

Ephesians 5:8–14

“When Christ the Sunrise Has Risen upon You and Transformed You into Light”

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How should believers respond, when their new life in Christ makes an uncomfortable contrast with those around them? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Ephesians 5:8–14 prepares us for the second reading in Morning Public Worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these seven verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the LORD hasn’t just brought us from darkness into light but transformed us from being darkness into being light. This makes for tension with those who are still darkness, so let us seek what is acceptable to the Lord Who is our Life, and find increasingly comfortable our increasing fellowship with Him. Then we will not be distressed by the tension that exposes the darkness around us and will increasingly hope that He uses us to increase His light in the world.

Thursday, December 23, 2021 ▫ Read Ephesians 5:8–14

Questions from the Scripture text: What were the Ephesians before (v8)? What are they now? How should they walk? In what three things is the fruit of the Spirit (v9)? What are they to find out (v10)? With what are they not to have fellowship (v11a)? What should their conduct do instead (v11b)? What is shameful even to speak of (v12)? What does the light do to those things (v13)? What two things are we commanded to do by the light of Christ in v14?

Up to this point in Ephesians, the apostle has been teaching that Christ’s salvation is a life-transforming salvation. Believers are a new creation (2:10), with a new calling (4:1), and a new character (5:1).

The contrast between the old and the new is put quite starkly in v8—not just that we were once in darkness, but that we ourselves were darkness. Not just that we have come into the light, but that we ourselves are now light.

When he tells us to walk as children of light, He is picking up on the fact that the God of Whom we are beloved children (v1) is the God Who is light, and in Whom there is no darkness at all (cf. 1Jn 1:5). “Now that you are light,” says the apostle, “keep making step by step in your forward progress as lightlings.”

So, what does a “light-ling” look like as he walks? He’s fruitful (v9a). The Spirit of God, the Spirit Who is producing light in us, bears fruit in us: all goodness, righteousness, and truth (v9b). The fruit of consistency with God’s character (goodness), God’s standards (righteousness), and God’s Word (truth). These are the kinds of things that we should determinedly discover, constantly “finding out whatever is acceptable [pleasing to] the Lord”(v10).

Lightlings do works (2:10) that are fruit of the Spirit’s light in them. But those who are still darkness do works that have none of this fruit in them at all—*unfruitful works of darkness* (v11). Everything that we do is either a fruit of light, or else it is an unfruitful work of darkness. So, when lightlings and darklings come across one another, the fruitlessness of the darkness is exposed by the fruitfulness of the light.

This is an uncomfortable thing for those who are darkness. It’s hard to be someone in whom the miracle of new creation has not taken place, when everyone around you is popping out light-fruit. The temptation for those who are lightlings is to “tone it down” to make it easier for the darkness to be around them.

But to tone it down is to stifle the fruit, to hide the light, and even to have some share in the darkness continuing to be unfruitful. Are we really willing to have a share in the kind of thing that it is even shameful to speak about (v12)? Or, would we prefer to have a share in that exposing of darkness that Jesus uses to actually turn darkness into light (v13)?

Christ is that awakening, resurrecting, shining light described in Isaiah 51:17, 52:1, 60:1–3; Luke 1:75,78–79. And when He saves us, He turns us into light-lings that expose others as darkness Whom He may save and transform into light.

So, don’t shrink back from bearing that light-fruit and the discomfort that can come to the darkness when it is exposed. Instead, since He has transformed you into light, SHINE!

Around whom are you embarrassed to shine by walking in goodness and righteousness and truth? Whom should you seek to please when around those people? How is this actually good for those people?

Sample prayer: Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, for You have visited and redeemed Your people. You have fulfilled Your promise to save us so that we might serve You without fear, in holiness and righteousness before You all the days of our life. Through Your tender mercy, O God, You have made Your sunrise to shine upon us and given us light so that we might be light. Forgive us for when we slide back into living as if we are darkness, and grant that Your Spirit would persist with us until You have shaped us completely according to Your marvelous light in Jesus Christ, through Whom we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH400 “Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

So Let us take heed to our hearts. How we hear these words. They're the words of God, Ephesians 5 versus 8 through 14 for you or dark one for you were one starkness, but now, you are light in the Lord, walk as children of light for the fruit of the Spirit is in old goodness righteousness.

And truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them furnace, shameful to, even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light for whatever makes manifest as light, Therefore he says Awake, you who sleep arise from the dead and Christ will give you light.

So one of the truths about our life, apart from the Lord Jesus, and the life of the Spirit in us to give us faith in Christ. So that we would have the life of Christ in us and belong to Him and live. Our lives as those who are Christ's and those who know that Christ is ours, One of the truths about the transition from our previous life, to this new life and Christ as that previously, before you belong to, the Lord, Jesus through faith.

You walk in darkness and once you belong to Christ and are made new and he's given you new life, you walk in light, but if you pay attention to verse 8, It's not just talking about walking in darkness and walking in light. He says for you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord.

So, there's, you know, the condition of the unbeliever is much worse than just being in darkness and not knowing what God says and not seeing what to do. The condition of the unbeliever is that they are. Darkness, that darkness and death is what is in there being anything good outwardly that they do or appreciate, you know, all of those kinds of things.

That's a mercy of God. Restraining holding back, what they are in and of themselves. And one of the things that is amazing about what God does in us, when He makes us alive to believe in Jesus and to belong to Him is not only doing now, walk in the light.

But he says, you are light in the Lord. So the old self that was us. Outside of Christ gets killed when you when you trust in Jesus. Now there's a lot that's left over from that old self in you and you fight against the remaining darkness and the remaining death and you may get very frustrated like the Apostle sounds very frustrated in Romans chapter 7 about how much death is left in you from your former self but the other thing he says in chapter 7 is that that death that you find always with you and that you're fighting against.

If you belong to Jesus by faith, that death is not. You you in the Lord are life. You in the Lord are light. And as those two things are at war, you trusting in, Jesus can rejoice. That the one that is you in that battle is the one that has joined to Jesus Christ.

You were darkness. Verse 8 says, but now you are light in the Lord. And so he says, walk as children of light, the Lord Jesus is light. And He says, what He who has seen me, has seen the Father. And we know that the Father is unto us, a father of lights from whom continuously comes Everything, good and everything, perfect.

And as we see the perfect goodness of Jesus, we see the display of the brightness of God's glory God. The Son having become man and being the perfect and great revelation of God himself. Now, one of the marvelous things that the Holy Spirit is doing for us is He's making us to be more and more like Jesus.

So not only has he made you light in Jesus Christ, but he makes you as it were brighter and brighter. As he helps you kill the remaining darkness and grow and intensify the new light that is the life of Christ in you Suddenly hating your sin and stopping it and loving righteous and growing in.

It becomes very exciting because now you're participating in this process of the Holy Spirit has started of making you more and more, a picture of Jesus, brighter and brighter light, as he kills the darkness, more and more and in a world that is still darkness, the brighter, you become, the more, you show, the goodness of what Jesus is like, and what Jesus makes you like when He saves you.

Now that's uncomfortable for the world. Those who are in darkness. Don't like the light shown on them because then it's revealed what they are doing and those who are darkness dislike having light shown on them even more Because now it's not just a revelation of or an exposing of how bad what they are doing.

Is, It's an exposing of how bad what they are is but as how bad what they are is exposed. And how good what Jesus is is displayed and how good what Jesus does to those. Who He is saved. Is displayed, the salvation of Jesus's, displayed and he gives you opportunity as you announce that.

The light King has come and he's offered terms of peace where you may surrender and belong to Him. And by His Spirit, He makes you a light link and makes you to shine with His brightness. And that contrast is a big part of the announcement of Christ and His salvation.

