

# Changed By The Light

Ephesians 5:6-14

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 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. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

(Ephesians 5:6-11 (ESV))

You might recall me saying to you recently that as I awaken each morning, one of my first delights is that I turn to Psalm 27 and read the words . . .

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1 (NKJV))

And though I have read and enjoyed those words for so very long now, I confess to you that until recently, I have not allowed their true meaning to sink into my soul and to do the work they are intended to do, especially regarding the word “light”.

And how often that is the case! With good intentions, we open the scriptures and read, but the focus of our mind is somewhere else, and though our eyes see the words, our mind and our spirit fail to grasp their true meaning and to allow them to do their intended work in us.

As I again read those words a few days ago, I also noted that there was a “reference” number next to the word “Light”, a number that referred me over to Psalm 18:28 which reads . . .

28 You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. (Psalm 18:28 (NIV))

And isn't that exactly what we have been studying about here in these words of Ephesians 5 . . . that all the world is completely and continually immersed within a mysterious kind of darkness, a darkness that holds captive and controls everyone who lives within it. And strangely, those who live in that darkness seem completely unaware of its presence. They are blinded to its existence and to its corrupt nature. That darkness is all that they know and because of that, “darkness” is simply their “normal”.

But as we have been saying over these past few weeks, thanks be to God, He has provided us a way out of that darkness. And that way out has directly to do with this very special “light” of God that we have been reading about, that special “light” that Jesus Himself brings into our souls when we receive Him in salvation.

And it is no mere coincidence that His “salvation” is spoken about right alongside His “light” here in Psalm 27. . . “The LORD is my light and my salvation”. His “light” in an integral part of the salvation He brings. And beginning with that very first moment of our salvation, His “Light” commences an ongoing work to dispel all the darkness within and around us, showing us a way out of that darkness and revealing things to us that we never knew before, changing us from within.

May I take a few moments here and repeat a small portion of the message that we heard last week because it is so meaningful to our understanding about this special “Light” that Christ brings to us.

You will recall that in the Book of Genesis when God brought His special light into the world, He described His special “light” as being “good”. And His “light” was so very, very “good”. And we asked the question, “Why would God’s special “light” be described in that way, as being so very “good”? And we said that it was because unlike the ordinary light that comes from the natural sun and allows a person to see the creation around them, God’s “True Light” has far greater abilities within it. God’s “True Light” enabled all of creation, and especially Adam and Eve, to actually see everything as it really was. Not just the physical appearance of the created things, but His special “True Light” enabled Adam and Eve to see the “beauty of the holiness of God” as it filled all of the things of creation.

And as I have pondered that thought, immediately comes to my mind the contrasting manner in which the unbelieving world, with its evolutionist views, considers God’s creation. They seem to view all things purely from a “physical” and “lifeless” analytical viewpoint, seeing only the scientific makeup of matter, the heavens and the earth, the trees of the fields, the animal kingdom, and on and on, in only their natural state of being. And they see the existence of mankind, you and me, as simply another stage of animal development . . . and nothing more.

How pathetically small their analytical studies make the magnificent beauty of God’s creation out to be. Sadly, the only thing they accomplish with their fruitless studies is to “analyze the precious life right out of everything that exists”. While

they may protest my words, it seems to me that from their viewpoint, a leaf from a tree is not a beautiful and artistic creation, but is instead reduced to being only its “species, genus, family, order, phylum and on and on.

Dear friends, such small mindedness belittles the true nature and beauty of who God is and all the glory that He has put into His magnificent creation. And I must tell you that their demeaning of such a magnificent work makes me angry for our God. He and His creation is so much, much more and so much, much better than all of the foolishness they make of it. Those same people would not dare stand in the face of the art world and declare that a Rembrandt painting created itself and that Rembrandt, if he existed at all, had little or nothing to do with it.

May I say that those people can be described as nothing less than “brilliant fools”! And I refuse to accept their small minded foolishness. I choose instead to see God and all of His creation through the “Light” of His eyes and to see the “beauty of His holiness” in all that He has created. Listen to these words from Psalm 29 . . .

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (Psalm 29:2 (KJV)

Listen . . . though you and I might not as yet, with our infant faith, fully comprehend what we are actually seeing around us each day, because of His “light” flowing through us, we can now at least begin to have the “sight” He desires us to have. We can now begin to see everyone and everything through the “beauty of God’s holiness”, and to love and to appreciate them as He does. Everything that takes place in our ordinary day can now be filtered through the lenses of that same “goodness” that God first brought into the world at creation. We can now begin to see His Will and His purposes and His special “Plans” that He speaks about in Jeremiah 29 . . .

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

May I give a personal testimony? In those years that I lived in the blindness of that darkness, I cared very little for anyone or anything outside of myself. Mostly, I cared only to the extent that other people and opportunities could benefit me. But in some miraculous way, when God began to shine His special “light” into my soul, changes began to take place. I know that is so because now my thoughts are inexplicably different. And no, those changes did not take place “overnight”. They have taken many years and are still ongoing, especially in these most

recent years. Now I find myself caring far more for other people and for their needs than I would have ever imagined possible. And I must tell you, I love my new thoughts.

