

Love Light Live

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Preacher: Philip Jinadu

[0 : 00] Evening everyone. It's so good to be here. As you've heard my name is Philip and Mike! Hill asked me to speak when he was away. It was like the best phone call I've ever had to be invited. I said Mike if you asked me to wash your car I would come and do it. He said well actually it is a little bit dirty but it's a tremendous privilege to be able to join with you. To be able to come to this church. As you've heard I work for Care for the Family. You saw some of the work that we do on the video. When I look at those videos I'm always profoundly moved. The people that are looking after those that are widowed young, bereaved parents, helping parents with children with additional needs. Family is at the heart of so much of what makes life work for us. And when I see the work that is done I'm amazed.

You know I'm not one of those that does that stuff. I'm a little bit more of the support staff. But one we every week we have a little briefing of what we're all going to be doing and I said I'm coming to. Sorry is it better if I use this microphone? Okay. I said I'm coming to Christchurch Clevedon and all the different people in the team. We've got about 80 different people that work for Care for the Family. One was saying I was in Sunday school as a little girl in Christchurch. Another said I was baptised in Christchurch. So there was a lot of goodwill and a lot of people who are friends of this church. A lot of people that are friends of Clevedon in general and the church here. So it's a really great opportunity. Now I am very privileged to be able to be your substitute teacher tonight. I can't pretend to have the kind of the knowledge and the experience of Mike. And I'm not also aware of how he's taught and what he's done. So if you allow me I'd just like to give you my little overview take of the book of Ephesians. We're focusing in on these 20 verses but it's helpful to be reminded of the wider context of how the book fits together. And maybe you've already heard this so this will be a good reminder. But for me the best book written about Ephesians was written by Watchman Nee. Who's heard of Watchman Nee? Wow. Good knowledge. 20th century Chinese church teacher. Part of the underground church. And he wrote the best book on Ephesians.

It's so good you don't even have to read it. All you need to know is the title of the book and that is Sit, Walk, Stand. And that simple title, I can't remember what's in the book but I've always remembered the title because it perfectly helps you to understand the book of Ephesians. So chapters one to three is about sitting. Chapters four to five is about walking and chapter six is about standing.

Sit, it means that the book tells us where we are seated. We're seated with Christ in heavenly realms. It tells us not what we have to do but what has been done for us. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ for in Christ he chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Every spiritual blessing and we just have to sit in that. We have to just be aware and for three chapters Paul just lays in again and again. This is what God has done for you.

[3 : 56] This is your position in Christ and so therefore when we get to chapters four and five it's how we walk. We walk in the light of our position in Christ and then chapter six the armor of God that's how we stand against the schemes of the evil one. So when we look at chapters like chapter five it's really important to know that what we're doing is we're walking uh we're walking out in practice what is true in position.

So what is true about me what God says about me what Jesus has done for me the more that I understand that the more I'm able to walk that out. It's a mistake if we take things like this chapter and just beat ourselves up saying I've got to be better I've got to do better that's a mistake. What Paul is saying is this is who you are now walk in the good of it. So let's go through the um this this passage what I've done is I've actually inspired by the kind of the simple three words I've

