

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

From Darkness to Light

Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-14

Code: 49-30

Now we have been working our way rather methodically and slowly through the book of Ephesians, and so we'll go back there this morning. Would you turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 5? We ended up last week at chapter 5, verse 7, and so we will pick up the text at verse 8; and I want to read the section from Ephesians 5:8–14 as the setting for the message today.

Ephesians 5, starting in verse 8: “For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, ‘Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’”

Now the text compares light and darkness obviously. There are essentially two commands. One is a positive command in verse 8, “Walk as children of Light.” The second is a negative command in verse 11, “Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness.” So darkness and light are set against each other.

Now the context for this, as you well know, began in chapter 4, as we began to look at the practical instruction of the Spirit of God through the apostle Paul for living the Christian life, for walking through the world in a way that honors the Lord. And we have talked about walking worthy. We have talked about walking in unity. We have talked about walking in purity, walking in integrity. Last time, walking in love.

And now we have come to walking in light, just another way to perceive the life of the believer. You were darkness; you were darkness formerly, verse 8 says, “but now you are Light.” This is a stark contrast. They are mutually exclusive; and that is why the Lord has chosen, by His Spirit, this particular analogy. It is the best figure to show the complete separation of the non-Christian from the Christian, the complete separation of the child of Satan from the child of God. One is darkness, the other is light; and the contrast is extreme to show the difference and the distinction and the opposite nature between Christians and non-Christians.

The darkness of this world is deep. It is a profound darkness. It is an ever-increasing darkness. It is a deep blackness. It is a spiritual black hole engulfing the world, and into which the world plunges deeper and deeper all the time.

Now Scripture likes to use this comparison because it is so stark and it is so extreme, so we're not surprised, then, when we find it a lot of places in the Scripture. If we were to back up, for example, to chapter 6 of 2 Corinthians and the familiar verse 14, we would see the contrast made there: “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or

what fellowship has light with darkness?"

We would also see this same extreme contrast in Colossians chapter 1, verse 12, where the apostle writes, "Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness."

You see it also in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and verses 4 and 5: "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness."

And one more Scripture just to illustrate the familiarity that the text of Scripture has with this idea: 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." This is the contrast that's so familiar in the New Testament.

Now darkness represents, I think, four things. If you understand these four, you'll sort of understand the range of the expression of this term "darkness." It represents depravity; it describes the human condition in sin. Not only does it represent depravity, but it represents deception; it speaks of the darkness of the mind, "darkened in their understanding," as it says back in chapter 4, verse 18, or blinded in their soul, as it says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. So darkness is associated with depravity, and it is associated also with deception.

Thirdly, it is clearly associated with death; the profound darkness of death defines the spiritual condition of nonbelieving people, people outside the kingdom of God. And finally, darkness is used to describe the destruction of hell, which is a place of blackness, a place of outer darkness, in which people are bound in chains of darkness and blackness forever.

So darkness is depravity, deception, death, and destruction in hell. It's an ominous reality in the Bible, but this is what darkness represents. There are also times when darkness represents divine judgment, such as the darkness when Jesus was dying, which was during the time that the Lord God was judging Him, punishing Him for our sins. So the concept of darkness relates to all that is unrighteous, from our depravity to our eternal destruction.

Now today I want to look at this darkness perhaps in a unique way. Because it is Father's Day, I thought maybe I would help you to understand the darkness that is perpetuated on the world by the sins of the fathers because, as we all know, Adam sinned, and the whole human race fell. Even though Eve sinned first, Adam acted in the place of all of humanity, and it was the fall of Adam that brought about the fall of the entire world. Men have that responsibility.

The world is fallen; the world is dark. It's been dark ever since that fall of Adam. And the present darkness is to be understood, I think, by understanding, again, the role that fathers play in the increasing darkness of the world. The Old Testament talks about the sins of the fathers. It doesn't talk about the sins of the mothers, it talks about the sins of the fathers being visited on the third and fourth generation. In other words, what corrupts sequential generations is the sins of the fathers. They have grave responsibility for whatever a society is, whatever a culture is.

The world has always been dark. It was dark before our Lord came. We know that because Isaiah

the prophet, in chapter 9 of his prophecy, in verse 2, says in a prophecy of the coming of Christ—he says, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.” And he’s speaking into the future, of the darkness of the world before Christ came. “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.” That’s a prophecy of the arrival of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by His own confession is the Light of the world. So the people of the world were in darkness before the Light came.