And the only explanation that can account for such changes is this one regarding the “Light of Christ” that has come to live within my soul. Recall again, the verses that we read from John 1,

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

(John 1:1-5 (ESV))

And verse 14

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14 (ESV))

Here in verse 4, we read

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

All throughout these scriptures, and especially in the New Testament, we are told that the very Presence of the Spirit of Christ actually comes to live within our being, not outside of us, not just near to us, but even more, He lives and abides within you and me.

And with Christ so Present within us, we cannot help but have His precious “light” filling all that we are, all that we think and all that we do, changing and redefining every aspect of who we are. A favorite song that we have sung over the years declares the words,

“To come into the presence of the Living Lord is to be changed. We cannot come into His High and Holy place and stay the same”.

You and I who have Christ, truly are different now! We have been changed! Do we feel different, do we act different, certainly not as we should, but we really have been changed and we really are different. And we need to be able to testify to that difference . . . to that change.

May I ask each of you to consider the evidence of the change that has taken place within your soul? As I said a moment ago, for myself, in the years that I lived in the blindness of that darkness, I cared very little for anyone or anything outside of myself. But now my thoughts are inexplicably different. Now I find myself caring far more for other people and their needs than I would have ever imagined possible.

And again, the only explanation that can account for such changes is that the “Light of Christ” is abiding within my soul and is bringing about those new and better thoughts and behaviors. And to the extent that I surrender my “will” to His “will” on a moment by moment basis, everything that I think and say and do comes out very differently, and far better.

And may I take these thoughts a little bit further. God’s precious “light” within us is what Jesus was talking about when He said words such as those we read in John 3,

3 Jesus answered (Nicodemus) and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."  
(John 3:3 (NKJV))

Note the words “see the Kingdom of God”. And then in Matthew 5 we also read,  
8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”  
(Matthew 5:8 (ESV))

And there are so many, many other similar precious truths like those, telling us that the mysterious “Kingdom of God” is all around us right now and we are actually taking part within it. And with His precious “Light”, our “eyes” are opened to see God and to see His kingdom, and to see so many other things that we could never see before.

You might be thinking right now . . . “I don’t know if I see what he is speaking about”. And may I say that too often, neither do I. But as I beseech the Lord to allow me to see Him and His “Providential Hand”, while it is at work in my daily life, He does exactly that. And oh, how comforting and reassuring my circumstances have become.

And may I bring one other thought to our minds that I believe directly relates to all that we are saying? A few days ago, I was asked if I believed that “miracles” still did take place in our world today, or have miracles ceased to be, as some in our Christian community claim. And my thoughts immediately went to these things

that we are talking about here, the ever-present “hand of God” intervening and changing the “natural” things of our daily life and making them different.

Folks, is that not the very definition of the word “miracle”, a circumstance or an event that departs from the natural order of this world, a mysterious supernatural “hand” that is inserted into the “natural” sequence of life, causing things to be different from their natural order? Or do we hold out and insist that for a miracle to be a miracle, it has to measure to the level of the ones that the Lord Jesus performed, the “raising of the dead”, the “giving of sight back to the blind”, or God “parting the waters in the wilderness”?

While yes, those were all wonderful “miracles”, I am fully convinced that God’s “miracles” actually do continue to take place every moment of every day, His intervening hand “reaching in” and changing us and changing the circumstances of our daily life, bringing about His will and His purposes.

And so, as I pray each day, asking God to insert His “big and powerful and loving Hand” into my daily “wish list” and to miraculously save the souls and to change the lives of my children and my grandchildren, I believe that such blessed answers to prayer is simply who He is and what he does. And yes, those truly are miracles! Psalm 119,

<sup>173</sup> Let Your hand become my help, For I have chosen Your precepts. <sup>174</sup> I long for Your salvation, O LORD, And Your law is my delight.  
(Psalm 119:173-174 (NKJV))

One last thought before we close. A saint of old, Brother Lawrence, wrote a book entitled “The Practice of the Presence of God”. And He was noted for doing exactly that, practicing the presence of Christ, and for the intimacy he had with Christ. And so should we also be noted in the same way, because God truly is present, and He is abiding within each one of us who have Him as Savior and Lord.

And the Light of His presence truly does change us daily, in ways we could never imagine. And all that He asks of us is that we surrender ourselves and “let” Him do it.

I’ll close with some of the words of the song that I mentioned a moment ago, “Change Me Lord”. Listen!

To come into the presence of the living God is to be changed.  
You cannot come into his high and holy place and stay the same.  
So, change me Lord, remake me Lord,  
Conform me to the image of your Son.  
Change me Lord, remake me Lord,  
Til Father, Spirit, Jesus, we are one.