, chapter 13, we see a New Testament illustration of this. He says: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore” – watch this line – “cast off the works of darkness.”

Where there is intellectual darkness, there will be the works of that darkness. The next verse says: “Wild parties, drunkenness, immorality, shamelessness, strife, and envy.” So on the one hand, you have the intellectual side of darkness, not knowing God or His truth, which results in a moral darkness, doing the deeds of that darkness. On the other hand, light is knowing the truth, and it results in living it out. Now, as Christians, people, we walk in the light. Now, let me make it clear. If you’re a Christian you walk in the light. Let me tell you why. Look at 1 John, chapter 1, verse 5, it says this: “This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you” – here it comes – “that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”

Now, God is light and in Him is no darkness. If you are a son of God, you are a son of light, and if you are a son of light, there is in you no darkness at all. In other words, when you were redeemed, you were fully redeemed. There is no residual darkness. I do not believe that Christians walk in the darkness. Verse 7 of 1 John says it. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we are having fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from all sin.” Put the verse in reverse. If we are the ones whom the blood of Christ is cleansing from all sin, then we are the ones having fellowship one with another, then we are the ones walking in light.

In other words, the ones being forgiven are the ones in the light. And that’s the whole point. As long as we are God’s children, God is light, light produces light, God’s children are light, and Matthew 5:14 says it: “Ye are the light of the world.” We are called sons of light repeatedly in the New Testament. In 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, and verse 4: “Ye brethren, are not in darkness,” verse 5, “Ye are all sons

of light." If God is light, He gives birth to us, we become light, then, says Jesus, we are the light of the world. We walk in the light, we are the ones having fellowship, we are the ones being cleansed. The point is this is a definition of a Christian. A Christian is somebody is the light. We don't walk in darkness.

We have been translated, Colossians 1 says, out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, which is a kingdom of light, because He said, "I am the light of the world; whosoever followeth Me shall not walk in" – what – "darkness." I don't think there's any middle ground. I think when you were saved you were taken out of darkness into light. You say, "Well, what about when we sin?" Well, when you sin, you do the deeds of darkness, but you do them in the light. And they are manifest. Right? They are manifest. And we'll see more about that as we go. We are to walk, Ephesians 5:8, we are to walk as children of light. Listen, people: if we are the children of light, if we are the sons of light, if we are the sons of the day, if God is our Father, and He is light, and then we are the light of the world, we are to live that way.

Do you see what he is saying? Boy, what a great thing. What a tremendous truth. We are the light of the world. I don't believe a Christian can walk in darkness. I don't believe that. I think you can do the deeds of the darkness, but you're going to do them in broad light, and God's going to know, and everything is going to be exposed. Light and darkness are absolute opposites, just like conversion is an absolute opposite; the ultimate contrast - light and darkness. And we live in a world that's so dark, and so desperately in need of the light that we give, and so Paul says, "Walk as children of light."

You know, it's so sad, there is light for a dark world, and this is a dark world. Really, this is a dark world. Ephesians 4:18 sums up how really dark it is; and we studied it, didn't we? The apostle Paul says that "the understanding is darkened, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart." It's a dark world, a strange miscarriage of justice, the constant compulsion to do evil, the bitterness of separation and death, the darkness of the future, the dimness that hides truth, the inescapable reality that you can't find reality, it's a dark world. And we come to the world, and Jesus came to the world and offered light, but Jesus Himself said, "Men love" – what – "darkness rather than light because" – what – "their deeds are evil."

And what happens is they plunge deeper and deeper into the darkness. It's the story of a sick, dying man who cherishes his disease. It's the story of a blind man who pushes away the cure. And God has called us into the world to be light, to show light in a dark world. And the only way we can be effective at it is to walk as children of light, not to fiddle around doing the deeds of darkness. We have no part with that. Second Corinthians 6 says: "What fellowship has light with" – what – "with darkness? Christ with Belial? What concord has God with idols," see. That's – we don't have anything to do with that. We're light; walk as children of light. That's when he goes on to say in that same passage, "Cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In other words, we are light, let's live like light.

