

Walk As Children Of 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))

For several weeks now, we have been studying these truths in Ephesians 5 and asking the Lord to reveal to us His answers to the mysteries that are cloaked within these two very mystifying words, “darkness” and “light”. And He has been doing exactly that.

We have learned that the “darkness” spoken about here is all-encompassing and invasive, covering over and reaching into every soul that lives within that darkness, whether they be “saved” or “unsaved”, and seeking to exert control over all that takes place within that darkness.

We have also said that thanks be to God, as the “light of Christ” enters into a person’s soul in salvation, He provides them freedom from the control of that “darkness”.

But though we be set free from it, the darkness still remains and fills the earth. And you and I are called to remain here in its presence and continue on with life, intermingling and relating with the people who are still caught up in that darkness. And we are kept here for a very important purpose. As these words in verse 8 suggest, along with the blessing of our having received “the light of Christ”, comes responsibilities. Listen!

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

As these words suggest, you and I have things that we are called to do with the “light” we have received, things that must begin first within our own souls, but then also reach on out to others, especially to those who are still caught up in the snares of that darkness. Listen!

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:14-16)

And in James 1 we are strongly exhorted that our just hearing and knowing the truths of God is not enough. We must also put His truths into use.

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25 NIV)

The light of Christ flowing through our souls has made us to be very different people from who we once were. We have truly been changed. And we must diligently get about acting and speaking and doing as God's special light directs us. And so, may I ask you, "are you still just a 'hearer', a gatherer of information, or are you a 'doer' of God's word"?

As I have been saying to us over and over again, God really does have a plan for us. And it is a very definitive plan. And we need to be asking and seeking and knocking to find out those things that we are supposed to be doing in that plan.

As I have pondered these words,

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

my thoughts have been directed over to a portion of scripture given in Psalm 119. And I would like for us to turn there and think through these words together.

Here, God gives us some very special words and expressions that perfectly fit this command for us to "walk as children of the light". One of those words is "blessed", another is "walk" and another is "way". And all three of those words are here in verses 1-3. Listen!

1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, 3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! (Psalm 119:1-3 (ESV))

The word "walk", as it is used here is simple, but all inclusive. It means every step we take, every thought we think, every relationship we involve ourselves in, every conversation we have, every bit of work we put our hand too, literally every breath we breathe, is to be done in the ways of the Lord. God is that serious!

May I again take us to the commentaries of Matthew Henry to help us better grasp the understanding of these words here in Psalm 119, and in particular the words “walk” and “ways”. Matthew Henry tells us, and I will summarize his words . . .

“Godly people are especially happy people; they are, and shall be, blessed indeed. And such blessed contentment is the thing that all people desire and do pursue after. And all men could be happy if they truly would seek to walk in the ways of God, but few take that right way.

Here in this Psalm, God has laid before us the right way to walk, which we can be confident will end in happiness, though His way often will be strait and narrow and difficult.

For them that walk in the law of the Lord, God's word is law to them, not just in some circumstances, but in the whole course of their behaviors; they walk within the hedges of that law, which they dare not break through by doing anything it forbids. And they walk in the paths, the ways, of that law, which they will not trifle in, but will press forward in them towards the mark, taking every thought into captivity and never walking in other adventures.

This is walking in God's ways, the ways which he has marked out for us and has appointed us to walk in, and not in the ways of the world, or the ways of our own hearts. It will not serve us to just make religion the subject of our conversation only, but we must make it our rule of life, to walk in His ways, being doers of His word”.

And I say amen to these words! Here in our scripture text for today from Ephesians 5, we read essentially the same message that is given in Psalm 119. Listen again to verse 8,

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

God has an exact “way” for you and me to walk, both an exact path and an exact manner of behavior that He not just desires of us, but strongly “commands” of us to walk. And here in Psalm 119, we are promised that if, and as, we do walk in His ways, then our reward will be a kind of blessed happiness that we have never known before.

And God repeats those promises over and over again throughout these scriptures so that we can't mistake them or misunderstand them. Listen to the way He words His promise of blessings in Psalm 103 . . .

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5)

Folks we cannot begin to count the blessings that will come to us as we commit ourselves to simply walking in the ways of the Lord. Here in Ephesians 5, we are reminded that Christ has entered into our lives and has taken up residence within our souls, bringing His special "Light" with Him, that same all revealing "light" that is part of His nature, that same light that He "lit" up the whole world with at creation.

