

**For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light** <sup>9</sup> **(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)** <sup>10</sup> **and find out what pleases the Lord.** <sup>11</sup> **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.** <sup>12</sup> **For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.** <sup>13</sup> **But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,** <sup>14</sup> **for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said:**

**“Wake up, O sleeper,  
rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”** (NIV 84)

Theme: Light and Darkness.

1. They have nothing in common
2. Light exposes darkness

Who you are is how you live your life. What I mean is this— what you enjoy or what you are good at leads to what you do. If you're into sports, you are going to watch and maybe play sports. If you like to read, then you'll find some time to sit down with a book or a kindle. If you are good at diagnosing medical conditions you are most likely a doctor.

The opposite is also true—if you are a Michigan fan you aren't going to cheer for Ohio State or MSU; if you're a Chevy guy, you won't be caught driving a Ford; if you are a hunter you aren't going to be a member of PETA.

If you are a Christian, if you are a child of God, a child of Light, then you will live as a child of light, not as a child of darkness. Well, at least that is what you strive for, but will fail at times. But the premise holds true: who you are is how you live your life.

But who you are now, is not what you were. You were born as a sinner who could do nothing but sin. What David says about himself can be said about all of us, **surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.** When you were born you were an enemy of God. You didn't know who he was or what the Son had

done to save you. You were in the darkness of unbelief and sin. As Paul says in verse eight to the Ephesians, but once again about all of us, **you were once darkness.** And not just in darkness, but you were darkness. You were completely dark, there was nothing good inside of you—not one spark, nothing, not even a single inclination to God or to do what is good and right. And as darkness, you also led others to follow in your dark sinful ways.

But now you are light in the Lord. It isn't just that Christ has shined the light of the gospel on you—you aren't in the light, but you are light. No longer darkness, no longer an unbeliever; Christ has made you a believer. You are now a child of Christ—a child of Light. You are now able to obey the Lord, to say no to sin. And as Light you are now a good influence on others, leading them to live a Christian life. You were once darkness but now you are light. That is how complete your transformation was. You were completely changed. At your conversion, for most of us at our baptism for others when someone shared the gospel with you, the Holy Spirit worked faith into your heart and you were changed—from an unbeliever to a believer, from a child of the devil to a child of God, from being ignorant to the way of salvation to seeing Jesus as the way the truth and the life, from being on your way to hell to on your way to heaven. So great is the grace of our Lord that he would do this for sinners such as you and me. Darkness and light couldn't be more different than each other—they are complete opposites; they have nothing in common. So it is with those who are darkness and those who are light—those who are unbelievers and believers, there is nothing in common between them. Sure, like it was in Ephesus during Paul's day it is today—believers and unbelievers inhabit the same lands, we breathe the same air, we eat at and shop at the same places, our tastes in entertainment may be similar; but yet we are different.

One major difference which Paul pointed out in our second lesson: God's wrath will come upon them—for all their sins they will be punished eternally. So Paul concludes, **do not be partners with them.** Do not have anything to do with unbelievers because in the end they will go to hell. In our text for today Paul comes to a similar conclusion about the works of unbelievers: **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness.** Unbelievers produce no good fruit; what unbelievers do is considered worthless in the eyes of the Lord

because it either doesn't go along with his will, or it is done for the wrong reasons—and not out of love and faith in Christ. What they do may seem right in their own eyes, but not in the eyes of the Lord. And what are some of the things that unbelievers do that Paul has in mind? As we saw in our second lesson Paul has mostly sexual sins in mind: **Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people...For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

There is really nothing new under the sun, the sins that are prevalent now were prevalent 2000 years ago in Ephesus. People had sex outside of marriage; homosexuality was also practiced by some. And make no mistake about it—these things are sins in the eyes of the Lord. God instituted marriage to be between one man and one woman. And any sexual act outside of marriage is a sin in the eyes of the Lord—including homosexuality, for they aren't really married in the eyes of the Lord. It doesn't matter what your personal opinion is; it doesn't matter what society says—those things change like the wind and waves. The only thing that matters is what God says in his Word. Listen to the way the Lord describes homosexuality in Romans one, **God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.** Homosexuals will receive their due penalty—of eternal damnation. Paul is a bit more succinct in 1 Corinthians, **Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders...will inherit the kingdom of God.**

So the Lord commands that we stay away from such sins—so much so that we aren't even to give the appearance that we go along with them. It should even be shameful, or embarrassing to even talk about such things. Sadly many fall into these sins. At times the deeds of those who are light are no different than those who are darkness. And let's be clear on this too: sexual immorality including homosexuality are no different than any other sin. It is not as if these sins are worse than

stealing, murder, or gossip—every sin is equal in the eyes of the Lord. But any unrepentant sin, no matter what it is, is grounds for eternal damnation. That is where all those who practice such things without repenting will go. That is why Paul tells us twice to stay away from unbelievers and their deeds.