broken this 20 verses into three words for us to look at tonight which is light love light and live love light and live. So love the first section is basically about our inspiration and our inheritance. So what we're going to do is we just go through a little bit at a time it's very um it's just very powerful to read scripture slowly to think about it but there's also two kind of tricky passages in this 20 verses and we'll have a crack at getting a little bit underneath those and finding out exactly what they're saying because I don't know if you followed uh in the reading if they if you if all of it was perfectly clear for most people there's a couple of verses that don't really fully um they're a little bit complex complicated complex okay so let's start off it says follow God's example in verse one and for me this is why it's so important to know the sit walk stand thing because if you say to someone out of the blue without any context follow God's example that seems like the bar is set extremely high uh how on earth are we supposed to follow God's example you know you can't even follow the example of your better half most of us you know people that we look up to in a mother that are just people and yet he says follow God's example so how do we do that that's when he then explains and goes on so the next part of the verse says follow God's example as dearly loved children everyone say as dearly loved children very good by the way word of warning for me I am half Nigerian and I'm half English half Nigerian means I've got rhythm half English means I can't dance and in Nigeria where I was born and grew up uh everyone gets very excited so if I seem more animated than um than normal then just bear with me that's why I like to get a little bit of feedback and and we're all in this together but he says follow God's example as dearly loved children everything that follows in this chapter comes out of the fact that we are dearly loved it is our identity that determines how we behave we're not trying to be something that we're not we're not striving for some kind of religious perfection we simply need to understand that we are loved if you have children just been hearing about Neville's children and grandchildren and when they know when children know that they're dearly loved they act with security and they are confident in who they are they just act out of that and Paul says the only way that you'll be able to follow God's example is if you understand profoundly that you are a dearly loved child turn to the person next to you and say I'm a dearly loved child our identity is dearly loved children and because we are loved I know I'm laboring this and don't worry we're not going to go this slowly on all the verses we will be finished by nine o'clock I promise you but because we are loved then we can walk in the way of love so there's our sit walk stand and you see walk come again and again in chapter four as well it is only once I realize and deeply appreciate that I am loved by God agape loved other oriented choice based self-sacrificial love not dependent on what I do not dependent on my goodness or my badness simply unconditional self-sacrificing love and because I realize and appreciate that I am loved then I can walk in the way of love I know that I'm loved therefore I love it's not that we try to be loving it's just that we naturally respond in the way of love once we know that we are loved ourselves it's really really important because he then moves up a gear and talks about stuff which can be quite challenging next verse just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God so we follow God's example because we understand and he's given us three whole chapters worth of good theological basis that you're loved a child of God and so there we walk in the way of love just as Jesus loved us so every way on every side we are bombarded with love and everything that comes out of love is an expression of what it means to walk in love next verse says this but 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 nor should there be obscenity foolish talk or coarse joking which are out of place but rather thanksgiving do you notice those two phrases improper and out of place what Paul is saying is follow me on this you are loved by God you are loved children and so therefore you have to walk that out we walk out in practice what is true in position and walking the way of love certain things are compatible with that way of love and certain things are incompatible with the way of love what is the issue with sexual immorality is it about religious rules is it about a code and the standard of living actually it's about what is most compatible with the way of love so with Paul he's saying the issue with sexual immorality is that it's not fitting it's improper it is not compatible with this lifestyle where we're loving one another the word sexual immorality in the Greek anyone know what the word is Greek scholars pornea very good 10 points pornea from which we get the word pornography and pornea literally means any sexual activity that's outside the committed relationship of marriage and so it's a catch-all phrase like adultery would be part of pornea pornography would be part of pornea and pornea this kind of breaching of sexual boundaries outside of marriage what Paul says the reason that we don't do that is not

sometimes paul mixes his metaphors uh it's almost like this is too inexpressible to really be captured fully in words but he's saying you are light and the light has fruit and that's contrasted with the darkness which

is fruit less and so what we want to do is we want to not only walk in love but we want to walk in light verse 13 goes on it says this but everything exposed by the light becomes visible and everything that is illuminated becomes a light this is why it is said wake up sleeper rise from the dead and christ will shine on you now for me i don't know about you maybe this is completely clear to you but this to me seems again a little bit of a challenging verse everything exposed by the light becomes visible fine and everything that is illuminated becomes a light what does that mean that's why it is said very helpful explanation wake up you sleeper rise from the dead and christ will shine on you now when it says that is why it is said is that passage wake up sleeper rise from the dead and christ will shine on you is that a quote from the bible hands up if you think that's a scriptural quote okay couple of brave souls hands up if you think i'm not putting my hands up it's a trap it's actually paul quoting from an early church hymn which is incredible we get you know we sang our songs uh at the beginning this is paul quoting early i mean this is fascinating right this is the early church hymn still if you think you know modern day hymns aren't very theologically strong they're quite simple but that's quite simple too isn't it it's like we've always had very simple songs that christians like to sing but it's full of truth wake up sleeper rise from the dead and christ will shine on you what is illuminated becomes a light everything exposed by the light becomes visible now if you're talking about something being exposed normally you talk about something which is shameful right normally we expose things that we want hidden so why would something that is exposed in the light become illuminated and become a light i think what is happening is paul is saying i want you to live your lives completely transparent we're no longer in darkness but we live everything in the light and that means that even our weakness and our failing if it comes out into the light christ can shine on it if we are sleeping if we are dead and experiencing death and a lack of life in our light in our life then christ shines on that and christ makes it a light now here's the thing i um that care for the family video it's put together by our guys in the studio so we have cameramen and they're incredibly talented so i went to one of them and i said can i borrow one of those special things that you use it's like a light but it's not a light it's a it's something that is not a light in itself but it's illuminated and he said do you mean a reflector philip i said yeah so can i borrow a reflector because i think it would make a really great illustration so here it is right now it is hidden in the dark depths of my bag but if i was to bring it out you see that it is now exposed