You know, it's unbelievable – when a Christian sins it's a relapse, and he's doing the deeds of darkness. How stupid, how stupid it is. Imagine it this way. Imagine there was a man – imagine yourself lost in a cave. And you keep trying to find your way out, but you get deeper and deeper, and the cave is a maze, and a network of tunnels, and so forth. And pretty soon you're down in the belly of the earth somewhere, and you haven't the slightest idea where you are. You're scared, your heart is pounding, you're eyes are wide open, but all you can see is an oppressive blackness that looks like it is liquid. And in the midst of that darkness, you grope for days, and days pass into a week, and the week begins into another week.

And finally you're feeling the cold, dirt walls, and the frenzy is mounting, and the fear is escalating, and then, way off somewhere, there is a pinpoint of light. And you move toward the light, and you grope, lest you fall into a deeper pit. And finally the light begins to crack open, and it becomes an exit, and you charge out of there with the strength that's left, and you're in the daylight, and the sun is beaming down on you, and you know a freedom like no freedom you ever conceived possible before such a terrible plight. And then not long after, you decide there are several things in the cave that you enjoyed, so you wind your way back – foolish, foolish. But that's essentially what a Christian does when he wants to do the deeds of darkness – makes no sense.

Now, Paul's going to tell us five things we need to know if we're to walk as children of light. Five things we need to know; very practical. Number one: the contrast, the contrast of children of light. And it's a very simple, beautiful contrast, verse 8: "For ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." That's not something extraordinary. We aren't shocked that he asked us to walk as children of light when he just said that's what we are. He's just saying "be who you are." And I've told you this before, the Christian life is simply becoming what you are - that's what it is. Living up to your identity; being who you are. So he says, "This is the contrast - you were that, you are this - live like what you are, not like what you were."

Very little different than Romans 6:16; you yield yourself servants to obey somebody, than obey them. This is your identity, then live it out. This is who you are, then act like that. Now, notice in verse 8 for a moment: "You were once darkness." This is past tense, people. This is in the past. Now, you go back to Ephesians chapter 2, you remember that? And he says, "You were dead in trespasses and sins," verse 1. In verse 2: "In time past you walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the sons of disobedience." "You had your manner of life," verse 3, "in time past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath." This is past stuff.

In chapter 2, verse 12, he says, "You were without Christ, you were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now," verse 13, "in Christ Jesus." See. So many times in Ephesians, you've got a "you were, but you

are." And by the way, beloved, that's all the way through the New Testament. You were, now you are - so live what you are. That, in fact, could be stated as the thesis of the epistles of the New Testament. You were, now you are - live what you are. That's all he's saying. Now, I want you to notice something very interesting in Ephesians 5:8. "You were once darkness." Did you note that he didn't say you were in darkness? He says you were darkness.

You are not just a victim of Satan's system, you are a contributor, see? You were darkness, you are now light. In other words, whatever dominion we are in, we are of. See? We're a part. We are that system. There is no system of evil in the world, apart from the darkness of the individuals who are that system, be they demons or men. There is no system of light in the world, apart from those who are the light of the world, be it Christ or be it Christ's. So we are not just victims, we are contributors. "And if we were darkness but now are light in the Lord," and that's the only place light is, "then we should walk as children of light." We should walk as children of light. We're walking in the light anyway; we might as well act like children of light.

Now, again, may I remind you, the darkness here is both intellectual and moral, and so is the light. It's not just what we know, it's what we are. Just as darkness is what we don't know and what we don't do, light is what we do know and what we do do. Now, let me show you something, comparing these two and giving you the contrast. Four characteristics of people who are darkness can be observed, are you ready? They're going to come by real quick. "You were darkness" – what were the characteristics of that life? Look at your past, what did you used to be? What are four characteristics of the darkness of your past?

Number one: you did the work of Satan. It is true of people in the darkness that they do the deeds of darkness. You did the works of Satan. Verse 11 talks about the unfruitful works of darkness. A person in darkness, a person who is darkness, does deeds that are darkness. That is, they are ignorant, and they are unholy. They show no knowledge of God, and they show no life of God in the heart and the soul. So first of all, they do the works of Satan. And by the way, if you read John 8:44, that's exactly what Jesus says; you do what you do because your father is who your father is, you are of your father the devil. So if you're in the darkness, you do the deeds of the one whom Luke 22:53 calls "the power of the darkness."