Yes, God had shed His light of glory on the world in many ways, but never, never as definitively and as powerfully as He did when the glory of God was shining in the face of Jesus Christ, who in John 8:12 said, “I am the Light of the world; [whoever] follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

Since He came, the world has experienced the impact of the Light that shattered the darkness, namely the arrival of Christ. And through the two thousand years since His arrival, millions of people have come to the Light and have been redeemed and are now part of the Light, having been transferred from darkness into Light. Christian influence has gone on for two thousand years. It has shined in particular in the West; and the West, of course, with its mission zeal for the rest of the world, sent missionaries from the West to cover the globe to extend the Light to the ends of the earth.

So the world has experienced the light of Christ in a common-grace way: the gospel. The transformation of people through the power of the gospel has brought light to the world. However, there’s a problem. As John 3 identifies the problem, men loved darkness rather than Light because their deeds are evil. They love the darkness because they love the deeds of evil that constitute the darkness. The darkness accumulates; necessarily it accumulates from one generation to the next, to the next, to the next. That’s why the Bible says evil men will grow worse and worse. It’s accumulated.

So here we are, two thousand years after the Light arrived, and the world is as dark now as it was before He came. We are a generation that has seen the fall of the Christian West. We have seen the fall of this country and of influences of Christianity in the West, and we are now in a new era of human history that parallels the time before Christ ever arrived. This is a neopagan world. Its characteristics are precisely what they were in ancient Rome and Greece before the Light arrived.

I want us to try to understand that, and I want to help you understand the darkness so that you know what our Lord is asking of us in this passage when He says, “Have no participation with the unfruitful deeds of the darkness.” I don’t want to be vague about that; I want to be specific.

Now let me give you a little bit of just kind of a broad bird’s eye view of history. The gospel came, and the gospel brought the Light, and the gospel flourished in the world in the West; and there was an extension of the gospel, as you know, from there around other parts of the world. But the Fall and the encroaching darkness began to be dominant in two ways: the corruption of the Roman Catholic system, and particularly the papacy; and the corruption of royalty. That is, the people who wielded the power were corrupt. They were corrupt in the Roman system, and any reading of history will show you that; and they were corrupt in their monarchies all over the West. Corruption in high places was rampant. That corruption did not necessarily overturn the power of monarchs or the power of the Roman Catholic system and the power of the Pope. So what happened was the monarchs used lethal power to control people, and the papacy did exactly the same thing.

As corrupt as they were, they still maintained power, but at war, on generations of people. And by the time you get to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century, you have the outbreak of rebellion against all of that, which we would include the Reformation, and particularly the Enlightenment. The Reformers legitimately rebelled against autocratic monarchs and against the corruption of the Roman system. And there was always a faithful remnant; there was always a church of Jesus Christ, but it blossomed and bloomed and flourished in a fresh, new way under the influence of the Reformers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

But it was paralleled by the influence of philosophers in those same centuries, philosophers who were sick of autocracies, who were sick of demagogues, who were sick of dictators, who were sick of immoral judges, who were sick of the repression that came upon people insofar as religion could, particularly religion, could suppress their natural desires. And so you had a litany of philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists who go all the way from people like Kant and Hegel all the way to Freud, and they basically said this: You need to be freed from repression. The message of those European philosophers was very simple, very simple: You can't tolerate any longer the repression of religion, particularly the Christian religion, particularly its moral constraints.

They attacked God. Many of them, if not all, were atheists. They attacked morality; and in particular, they targeted men, and they targeted fathers, as all revolutions do. The message was clear to men: You should feel free to do whatever you want to do. Your repression is evil; it is bad. Your lowest, most base sexual desire is true to your humanity, and you shouldn't have to be repressed at that point. You should be free. There's no God; there's no morality. You need to live out your impulses. Reject religion, reject God, reject morality. And of course, all of them had done that already. They were the most lecherous and lascivious of men possible. "Stop repressing your desires. Live for lust; choose pleasure; become licentious. Free your desire from religion, tradition, and moral bondage. Throw off all restraint."