and when it's exposed it can now be illuminated now if this thing catches the light from these spotlights it now as a reflector becomes a light and i know this because i've seen the guys making the videos what you don't see when they're doing that filming is there's someone going around and they're exposing this thing and it reflects sometimes the light from the sun sometimes they have studio lights and it reflects back i mean it's it's a bright day today right it's bright in here this is not can you see any light there you can see a bit you get the point the the point is this what is kind of dark shameful and hidden when it's brought out into the light the light shines on it and it becomes a light in fact there are some filmmakers who use all natural light to get very sort of beautiful natural compositions and all they use is these reflectors sometimes they're gold sometimes they're silver sometimes they're white and this thing becomes a light and what paul is saying is he's saying look you might feel like there's dark parts of you there's weaknesses there's failings there's things that you don't feel confident in but we are light amen we're not darkness and we get to rise from the dead we get to wake up and jesus takes the weakness the failings the things that we um wish others could not see and yet somehow our weakness becomes a light as he shines upon us and we become witnesses that's all we have to do you know sometimes when i talk about being a witness and sharing faith and um walking the way of love and light to people people say oh i'm i'm not very good i'm not very strong i'm i'm weak i i feel hypocritical i feel like i i'm not very good representation of a christian but this is precisely what paul is saying he's saying live in the light allow jesus wake up sleeper don't be put down and don't be bound in death but rise up and jesus christ will shine upon you and what is illuminated becomes a light so that is um yeah that is light so let's move on we've got identity and illumination we've done love and then finally how we live and that's intentional and intelligent and i tell you what as i was reading this and just meditating and praying this is the thing that struck me the most because you could be forgiven for thinking that paul is just saying you're loved by god you are light therefore just do your thing you know just be yourself and it will all pour out of you but this is where paul says we have to be intentional and we have to be intelligent in

other words god has made me his dearly loved child god has made me light but i still have my parts to play so this is what he says in these final verses be very careful everyone say very careful be very careful in other words this is going to take care intention and attention be careful how you live not as unwise but as wise in other words it requires intelligence this is not something that will just happen automatically we have to work at it so be very careful how you live not as unwise but as wise making the most of every opportunity because the days are