Satan is called the power of the darkness. So when you function in the darkness, you are empowered by Satan, you do his deeds. You know, it's hard for people to see this. It's hard for the average, nice guy on the block to realize that he is empowered and energized by Satan. People say, "Well, he doesn't foam at the mouth and fall over, and doesn't have seven demons rolling around, and all this." No, but you see, it's all a matter of degree. It's the same Satan controlling the system, it's just that there's different ways to do it with different individuals. Same problem, it's only a matter of degree.

The same hell will be occupied by people who were Satan-energized in gray flannel suits as it will be by witchdoctors from Bula-Bula land. You see, it's only a matter of expression. And so they do the works of Satan. And people who are darkness function in the deeds of darkness, the unfruitful works of darkness, the works of Satan.

Secondly, and this kind of builds on that, they are ruled by Satan - they are ruled by the prince of darkness, they are literally dominated by him. It isn't just that they do his deeds, being his children – and by the way, that's the whole point in the text here, if you're the child of Satan, you will do the deeds of Satan; if you're the child of God, you'll do the deeds of God. They not only do the thing he wants, but they literally are ruled and dominated by Satan. It is hard for people to realize that. But you remember that in Colossians 1 it says that you were taken out of the kingdom of darkness? It's a kingdom. It has a hierarchy, and it has a ruler, and it's Satan. And he is the one calling the shots.

People say, "Oh, I don't want to become a Christian; I'll give up my freedom" – the freedom of running around in a cave in pitch blackness trying to find a way out. That's the only freedom, and that's no freedom at all. That's no freedom at all. You don't give up freedom to become a Christian. You were victimized by the rule of Satan. Without Jesus Christ, Satan calls the shots in your life. The kingdom of darkness is ruled by the king of darkness, and he rules the life of those who are the darkness. Now, let's look at it from God's side for the last two things. You do the works of Satan under the rule of Satan, thirdly, which means you come under the penalty of God.

The penalty of wrath – that's a third characteristic of one who is darkness; God's penalty of wrath comes upon them. In Romans, chapter 1: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." In other words, the wrath of God is going to come on sin. And it talks about, verse 21, the people it's going to fall on are those whose foolish heart was darkened. Those who are the fools, you see. Those who exchange the truth for a lie; those who didn't want to retain God in their knowledge and went over to ignorance, and who did all kinds of evil things. Those are the ones.

In John, chapter 12, verse 35, our Lord had just presented Himself as the light, and He said, "You'd better respond to the light while you have the light, because a little while you won't have the light and darkness will come upon you and you won't know where to go. While you have the light," He says in verse 36 of John 12, "Believe in the light that you may be the sons of light." He gave them a message. But they didn't believe. It says in the next verse "they believed not." And then He said, "Well, then this is what Isaiah says; 'He's blinded their eyes, hardened their heart, they should not see with their eyes or understand with their heart, be converted and I should heal them.'" In other words, where you say to yourself, "I will not believe," God then says judicially, "You cannot believe." You come under divine judgment.

Which finally leads to the fact that people who do the deeds of Satan, under the dominion of Satan, come under the wrath of God, which - fourth and finally – leads to an eternal place of darkness. That's the fourth characteristic of these people. The ultimate end is darkness. Matthew 8:12 says, "They will be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Well, that's the story of the darkness. They do the deeds of darkness, under the dominion of the prince of darkness; it results in coming under God's judgment on darkness, which is an eternal hell, which is outer darkness. You want darkness? You can have it forever.

And we were once that. We were once that. But look at verse 8: "Now we're light," you see. This is the point. He's making this tremendous contrast. And by the way, this is germane to his whole thought here. He is trying to show you the absolute contrast. That's why he picks light and darkness; they are the absolute opposites. We were that - but now we're light. And there's a big difference. We don't do the works of Satan; we do the works of God, right? "We are His workmanship, created by Christ Jesus unto good works." We are not under the rule of Satan, we are under the lordship of Jesus Christ. We are not under God's wrath; we are under the promise of being participants in the kingdom of light. We will not go into a place of darkness, we will go to a place of light, and the Bible says there is no lamp there for the lamb is the light of it, see. The history is absolutely the opposite.