And they sowed those seeds successfully. You see them in the annals, for example, of the French Revolution and what Europe became during that period of time, the debauchery to which it descended—debauchery which had always been a part of royalty, and sadly even a part of the corruption of the Catholic hierarchy. They succeeded in planting that philosophy, and it has been around now for four hundred years, and its fruit has accumulated.

Men were to shake off oppression, particularly oppression by Christian religion. And the target of the revolution, again I say, was men, because Satan knows that it is the sins of the fathers that corrupt society. Once men are set free to fulfill their lusts, immediately there are victims, and the first victims are women.

Women are victims in two ways. Women are victims actively because they become useful to men only for self-gratification; and women become abused by men in a self-gratifying, sexual way. But they are also passively abused because men who live like that shirk all real responsibility designed by God to care for women. Corrupt fathers abuse women for their own pleasure, and they become a toxic masculinity—if you could even call it masculinity. They abuse women for their pleasure; women become victims of their desires. They use women; they use them for the expression of their evil, and they use them to take place in a family or in a relationship that shouldn't belong to the man by ignoring their own fatherly responsibility.

What is a father, by God's design? Fathers are designed by God to love, to lead, to feed, to provide, to protect, to instruct, to empower, to discipline, to sacrifice, and to suffer for the love of wife and children. Let me go over that again. God designed men, fathers, to love, lead, feed, provide, protect, instruct, empower, discipline, sacrifice, and suffer for the love of wife and children. When they decide to live only for their own lusts, everything goes wrong. Women are abused, children are therefore abused, as the family completely disintegrates. The abused women turn to resent the abuse, and so you have a responding hardness that comes on women who were designed by God to be tender and compassionate and caring wives and mothers. They grow hard, they grow callous, they grow vengeful, and they attack back.

So you have, essentially, the conflict between unfaithful men and abused women, which destroys the family and, of course, the children and the whole society. Destroy fathers, and you destroy an entire society. When the moral character of true manhood, true fatherhood, is gone, women and children are threatened, hardened, exposed to abuse; and eventually they become angry, and they turn on the men who abuse them, categorically.

Now the results of this are tragic in our generation. I mean, we see it. Just for example, statistically the United States is number one in the world in the number of fatherless children, that is children who live in a home with no father—25 million, currently. Eighty-five percent of youth with severe behavioral issues had no father in the home, seventy-five percent of youth with drug and alcohol treatment histories had no father in the home, ninety percent of youth runaways and homeless had no father in the home, eighty-five percent of youth in prison had no father in the home. And nearly half of all children born in this country now are born outside of marriage, and they are five times more likely to be poor and nine times more likely to drop out of school.

We all know the fallout of this. They don't know what a man's role is. One of the reasons that you see all the civil unrest, all the damage, all these people in the streets doing destructive things is because fathers teach their children how to suffer well. Fatherless children don't think they should have to suffer, and so they revolt. Fathers teach their children that life is hard and challenging, and you need to suffer well; and as we read this morning, if you suffer well, it develops your moral character, your perseverance, and your hope. But if you never learn to suffer well, then you hate all the sources of your suffering, and you blame it on some systemic social problem, rather than accepting responsibility for the fact that life is hard, and if you take responsibility for it you can rise above it, if you are thoughtful. It's not that fathers teach their kids to be criminals; it's that fathers don't teach their children how to suffer difficulty, and so they burn things, and tear things down, and destroy things, and kill people.

The fallout of this is devastating. You would think the culture would wake up and understand that they have to change things. But instead of that, 65 percent of Americans recently surveyed are OK with babies born outside marriage, which means you've got a fatherless home and a wife with no husband. Sixty-five percent of people in America are OK with abortion. And you can throw this in: 66 percent are OK with homosexuality.

Homosexuality is the ultimate perversion of manhood. It is the ultimate perversion of manhood and is, by the way, the end of society. When I say the West has fallen, I say it particularly because in 2003 the United States legalized sodomy. In 2015 they legalized homosexual marriage. And here we are, in 2022 featuring the ultimate degradation of homosexuality, which is drag queens in elementary

schools, grooming kids to be as perverted as a male could possibly be. And the government is demanding acceptance for these people, if not making them the priority. Where you have homosexuality, you have the end of a culture. When it is legalized, the way it has been in this country, when it is normalized so that they can be married, and when it is praised and elevated, you know the culture has fallen.