Yet there is one who never participated in fruitless deeds of darkness. Not once did Jesus Christ fail to obey God's commands, but he always did what is good, right, and true. And that perfect obedience, his righteousness, he gave to us. Yet he scorned the shame of the cross and was forsaken by the Father as he became a sinner for us and suffered through the eternal punishment that our sins deserved. So on account of Christ God declares us not guilty. This love of Christ leads us to show love to him by stay away from the fruitless deeds of darkness.

But often it's not enough simply to stay away from such actions. Paul says in verse 11, **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.** As light exposes darkness, so those who are light expose the fruitless deeds of darkness for the sins that they are. Many who are caught in sin are in the dark about their deeds. They think they are doing what is perfectly fine. So it is our job as light to show them the light of truth. If you saw someone about to drive off a cliff, you would do all you can to warn them, or if a doctor realizes that a patient has cancer and is going to die unless he gets treatment, then he is going to inform his patient. So it is with those living in the sin of homosexuality, or any other sin—we warn them.

But we see such sins so often. Sexual immorality has been the norm on t.v., movies, and so on for decades—and the same is almost true for homosexuality. The four major networks all have many different characters on their shows who are homosexual, or one of our favorite musicians is a lesbian, And you all know many people who are currently or were at one point living with someone outside of marriage. We've become inundated with it; and thus we become desensitized to it. And our reaction now is—it's no big deal, so many people are doing it anyway, what's the point. And so we may personally stay away from such deeds of darkness, but we don't expose them.

And we also have others in mind as well—perhaps our children, a friend, or neighbor. They are those who see the dark deeds of others, and they are watching how we react to them. And if we don't react in a manner that exposes that sin then we may unknowingly give the "okay" to such deeds of darkness. So we speak up and expose their deeds for what they are.

And make no mistake about it; you will get attacked and vilified. Those in darkness may call you names, claim that you are full of hate and are unloving—nothing but a bigot. It's a common tactic—if you dare to say something against their way of life they will attack you personally and say, "how dare you judge me based on someone I love."

If you speak up against such sins you might be taken to court or blacklisted. Look at what happened to the owners of the pizzeria in Indianapolis several months back or the owners of the bakery in Colorado. They may try to make your life miserable by any means necessary. There may come a point in time—possibly not in the too distant future that it will become illegal to call homosexuality a sin—it already is illegal to do so in Canada. The government may also try to force us to do something against God's Word..

But you have nothing to fear for God is with you. The prophet Elijah defended the name of the Lord and killed the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. When wicked queen Jezebel threatened Elijah's life he fled south and sat under a tree. The Lord sent his angel to strengthen him. 40 days later he came to him on Mount Horeb, better known as Mount Sinai. And there the Lord reassured him that he was not alone, but there were many other followers of the Lord.

In the same way the Lord is with us. He is always watching over us and will take care of us. The book of Acts is littered with stories of the Apostles and others being persecuted for standing up and sharing the truth. In many instances the Lord guarded and protected his people and saved them from peril. In other cases he didn't. But no matter what happened to the Apostles, they knew that they would eventually be in heaven. So we can say along with the Psalmist, **The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?**

And so we are not afraid to expose the sinful deeds of darkness. But we don't do it out of hate. No, we do it out of love. In verse 14 Paul quotes an early Christian hymn, **Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.** When a teenager refuses to wake

up in the morning for school his mom may come into the room turn on the light and flip up the shade—the light is an effective way to wake someone up. So is God's Word and effective way to wake someone up from the dead.

Those who are living in sin—no matter what that sin may be, are on their way to eternal damnation. We love everyone and want everyone to be saved. So we speak the truth in love in order to wake them from their spiritual slumber—that they may repent and turn to God. Then they will not die but live. It is not a loving thing to do to let someone die eternally. But rather out of love we tell them the truth that they may repent.

And then we get to share with them the sweet message of the gospel, the good news that Jesus Christ has suffered and died in our place so that we wouldn't have to pay for the eternal price for our sins. He is the Bread of Life who came down from heaven to give us eternal life by defeating sin, death, and the devil. It was Christ who brought us to faith through his gospel so that we became his brother, a child of God, and an heir of the Father—and heir of eternal life in heaven, where Christ will shine on us forever.

Who you are is how you live your life. You are a child of light so you live a child of light—not as a child of darkness. So you not only do what is good, right, and true; but you also expose darkness for what it is. You do this out of love so that you can share the gospel that they may repent and join you and all believers in heaven forever. Amen.