[35 : 42] evil therefore do not be foolish but understand what the lord's will is so when we come together on evenings like tonight what we're doing is we're trying to understand what god's will is for our lives and then work that through work at it so we are trying not to be foolish but to understand okay the next one case in point do not get drunk on wine don't look at the person next to you which leads to debauchery instead be filled with the spirit again a really practical example of lifestyle now there's an interesting tense that is used in both drunk and filled and that is the present passive imperative imperative drunk and filled both the present passive imperative so it literally means something which is continuous and ongoing so it's not saying don't get drunk a one-time thing and that was it but it's a don't be continually drunk don't be habitually drunk but be continually habitually presently presently filled do you know when i am feeling extra in need of a treat i will take my wife out to a fancy restaurant and show her a good time it's called nando's have you ever been to nando's if you've been to nando's you will know this is good for the grandkids you will know or maybe it's not good for the grandkids you will know that you can get a refillable glass of coca-cola seven up whatever it may be and all you have to do is you buy the glass once and then you just keep going back again and again whenever i'm there i just keep going back a drink to the point of wanting to be sick not because i want the drink because i want a good deal because it's it's a refillable now paul is saying being filled you're like the nando's glass your job is just to be filled and then refilled and then refilled and then refilled and then refilled so being filled with the spirit isn't some one-time special thing for special people being filled is for every single one of us and we are to be continually filled with the spirit it means that i am on a daily basis in my prayers saying jesus fill me with your holy spirit come holy spirit let me know your presence let me know your infilling i cannot do the christian life without you and that's just being smart that's being wise it means that i am intentionally taking care to live a life that's compatible because i am loved because my identity is as light therefore i want to live that out well and then i think this is the final bit of the passage yeah verse 20 and it's it's a shock in the tail because we weren't expecting this we started off with being children dearly loved makes sense that's a good start yeah and then we went to walking in the way of love and we talked about immorality the things that are unfitting improper that are just incompatible with the way of love and then we reinforced it that not only are we loved but we are light and then actually the shameful hidden or failing weak parts of us when we bring them before jesus he can actually illuminate people can be brought to jesus not despite our failings and our weakness but because of them because people see that it's it's jesus that is the one that is strong in my weakness he is made strong and so when people see um the failures and the weakness actually jesus can shine on that and illuminate through that and so we make every effort and then it ends with this suddenly he says speak to one another with psalms hymns and songs from the spirit sing and make music from your heart to the lord always giving thanks to god the father for everything in the name of our lord jesus christ so not only is paul quoting hymns in the earlier verse but he's saying this is how i want you to see this section out with worship so when we had worship at the beginning that wasn't just to warm us up paul is saying there's something intrinsic about worshipping together as the people of god literally singing to one another or speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs there's something about that that and fills us with the holy spirit so that we can live wise intentional lives that are appropriate for dearly loved children of god sometimes i find sometimes i find that people who are very cerebral and rational and like to think things through and be deep thinking sometimes i find that those kinds of people don't find worship as powerful and sometimes i find people that love worship that put the cd on in the car at every opportunity they're always singing the songs they are less inclined to be you know looking at bible studies and theology but what paul says is he says actually to be wise and to be intentional in our discipleship of jesus we should be constantly worshipping not just um when we're together but in our hearts singing songs from our hearts music make music from your heart to the lord always giving thanks to god the father for everything in the name of our lord jesus christ so there's a lot there's a lot in this passage but it's just again how do we sit walk stand we sit understanding that we are

blessed in the heavenly realms with every single spiritual blessing in christ chosen predestined uh we have been brought forth you know he's divided the wall of host he's broken down the wall of hostility that divided us and as a result we walk what does it mean to walk it's holistic it means i walk always asking myself is this the way of love uh or is this an idolatrous way that disinherits me from god's kingdom right now and god's kingdom which is to come and then i'm thinking right how can i be wise there's empty words in the culture that says live like this this is the way to be successful and happy but that's foolishness and so i'm being wise i'm trying to understand what god's will is and i'm living a life of worship and thanksgiving so it's not worship or thinking studying intention it's the two of them together it's this holistic discipleship life so i hope that's given us a little bit to chew on let's look at our summary again we've got love we've got light and we've got live that breaks down what god has done for me he's loved me