So where are we? We're where we were before the Light arrived; we're back in Greece and Rome. The Greek and Roman culture was literally steeped in deviant homosexuality. They had gymnasiums—from the Greek word *gymnos*, which means “naked”—only for men, and they participated in whatever they were doing naked. It was marked by debauchery, homosexuality, cross-dressing—every bizarre, unimaginable thing. There were catamites; there were pederasts, it's called—you can look those up. It was the worst of the worst, and it brought about the end of the Roman Empire, the Greek Empire. The Fall was profoundly complete. We're in the same place, the same place. This is not new. This is paganism, pre-Christian paganism. So now we're in post-Christian paganism.

How do we get out of this without fathers? Kevin Swanson has written a marvelous book called *Epoch*—highly recommend it—subtitled: *The Rise and Fall of the West*. Let me read you just one paragraph.

Over 60 years the pornography revolution has ruined the American male, ruined modern sexual life, and ruined marriage. Pornography enabled mass isolation, depersonalization of sexuality, and homosexuality by the accommodation of self-gratification. It was electronic technology which mass-produced and fast-tracked the dry rot to disintegrate human society in the modern world. Electronic access to pornography was constant and omnipresent after the smartphone was released in 2011. Children were corrupted by this technology as readily as the Greeks had accomplished the same feat with their own children in the gymnasiums. On average, a child first encountered pornography around 11 years of age, and ninety-four percent of children were viewing porn by 14 years of age. By 2019, ninety-five percent of teens 13 to 17 had full access to a smartphone and pornography, and almost half of them admitted to constantly being on the Internet. Eighty percent of American men 18 to 30 were addicted to pornography, admitting to regular use. Overall, Americans increased their participation in pornography from twenty percent to sixty-five percent between 1970 and 2019. The sheer number of men, boys, and families ruined by this electronic and demonic scourge would be impossible to figure. All that was left to assess was lying in the ashes of Western civilization.

That's where we are, and Satan has done it by attacking the fathers relentlessly; and it can't get worse than it is. It doesn't go beyond being a drag queen; it doesn't go beyond putting a drag queen in an elementary school. That is perversity beyond comprehension. That's the darkness. That is the present darkness.

And now, going back to the text of Scripture, I hope that will help you understand what it means that we are to have nothing to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but we are to walk as children of light. So let's look at this text.

First of all you see a contrast in verse 8, a contrast: “For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord.” “You were formerly darkness, now you are Light in the Lord.” The verb “were” is emphatic: “You *were*.”

If you go back to chapter 2 of Ephesians and verse 1, “You were dead in your trespasses and sins”—I said the darkness speaks of depravity—“in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” You not only were depraved and dead, but you were deceived by the prince of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience. You were also dead in your trespasses and sin. Verse 3 says, “[You] lived in the lusts of the flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath,” which speaks of the coming destruction. All four elements of the darkness are indicated right there in that verse. You were that.

In chapter 4 and verse 17, you walked in futility of mind. Verse 18, you were darkened in your understanding; you were “excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in” all unbelievers. You were marked by “hardness of heart,” verse 19, callous, “given . . . over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.” You were.

But please notice it doesn’t say, “You were formerly in darkness,” it says, “You were formerly darkness.” The darkness is the composite accumulation of all the dark people. It’s not that you’re in the darkness as a victim; you’re in the darkness as a contributor: You are the darkness. Apart from Christ you are the darkness; you are a contributor, you are a perpetrator.

Proverbs 4:19 says, “The way of the wicked is . . . darkness: they know not at what they stumble.” That, of course, is part of the deception. Second Corinthians 4:4 says, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of them that believe not.” You’re blinded by Satan; you’re blinded by the darkness of sin.

The darkness is a system; it is a realm, it is a kingdom, it is a domain of unbelievers. But the darkness is not separate from those unbelievers. You are the darkness. You, if you’re a believer, you were the darkness, you were part of the darkness; you made the darkness dark. It’s not that you were a victim of it, you were the darkness, you were the darkness. And verse 3, if you go back in chapter 5 to verse 3, your life was marked by immorality, impurity, greed; verse 4, filthiness, silly talk; verse 5, immorality, impurity, covetousness.