Those who are darkness do the works of Satan under the power of Satan, fall under the judgment of God, and end up in eternal darkness. Those who are the light do the deeds of light under the prince of light, the Lord Jesus Christ. And they become inheritors of the kingdom of light, and finally, an eternal heaven of light. See the difference? He's showing you how opposite these are. And he's saying, "Look, if you're a Christian, beloved, and you're here in the kingdom of light, then live as a child of light." Do you see the point? What would you have to do with that whole dominion over there? That realm is gone, it's past, it's over. So live like children of light. Not children of wrath, not children of disobedience, not children of the devil.

He goes a step further, point number two. He's given the contrast of the children of light, now he gives the characteristics. You say, "All right, Paul, I'm with you. Boy, if I'm not in that kingdom, I shouldn't mess with it. But what are the characteristics of children of light?" Oh, that's easy, he says in verse 9: "For the fruit of light," best manuscripts say light, not the Spirit, "For the fruit of light," that's what he's talking about, "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." That's pretty simple, isn't it? You don't need some great Bible teacher to unscramble that mystery. Goodness, righteousness, truth – those are the marks of those who walk in light.

You say, "Well, I'm a Christian, what should characterize my life?" Goodness, righteousness, truth. Hmm - that's terrific. You know, there were a lot of people, and still are, who claim to be in the light. "Oh yes, we're in the light, we made a decision for Christ, we've been born again. Oh, I've been going to church for years. I'm very religious, very religious. I've given a lot of money to the church. I've been in a certain denomination since I was baptized, christened, confirmed, or who knows what. Oh yes, I

remember when I received an award for learning the Bible." You know, people have all that stuff, "I'm a church member." But you know what the real test is? You see, the children of light are made manifest by the fruit of light. The children of light are made manifest by the fruit of light. There needs to be some fruit. That's what he's saying here.

And he says the fruit is this - look at it. Goodness, first of all. You know what I think? I think this is just a beautiful picture of how you relate to other people. There's a word in the Greek, *kalos*, which means good, it's translated good, it means free from defects and beautiful. Like that's a good painting, or that's a good jar you made, that's a good tapestry, it's free from defects, good. Then there's the word *chrstos*, which means useful. That's good for digging a hole, hey, that's good for holding that thing together, it's useful. But then there's *agathos*. *Agathos* is a beautiful word, your great-aunt, maybe her name was Agatha; that's where it comes from.

Agathos - you know what it means? It means overall, moral excellence, and one lexicon says especially active in behalf of others. It isn't just free from defects, it isn't just useful for certain things, it's just good, and it touches everybody in that same way, with a very positive, moral, excellent effect. And that's the word he uses here. This is what Paul meant in 1 Thessalonians 5:15, when he said, "Just do good to everybody." And I think this is the first element of the fruit of light, and that is that it touches other people with goodness. Look at yourself. If you're a child of light you're going to walk in light, and you're going to walk as a child of light, then the first thing should be goodness in terms of others.

The second thing I think points more toward God - righteousness. That has to do with your relationship to God, never deviating from His pure path of holiness. And the third term is truth. And as I checked out lexicons on that, I find an interesting thing. One said it means integrity, one said it means honesty, one said it means reliability, one said it means trustworthiness. And that has to do with my own self. First, goodness in relating to others; secondly, righteousness in relating to God; and thirdly, integrity as I view myself, as I am what I say – honesty, reliability, in contrast with the sham, and the falseness, and hypocrisy of the old life. This is God's desire for us.

And, beloved, he says, "Look, if you are walking as children of light, there is to be the fruit of light" – toward others, toward God, even within your own self. You ought to be able to examine your own life to see if you're really in the light. Now, there are people, as I said, who claim to be in the light, but there's one good way to tell. In Matthew, chapter 7, and verse 15, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them" – watch this one – "by their" – what – "fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" In other words, if they're a thorn and a thistle, nothing will grow on them. "Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit."

Now, listen to me, people: all Christians bear fruit. Did you get that? There's no such thing as a no-fruit Christian. There's a lot of little fruits, got nothing but a few shriveled raisins hanging on, but there's no such thing as a no-fruit Christian. If there's life, there will be product. "Every good tree brings forth good fruit. A corrupt tree brings forth bad fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth forth not good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire; wherefore by their fruits you shall know them." The point is this: if you are a child of light there will be the fruit of light, you see?