We who once lived in and walked in "darkness" (and I did for the first 29 years of my life) . . . we who once lived in and walked in "darkness" have now not only received the "light" of Christ, we have actually become a part of His "light".

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

May I stop and ask, "Have you given these words much real thought . . . that in your salvation, you are now 'Light'"? It is who you now are, and it is completely contrary to your new nature to fall back into that "darkness", and to "walk as children of the darkness".

I know that to be true for myself, and God is gracious to remind me of it. Such as, when I come into contact with the corrupt ways of the world, I am pricked to the soul, flinching when I see vulgar pictures on the television or hear vulgar and profane words being spewed out before me, or when I see people mistreating one another, and on and on.

Another question . . . does it bother you, perhaps even insult you, when a person cautions you, warns you, reminds you of something that you think is already a part of your way of doing things. Do you find yourself quickly responding with, "I know that", or "I do that", or as one of the comical television commercials repeats "everyone knows that". May I suggest that our wrong responses come often from our "ego" and not from the righteous light of Christ that flows within us?

Here in these words, God is doing as He has done all throughout the Old Testament as well as throughout the New, He is reminding our forgetful souls of a truth that will greatly bless our souls if we will just be humble enough to receive and remember it. We are believers now and are fully saved, we just need to get on about it and "walk as children of the light".

. . . May we take the last few moments of our time today and ask ourselves how we can do exactly that, how we can “walk as children of the light”, how we can work out this great salvation that Christ has worked into our souls, and how to do that in the practical matters of our day, how we can let His perfect light shine through and not only give light to our own path, but also provide light to others around us, our wives, our husbands, our children, our grandchildren, our friends, and on and on.

First, may we remind ourselves of the place we need to always go to when we seek to find and to receive the practical advice we need for our “walk” in His “way”? That place begins and ends with the Lord and within these scriptures. And bear with me because I want to read several of these scripture verses. First in Psalm 27,

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation. (Psalm 27:1 (NKJV))

And in Psalm 18,

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

Psalm 119, verse 105

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105 (ESV))

And Psalm 119, verse 130,

130 The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
(Psalm 119:130 (NASB))

We sometimes hear it said by even some of the most devout of believers that because these scriptures were written so long ago, they cannot always be relevant and speak to today’s circumstances. But may I say to us emphatically that the answer to every problem and every sin that we will ever encounter in this life is either addressed specifically in these scriptures, or at least clearly implied. All we have to do is be diligent in our search of them. So then yes, these words of these scriptures are perfectly relevant and are the exact “light” that we need for everything we think, say and do.

Consider these next words for a moment and compare them to the obvious corrupt lifestyles in today’s culture.

John 3:19-21

19 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. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light,

so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:19-21 (ESV))

Today, we are being besieged with sinful behaviors all around us, and they are being forced upon us by the media, and even by our government. And there seems always to be a concentrated effort to demand that we accept and include those sinful behaviors within our Christian religious beliefs, currently, the most pressing coming from the homosexual groups, and the proponents of secular psychology and even the pro-abortionist groups.

They seem to want our churches to validate their sinful behaviors by accepting them into our fold, bringing corruption into our Christian faith. You and I must be careful in the handling of our thought processes and we must seek out the real truths within these scriptures. And once we find the righteous answers to our questions, we must be strong and diligent to walk in that truth. We are told clearly in James 3 that

17 . . . the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. (James 3:17 (ESV))

Yes, we are to love and to minister to those people who are lost in those corruptions of sin, but we are not to accept and endorse their sinful behaviors simply to keep peace in our family, in our friendships, or in our church. Our religion is first of all “pure”, and righteous and holy, and then it is peaceable.

And this warning is to be held too strongly by our Christian leaders. I find that many of the Christian leaders of our day are carefully “mincing” their words so as not to offend those in their membership that want to hang onto their sinful ways. And that should never be.

We Christians are clearly being described all through these scriptures as being the “light” that will show sinners out of their ways of darkness and unbelief. And we must always be up for the task. Listen again to the words in Matthew 5,

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

And In 1 John 1:5-7

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him

while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7 (ESV))

It's time to close for the day, but may I quickly say, and strongly so, that we are not to be unkind and unloving as we show forth the light of Christ, especially to those who are lost in their sins! God will give us gentle words of instruction to say if we will only ask and seek and knock.

It is truly a "thin line" that we must walk, but we must walk it. It is now who we are. We are the "light of the world" and we must be that light, no matter what it costs us personally. And again, we must always walk that walk in love. Listen as we close . . .

14 You are the light of the world.

. . . 16 . . . let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)