So, what's happening in Ephesians 5 is you got an age of darkness? You've got people who are liked and were tempted to want. What We're tempted to want to fit in. We're tempted to want to not make people feel badly about themselves because that's uncomfortable. And our remaining sinfulness, not only wants to continue sitting, but it comes down in this conflict on the side of wanting the, you know, wanting people to feel more comfortable around us being sinners.

In fact, there are whole churches that they're worship and their fellowship times are built around, making it comfortable to be sinful there And they teach a form of evangelism. But that in fear quotes, that is designed around making sinners feel comfortable about being sinful with you. Now sinners do like to be loved.

And the big part of the light of Christ is loving them And yet, sinners that the Lord, Jesus is bringing to repentance will enjoy that love and hate the sin and enjoy Christ Himself and turned in and sinners that. The Lord Jesus is not being bringing to repentance. They will not like being around you, even if you love them because your brightness, your godliness, the fruit of the Spirit in, you is exposing their sin.

So he says for you or one starkness, but now you are light in the Lord, walk as children of light for the fruit of the Spirit. So you've got the spirit versus the flesh, the spirit, your new life in Christ. The flesh who you used to be without him.

The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness righteousness and truth finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. Now, the old nature, always wants to find out what is acceptable to people. How can I fit in? How can I look a certain way so that people will like me?

How can I learn the things that that people will like, how can I be? How can I make them comfortable with me? But we are verse 10 to be finding out what has acceptable to the Lord. How can I grow into this new life with the Lord that is liked?

How can I obey Him more? Please Him more reflect. What He is. Like more display him more. And that doesn't mean how can I it tried to be as offensive as possible to others, but it does mean. How can I love them in such a way that I know that they may find offensive?

But I'm not trying to figure out how to not offend them. I'm trying to figure out how to please the Lord. So hat. And he goes on to say, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. Do I want to be with them? Yes.

But when I am with them, what do I want to do have fellowship with their works or have fellowship with Christ's works? And if I have fellowship with Christ's works and Christ's works our light. What does light do to the darkness? It exposes it, he says for it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by then in secret, but all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light for whatever makes manifest as light.

Therefore he says awake. You who sleep arise from the dead, be done with your darkness, be done with your death and Christ will give you light. Now this is this can be a very uncomfortable way to live unless your great fellowship is with Jesus. So as you spend time with other people, especially people who are unbelievers.

You remember that you're also spending time with the Lord Jesus. He is with you and your great fellowship is with him. Your heart is satisfied in him, You're not nervous and anxious about what others will think of you, because you have Jesus to attend for your sin and loves you.

And you have fellowship with him by his spirit in that moment. And you now in fellowship with him are loving the sinner not by being like then but being like Jesus and desiring that your Lord Jesus, and His Holy Spirit will also give them life and light. Even as he exposes what they are like and the way he removes the discomfort from us in that situation as by the more and more, you are realizing that you have fellowship with Jesus all the time, the less and less the discomfort of that contrast will be uncomfortable for you.

Let's pray that the Lord Jesus would make us love our fellowship with Him and our display of His goodness in our lives. Our Father in heaven. We thank you that you have made your son, our Lord. Jesus to be the sunrise of righteousness for us. That in him, we who were only darkness and death in ourselves.

Might have life and lie to my even be alive and bright in him. And we pray that you would help us to know the fellowship of your Holy Spirit that he would make our hearts and minds eager not to find out what has acceptable to the world. But what is acceptable to you that you would make us to enjoy this

walking in fellowship with you that this passage teaches and sets before us?

They you would stir up our new natures that are appetite for and hunger for fellowship with you belonging to you, displaying your salvation would be increased. I would pray that you would remove from us. This desire to be enjoyed by or appreciated by the world. We pray that you would help us not to be uncomfortable by the contrast between us and the world.

But to enjoy likeness unto you and to desire that that contrast might be eliminated by the exposing and eliminating the more and more darkness from the world grant that your gospel would go forth. Grab that more and more darkness would be exposed and eliminated. We ask in your name, Lord Jesus.

Amen.