So when somebody comes along and says, "Well, we did this and we did this" - finally, you know, the next text in Matthew 7, He says, "You can say, 'Lord, Lord,' all you want, you can say you cast out demons, you did this, you did this, you did this, but I never knew you." No fruit, no life. And so some claim to be walking as children of light, but there's no fruit, and they lie. Now, from time to time, you know, we who are Christians who sin, and when we sin our product drops. And maybe they'll look a long time in your life to find some fruit, because your life isn't what it ought to be. The expression of your life at this point is sinful in some ways. The Christian who walks as a child of light will produce fruit, and as you sin, even as a Christian, fruit diminishes.

But what he's saying here is this: if you're really walking as a child of light, there is going to be some fruit there. There will be goodness, righteousness, and truth. And this will verify your life. Look at verse 10 – really great: "Proving," or verifying, "what is acceptable to the Lord." What is he saying here? You shouldn't just teach what is acceptable to God, you ought to live it; you ought to verify it in your life. This is the joy of the Christian, to be a living example of God's truth, to be a living verification of what is pleasing to God. People say, "Well, how do I know I'm a Christian? Or how do I know this person's a Christian?" It's verified in the fruit. It's verified in the fruit.

If you have to sit down with yourself and say, "I don't know if I'm a Christian. Well, let's see, yeah, I guess I am. I mean, I'm religious, and I've gone to church a long time, and I remember when I made a decision." If you've got to speculate and philosophize, you're not doing it the way the Bible says. You can prove what is acceptable to the Lord; you should be able to verify it by looking at your life. It ought to be there. If you do the deeds of the light, the light is in you, see. A child of God will bear some resemblance to his Father. You know, in the east, I was in Damascus one time, and they have these little tiny streets.

And the streets are dark because, not because the sun doesn't shine, but because over every little shop – there's no windows or anything, just an open shop – they hang all this material, so you can't see anything, it's dark in there. And they do it in little narrow streets, so there's a little tiny strip of light going down the middle of the street, in between all these things. And when you go in there, I remember we went into this place to buy some linen for my wife, and in order to tell if the stuff's any good, you've got to take it outside and find a little bit of light and hold it up and see if there's any flaws in it. And I guess, maybe, that's the idea. You know, I would only purchase something that passed the

test of light.

And I guess maybe that's the only way to really evaluate our lives. We can't determine that we're a Christian because of some past thing. The only way to do it is to show it up to the light and see if it stands the test, you see; to expose every action, to expose every decision, to expose every motive to the light of Christ and see whether it's genuine. You know, when I go into the airport and I have to put my suitcase through that X-ray machine? I never worry about that. I just go right on in there, just – I know I don't have any guns in there, I don't have any bombs, no hand-grenades, not smuggling diamonds, nothing. I don't worry about it. I don't mind having my suitcase X-rayed.

And you know, that's the way it ought to be with Christians. We don't mind having the light reveal what we are, because we find it will only verify the truthfulness of our identity, right? We ought to be willing to bring ourselves to the light, to prove by our living, to verify in our life, that we are light. So he says, "Look, the contrast is clear, you're not that anymore, you are light, now live it. And if you're really living it, here are the characteristics: goodness, and righteousness, and truth, and these will become the verification to you and everybody around you that you are walking as a child of light."

But beyond that, there's a command too. Look at that in verse 11. There's a command. The contrast and the characteristics lead to a command. Just in case you need something negative, he says in verse 11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." And you can stop right there. Just in case it isn't clear to you yet what I'm saying. Based on the contrast, you see, you're so different, you're so far removed, you're over here trying to verify the life of God in you, you're over here involved with goodness, righteousness and truth, you were that. Now, the point is have absolutely no fellowship with that. And he uses the word *sugkoinne*. *Koinne* means fellowship, you add a preposition to the front of it, it intensifies it.

Have no really intimate fellowship. In other words, don't you get involved at all in sin, the unfruitful activity of darkness. Don't get involved in the ignorance of the world toward God. Don't get involved in the immorality of the world. We've been saying this so many ways, people; there's no place for that. There is no place. We have no part. You say, "Well, does that mean you never go near anybody?" No, because we've got to touch the people of the world, we've just got to leave their sin alone. People say, "Well, if we're going to witness, don't we have to get a little involved?" No. The only way to witness is to not get involved. You'll destroy your testimony.