what god has made me he's made me light so what i do with it well i live i live a life that is compatible with my calling and with the fact that i'm loved by god and that looks like being careful being intentional not just thinking well i can just do whatever and god will work it out actually i'm going to take effort i'm going to be uh applying myself to this but i'm always doing it out of a place of this is the way of love i know that i'm loved i'm not striving i'm simply bringing myself into jesus's light and he's making me a light but there's a there's a cooperation that jesus does his bit and i do my bit look at these two questions what does it mean to speak to one another in psalms hymns and spiritual songs i mean what does that look like does it mean that you're walking along saying shine jesus shine uh how does that work and how can you cultivate a greater lifestyle of constant worship and thanksgiving okay full disclosure my hand is up i'm not one of these big worship guys i'd much rather be doing something or reading something or studying um my wife really is a worshiper she loves to worship and she she fills our house with spiritual songs all the time she's at her piano but for me this is more of a big deal so i have to think how can i live a life of constant thanksgiving and worship what does that look like for me who's a little bit more analytical i think one of the things about psalms you know even if we take the the psalms in scripture um they're so because they're poetry because they're songs they're lyrics they're easy to remember the lord is my shepherd i shall not want and one of the most powerful things that you can do when you're together in fellowship is actually to pray some of those things over one another uh to be able to pray psalms um and i think the same can be the same can be true of spiritual songs they help remind us of spiritual truths i think that the mindset thing is so important because for me when i look at this passage there's a combination of head and heart it's like in my heart i need to know that i'm loved and that this comes out of a place of i am deeply loved i'm dearly loved and i can't do anything more to earn god's love and no matter how bad i mess up i can't lose god's love so that gives me security so my motivation is that heart but at the same time i need my mind to be working that stuff out one of the reasons i really love ephesians is that it's actually one of the the passages in scripture that over the years i've looked to to um to commit to memory or to memorize at least parts of it i've never got the whole way through but to be able to have bits of ephesians that you can just fill your mind with um and i find that when i'm praying for people i'll i'll pray the words of scripture um so using scripture using worship to fill our minds other ways in which worship can be part of our everyday life i mean i i made fun of the people that listening to worship music in the cars but it's quite good uh i don't do it but um one of the things i do is i run and when i run i have my headphones in and i i ran out of all the music that i like and so i thought well i might as well try some worship because i've run out of all the good songs um and i found out that as i'm walking uh sorry i've given myself away as i'm trying to run

very slowly through the streets of bristol and i've got worship in my ears it actually affects me it changes me it sets me up and every now and again i kind of get pumped and i'll start running um in fact i ran this morning i did a little run this morning before work and it was a gospel choir that started singing our god is a mighty god uh he reigns from heaven above and i started running faster and faster because it started to affect me and we need to make sure that we are living lives of worship and and thanking god it's so easy to come to god with a list of prayers and requests our shopping list of burdens and that's not a bad thing but actually having lives where we're thanking god um again i have this spiritual practice i i pray in my living room in the morning and i will go around and i'll say thank you god for this sofa you provided this sofa for me thank you god for that picture of our family when the girls were little thank you that you've you've given you know i just go around and thank you for that plant i'm sorry i've killed it but going around being thankful to god these are spiritual practices that can help us pray thank you so much for allowing me to to be here uh as i said

before i brought a few of these things what i brought is i brought some postcards that have um details of the things that we offer so if you've got people who are in need of help whether that is just not really coping with married life or family life or young kids or whether there's additional needs or whether there's bereavement or just anything that we can help with as i alluded to we have a care line where you just ring the number and say look i'm having this issue with um whoever it may be but also if you want a little bit of a broader overview there's a book because family life matters at the back if you want to you can become one of the we have thousands and thousands of people across the uk that support us we do what we do because literally around about 15 000 people every month give a little amount and if you'd like to kind of explore that you'd be very very welcome just take one of these and you can do whatever it says but let's pray and commit these things to god now father god if we take nothing else from this evening i pray that we would just remember that we're dearly loved that you cherish us that we're your children and lord out of that place of love we want to live and walk the way of love father god you have made us light and rather than condemning us for those things which we keep in the dark you invite us just to live in the light and to become lights to be illuminated by you lord we want to live in the light and father as we have the challenge of day-to-day discipleship would you make us people that know what it is to speak to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to have hearts that are full of thanksgiving and overflowing with gratitude that we make music from the heart to you that we would be worshipers of god and that our thinking would be wise that we would know what your will is and that we're the kind of people that can be lights in this world because you shine upon us lord help us i pray in the name of jesus and i pray for um the churches represented here i pray that this time of easter we may be easter people resurrection people who extend out the message of the good news that jesus christ has risen from the dead hallelujah that those that we love who don't know you might be able to see that light and find you as their father for themselves we pray this in the name of jesus amen amen thank you so much you you