You were the darkness. You were not a victim; you were the darkness. Your works were unrighteous, your thoughts were godless, and you were under divine judgment. You were under the control of Satan, who in Luke 22:53 is called—Satan’s title is “the power of darkness.” You were the darkness empowered by Satan, and you were headed in your depravity and your deception toward death, already spiritually dead. You were headed toward death and then destruction. And Jude describes that destruction as “black darkness . . . forever,” which doesn’t mean that hell isn’t going to have any lights. What it means is the darkness has come to hell in the form of the people who came to hell. You are the darkness; you carry the darkness to hell. The darkness of hell is the composite of all the dark people who make up that place where there are chains of darkness, black darkness forever.

We were once all darkness. “But”—back to verse 8, the contrast—“now you are Light in the Lord.” But now everything has changed; now you are Light in the Lord through the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Him we have been transferred from the darkness; we have been transferred from darkness to light. Matthew 5:14, “You are the light of the world.” What an incredible transformation.

Again, the extreme between darkness and light shows the extreme transformation of salvation.

So there is a contrast, and then there are characteristics. So he says, “You are now Light in the Lord.” You are light. You are a light in the world. You are the lights that light the darkness of corruption, as Philippians 2 says. You are the light. You’re not just in the Light, but you are the light. Therefore, “Walk as children of Light.” Walk, again, consistently. Walk worthy of your calling—to borrow the language of chapter 4, verse 1.

So what would that mean? What does it mean to “walk as children of Light”? Well, verse 9 gives us the characteristics. So we go from a contrast to characteristics: “The fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.” So those are the things that mark the Light: goodness, righteousness, and truth. And that parallels chapter 4, verse 24, that when you “put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness [and] truth.” Righteousness, holiness, and truth, or goodness, righteousness, and truth—same thing. So if you’re a child of the Light, your life will be marked by all goodness, all righteousness, and all truth.

What is goodness? *Agathos*—that’s the name of your great-grandma, maybe: Agatha. *Agathos*. There is *kalos*, that’s a word for Greek, and it means “good to look at” and “free from defects.” There’s *chrēstos*, which means it’s something useful. But this is *agathos*, which means “morally good from the divine perspective.” So how do you know when a person is a believer? Because they are people of Light, and the Light shows up in their goodness, in their goodness.

First Thessalonians 5:15 gives you an illustration: “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.” That’s the same word. It’s just general goodness. There’s an opposite, an antonym back in verse 31 of chapter 4: “malice.” “Malice” is *kakia*; that is general evil. *Agathos* is general good.

So if you have become a child of the Light, you’re marked by goodness. Secondly, by righteousness; that is, you walk a path that doesn’t deviate from purity. You’re also marked by truth. No longer are you deceived. No longer are you marked by all the expressions of depravity. You walk in integrity, you walk in honesty, you walk in reliability, you walk in trustworthiness, in contrast to the shallow hypocrisy and falseness of those in the dark. Colossians 1:10 elucidates that a bit; listen to these words: “so that you . . . walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work.” So it’s all goodness, all righteousness, and all truth; that’s the fruit of the Light.

Romans 13—I can’t resist a few verses there—starting in verse 12, “The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.” Arm yourself with light, and don’t do the deeds of the darkness. You are the light. You’re in the light; you are the light. Don’t do the deeds of the darkness. What does that mean? Verse 13: “Let us behave properly as in the day”—in other words, “in the day” simply means with the light full on, with everything exposed—“not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” You “make no provision for the flesh.” Obviously that’s what the philosophers of the Middle Ages wanted to overturn. We “make no provision for the flesh”; all we want to know is the will of God, and that’s what it says in verse 10: “trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”

A Christian walks as a child of Light, producing the fruit of Light—which is goodness, righteousness, and truth—and is a living example of someone learning what is pleasing to the Lord. That's what it means to walk in Light. Look, you are in the Light; you can't hide anything—you can't. The Lord knows; He sees. Your determination should be very simple: "My life is an open book; I have nothing to hide because I'm governed by determination to find out what is pleasing to the Lord and do it."

This answers the question, How do I know if I'm a child of God? Don't speculate. Don't look past into the hinterlands of your experience years back and say, "Well, I once prayed a prayer." Look at your life. Is it marked by all goodness, all righteousness, all truth? And are you ever learning what is pleasing to the Lord so you can do it? So this is how we are to walk in the Light.