You know, it says in 1 Corinthians 5, that we're not to fellowship with fornicators, and coveters, and idolaters, and all that, and then it says those in the church - not those in the world. Those in the world need us; just don't do what they do. Reach out and love them, but don't do what they do, see. We're to be non-participants in the world's fare. Well, I don't know how you relate that to your life, but that's pretty practical stuff. Do not fellowship together with the unfruitful works of darkness. The system is sterile, see. It bears nothing. You have no part in it. It's a fruitless, dark system. Don't waste your

time.

You say, “Well, you mean I just sort of crawl in my little hole and don’t ever peek?” No, you don’t participate; you’ve got to peek, because the next thing is the commission. Look at this. The contrast leads to the characteristics, which leads to Paul’s command, and since we’re to have absolutely no fellowship, we might all bail out, and so he adds this. “But rather reprove them,” and the word reprove is expose. Listen: don’t do what they do, expose what they do. We are the spiritual CIA, folks. And our job is not to be involved, but to expose the crimes of darkness. Every one of us is called by God to do that. And the agent or the tool that does that is the Bible.

The Word of God, every word is “inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof.” We need to reprove. That means to expose the evil. You know, you can’t just say, “Well, I don’t like to say anything about what they’re doing.” You’d better say something – that’s your commission – by your life and your words. You know, sometimes just the way you live can expose people. Have you ever walked into a conversation that was really filthy, and they know you’re a Christian, and all of a sudden it gets real nice and clean, and “how’s church going? I know you go to church a lot. How’s church?” Yeah. I mean I remember playing golf with people, and about the fifth hole, they’d find out I’m a minister, and it changes their whole game. They can’t cuss, they can’t hit, you know. It’s amazing.

You know, I know that I know certain people who have lived a life of godliness in an ungodly environment, and they’re such a rebuke to the system that it cannot tolerate them, and they’ll be fired. But there’s more – it’s not just what you live, it’s what you say. You’ve got to be honest. You are commissioned by holy God to expose the evil of the world; to diagnose it, to confront it, and to offer the solution. That’s what he says. Reprove it, expose it, crack it open. It’s a cancer to be removed; you aren’t helping anybody by hiding it. We can’t go waltzing around the world with all this lovey-dovey stuff, never ever acknowledging sin. You know, some people say, “Well, we just want to love everybody all the time.” Well, that’s not evangelism.

I’ve told you before, you’ve got to make people feel rotten first; then make them feel good. They’ve got to feel bad, and then they know they need to feel good. We’re not only not to fellowship, we’re to expose it. Now listen, people: you know what’s wrong with us in most cases? As Christians, you know, we don’t see this contrast as dramatically as God sees it, just light and darkness. I mean we are just out of that system altogether. But here we are, we’re piddling around, playing around with the deeds of darkness, miles from being a spiritual CIA, from really going after and uncovering evil. You know, we should be so mature, and so far along, that we can expose evil, that we can search it out, and expose it, and offer the diagnosis and the cure.

But instead, most Christians are barely hanging on to the edge for their own life, let alone trying to deal with somebody else. People say, “Well, I certainly can’t help anybody else get out of this thing

until I get over some of my own problems." You know, that's way back, people. You've got to take care of that part, and then we ought to be out there really exposing evil. I'll tell you something else: if you're busy exposing evil, it will have an impact on your own life, right? Sure, it will. We are to speak to sinners. We're to tell them it's evil. Why? Look at verse 12: "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." I mean the stuff that they do is so rotten, and so wretched, and so vile, it isn't even to be spoken about, let alone done.

It desperately needs to be reproved. You see, you can't just let it go on. It's evil, it's vile, the things they do are unspeakably evil, and this is the heart of God talking here. And here we are in our world, where we're drowning in a sea of media stuff that pumps into us, that there's no such thing as evil, and we say, "Well, it's not so bad." It's evil. It shouldn't even be talked about. It shouldn't even be entertained in a conversation. It's so wretched, and it needs to be dealt with and exposed. And yet sometimes, you know, by just turning on your television in your home, you expose your child to a tolerance of the very thing you shouldn't even talk about; the thing that you should expose as evil.