Then we have not only the contrast, not only this command to walk in the Light, but we have a second command in verse 11: "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness." We've seen the command to walk in the Light, we've seen the characteristics of walking in the Light, now here's the command not to participate—and that's a form of the word *koinōnia*, have fellowship—with "the unfruitful deeds of darkness." We have nothing to do with them. We don't participate with them; we don't fellowship with them; we don't associate with them. We don't become linked with them, as 2 Corinthians 6 says, "Don't get involved in some kind of supposed spiritual enterprise with the darkness." We don't associate with people who profess Christ, 1 Corinthians 5, and are immoral. We obviously reach the people in the world who are immoral, but we don't associate with those who profess salvation who are immoral. So that simple command is not hard to understand. And why would you participate? Because the works are "unfruitful." On the other hand, their works in the Light are the fruitful works of light. Why do those things that produce nothing of value?

So there's a contrast—their characteristics—and then a command. Then we have a commission, and I think this is so interesting, kind of getting toward the finish line for us. There's a commission. If you're a child of Light, instead of participating in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, instead expose them, expose them. If we listen to Paul in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word . . . reprove, rebuke." You don't ignore the deeds of darkness, you expose them; that's your responsibility. You expose them for what they are. You expose them to the people who are the darkness. You warn them, you terrify them, for the consequences of what they're doing.

And in the church you confront it—Matthew 18, discipline: If anybody's at sin, you go to that person; you take two or three witnesses; you tell the church. You expose sin. The church has to expose sin, not accommodate it, not make people engaged "in the unfruitful deeds of darkness" comfortable. That's not what the Spirit of God did in Acts chapter 5, when Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit, were executed in front of the entire church by God Himself, who slew them in the public service of the church so people would learn not to tolerate sin. We have that responsibility: to expose evil.

Now what does that mean? Well there's a limit to that, and that's why the next verse has a caveat: "For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." You expose them. But that doesn't mean you go into the lurid details. There are just some things that aren't fit for even conversation, let alone behavior. I don't know that there's anything in this culture that fits into verse 12, that is so disgraceful it should never be spoken about, that people haven't already seen on their iPhone. It's disgraceful to speak of the things that deviated people do in secret. It's disgraceful. It's not anything you would even talk about. It's so repulsive, it shouldn't be mentioned. But when people are engaged in that without knowing the details, they need to be exposed. They need to be

exposed for their sake. And if it's in the church, certainly for the Lord's sake.

This is our commission. And verse 13 says why: because "all things become visible when they're exposed by the light." The one thing you never want allowed in the church is for sin to hide. You want the sinner, who is the darkness, exposed by the light. You want the people who are the light but doing the deeds of darkness, exposed by the Light. God never wants sin hidden, but that doesn't mean you talk about all of the lurid details of things that should never even be spoken of. But it has to be made visible, "for everything that becomes visible [becomes visible because of the] light." Light makes manifest what's in the darkness.

So we have a contrast between light and darkness, characteristics of light—goodness, righteousness, and truth. The command: "Walk as children of light." The negative command: "Don't do the fruitless deeds of darkness." And we have a commission: "Expose the darkness."

And the passage ends with a closing call, verse 14: "For this reason it says"—borrowing from some portions of Isaiah—"Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you." This is a call to become a child of Light. This is a call to wake, you that are sleeping in the darkness, "and arise from the dead, and Christ will" give you light, or, "Christ will shine on you." Once sin has been exposed, then the call to the sinner is to repent; Christ will give you light. That's a gospel verse tucked into this section: "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine upon you."

We're all here today worshiping, coming to the Table, because that is exactly what happened in our lives—right?—in our deadness, in our darkness. The Lord one day said, "Awake, sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." Pray that God would be so gracious as to awaken you if you're still in the darkness. Let's bow together in prayer.

Lord, we're so grateful that the Word is clear and powerful and penetrating to our hearts. Thank You for calling us when we were asleep, when we were dead, when we were darkness, and giving us life and light in Christ. Would You be so gracious as to do that even now? By Your sovereign power speak to those who are the darkness. Call on them to awake. Give them life and light through Christ. For those of us who have received that, we come now so gladly, so thankfully, to the table of remembrance, and for us, the table of salvation, reminding us of what Christ has done for us. Fill our hearts with joy, we pray, as we partake. Amen.

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