So he says, "The things that they do in secret are shameful to even talk about." It shouldn't even be talked about. You know, I read a book on the homosexual problem written by a Christian this week that talked about the problem of homosexuality in such lurid terms that it was like pornography. Now, that isn't right. You don't need to do that. You can give God's solution without portraying every evil thing that could possibly go on in that relationship. That's no necessary. These are wretched things that the world does. And they are to be reproved. They are things too shameful to even speak of, let alone to tolerate. And so he says, "Look, you are commissioned in this world. You ought to be beyond struggling yourself. Grow up, so that you can not only get beyond that hang-up, but that you can be a reprover of others, and you can be one who exposes evil."

Four – verse 13 – watch this: "For all things that are reproved" – now watch this, this is fabulous – "are made manifest by the light." In other words, listen, if the light doesn't get on, they'll never be made manifest. Do you see what he's saying? Anything that is manifest will be manifest by light, for whatever makes manifest is light, and if you're the light and you don't make it manifest, then it won' be made manifest. Do you see? This is your commission, people. Get out there, and reprove sin, and expose sin, because you're the light, and if you don't do it, it'll never be exposed, because it is the light that manifests. Light is that which manifests. And whatever makes manifest is light.

People, we've got to realize this – we're back to the basics again. Nobody gets saved unless they come to God, repenting of sin. Nobody knows what sin is unless somebody exposes it, right? It is not evangelism to tolerate people, and to just love them, and never talk about their evil. It is evangelism to make them face the fact of sin. For whatever makes manifest is light; the only hope they have is that the light would shine and make manifest. And so we've got to do it, people. That's why we're the lights of the world. So he says the contrast is clear - darkness and light. The characteristics, if you're going to walk as a child of light, goodness, righteousness, truth. The command, don't have anything

to do with the things they do. The commission, expose what they do, because it's shameful stuff, and you're the only light there is to expose it.

And then finally, he closes, and he closes with an invitation. I guess the apostle Paul felt there would be some people who would read Ephesians who didn't know Christ, and he wanted to throw an invitation in. And so he says in verse 14: "Wherefore he saith" – and I believe that the "he saith" here, the reference to Isaiah, chapter 60, and verse 1. Isaiah, chapter 60, and verse 1, when dealt with from the Hebrew text, conveys the identical thought, although this particular verse gives its fulfillment. Isaiah 60 says, "Arise and shine, for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Of course, that looked forward to the Messiah, and this interpretation of it looks back to what Christ has done.

And so he says, "The prophet says, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'" He puts Christ in Isaiah's words, because Christ is the fulfillment. May I add this? Most Bible commentators believe that this is a line from an Easter hymn sung by the early church – a line from an Easter hymn. It's an invitation. Somebody may be sitting in our congregation right now and saying, "Well, I guess I'm in the darkness. I look at my life and I don't see goodness and righteousness and truth. I don't see Jesus Christ alive in my life. I've never known God. I'm in the dark intellectually, and I see moral evil on every hand."

And so the invitation comes to you as it does throughout history: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And you have in that one little tiny verse, a whole picture of the gospel, a whole little Bible. First the sinner is described as one who sleeps, and then the summons is offered to awake and arise, and the Savior is presented – "Christ shall give thee light." It shows the dilemma of sinfulness, it gives the invitation to the sinner, and shows who the Savior is. Like Rip Van Winkle, men are going to sleep through an age, only it won't be an age of history, it will be an age of grace. And they'll wake up and it will be too late, and so he says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Light – no more moral darkness, no more intellectual darkness. John Holland, in his dying moments, swept his hand over the Bible that was lying on his chest, and he said to his wife, "Honey, did you light the candles?" "Oh no," she replied, "I didn't." "Oh," he said, "it must then be the light of the face of Jesus Christ that I see." Living in the light; and there is one ray of light, and it's Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Horatio Bonar put it magnificently in these words: "I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light, look unto Me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright. I came to Jesus, and I found in Him my star, my sun. And in that light of life I'll walk, till traveling days are done."

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for the truth of Proverbs 4:18, The path of the righteous is as the dawning light that shines more and more unto the perfect day. Thank You, Father, that You're a God

of light, who sent the light into the world that we might become children of light, that our lights could so shine that we would light the darkness, and men would come to the light. Speak to every one of us, Lord, in a special way, this morning. We’re so grateful for Your ministry in our hearts through this text, in Christ’s name.

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