

Walking in the Light

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[0 : 00] In this chapter, there's much mention of walk and our walk with God. And in verse 8 it mentions this idea of walking in the light.

And it says, for one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the world. Walk as children of light. We all know, I'm sure, it's not an easy thing to live as a Christian in the world in which we are today.

If it was easy, I think we should be asking ourselves questions. Why? Where are we going wrong? Because the Bible makes it quite clear to us that it's not going to be easy.

Whether we're looking at it in the Old Testament or the New Testament, we find right throughout all the generations of God's people, that in Christian life, walking with God is not an easy thing.

But we also see too, as you think of our walk with God, that there are so many blessings and privileges in it as well. Seeing that, even in hearing the men praying, we come with all that's sort of going wrong around us in our own lives as well.

[1 : 04] But we also come giving thanks to God for all that we have through the creation, the wonder of creation, and the wonder of the fact that we have his word that still speaks to us.

So there's so much variety in our lives. There's the challenges and there's the joys, there's the highs and there's the lows. And we see that even as we read in this chapter in Ephesians.

You see the similarities of the world in which we live today, the challenges that they were facing are the same challenges that we face today as well. So how do we cope with the challenges that we face on a daily basis?

How do we cope with people who spurn God, reject God, go so blatantly against the law of God?

How do we deal with people who make God just a joke, make a laugh of God?

We look around as we see all that, but as well as that, how do we deal with ourselves? How do we cope with ourselves? And we think of our own hearts, how they can be hard, how they can be cold, how we can be distant from God.

[2 : 05] How do we cope with that? How do we tell a generation coming after us how to live as Christians? How do we tell our young people, this is how you deal with the pressures to conform in this world?

When society says the norm is one thing, but the Bible says something very different. When we hear our young people saying that they're the ones who are odd because they don't do these things, how do we help them stand up and say, no, you are the ones who are in the wrong.

We have the word of God as the light to our feet, and it helps us along the way. So there's all of these challenges going on. How do we encourage people to seek the Lord?

How do we show them the light of the gospel in a world that says the gospel is strange or at odds with the world, the day that we live in, the age that we live in?

How do we show the reality of the gospel and the power of the gospel and the beauty of the gospel to our people who are blind? We have all of these challenges to face.

[3 : 08] To live as a Christian today isn't easy, but we shouldn't be surprised. And we can take heart because of the word of God and that word that is even before us this evening, the light of the gospel that we have.

And that's really the theme that Paul has in this section as we think of the light and being imitators of God as he starts at verse 1 in chapter 5.

Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love. You have that theme of walking with God there from the outset of the chapter. You have the theme of darkness and light throughout these verses as well.

And it is all about our walk with God. How do we walk as Christians in this world? Well, there's two things I just want us to take, especially our two points are really from verse 8, but it surrounds these verses as well.

And they are the change of life that we see here and the call to live. The change and the call. Because Paul makes it very clear where the change comes in.

[4 : 25] We see that with these words, one time you were darkness, but now you are light. So there's the change that has come in. But it doesn't end there.

Because then he goes on to say in the same verse that you are to walk as children of light. So it's to go on. How are we to live?

We are to live walking as children of light. So I just want to take these two things from this verse this evening. The change and the call to live.

So the first thing we see here is the change. Paul in these verses tells us that there is to be a difference in us to those around us who are not believers.

But he does this in showing what we once were. And notice what it says. He shows us the difference by saying, you were once darkness, but now you are light.

[5 : 26] The change is there for us. And Paul in the letter to the Ephesians, he quite often uses, he uses this phrase often, you were.

You see it a few times throughout the chapters here. You were. It says in chapter one, you were sealed. So it kind of begins with this idea of the Christian, you are sealed in Christ.

You are brought in to Christ. But he also makes it clear that you were dead. You were dead in your sin. So he's clear that what we were as well.

You were dead in your sins. You were separated from Christ, he says as well. You were separated from Christ. So once we were not with Christ, we were separated from him.

He says you were far off. Again, it's that kind of distance. It's this, you were far off. But then he says, you were called.

[6 : 26] So as you read through the letters of the Ephesians, all these words, you were, it shows the whole change that comes into the Christian life. How we are sealed, is that we are brought from death to life in Christ.

We were separated and far off, but we were called. And so Paul is using all of these descriptions to remind us of the change that came about in our lives.

But the two of them, the two that stand out for me in terms of these where, is when you look at the fact of dead in your sins and the darkness that we see here.

Because what does he say? Well, first, what doesn't he say? When you go back to that text in chapter 3, when you were dead in your trespasses and sins, he doesn't say you were dying in your sins.

He doesn't say you were falling away in your sins. He says you were dead. You were, there was nothing. You were dead in your sins. There was no life at all.

[7 : 31] You were dead. But you were made alive in Christ. So it's dramatic. You were dead. And it just shows us that's what we were.

And it changes, the remarkable changes that we are brought to life through faith in Christ. And you see, it's quite similar here in verse 8 and chapter 5 as well.

It's a missing word, if you like, that changes. At one time, you were darkness. You would expect in. You were in darkness.

But it's not there. It says you were darkness. And that's the reality as well. It's not just that we could say, well, I didn't know where I was. I was.

I was lost. It was not me. He says, no, you were darkness. Not just you were in darkness, but you were darkness. And that just adds to what he's saying here.

[8 : 28] It's not just the reality of you were dying in sin or you were in darkness. It's more than that. You were dead in your sin. And you were darkness.

You were the darkness in this world. And then he changes that by saying, you are light. So again, you might expect to say, and maybe even more so expect to say, you are now in light.

But he says, you are light. And then we see the burden of responsibility in this change. You were darkness.

Everything that you showed to the world was darkness. But now, you are light. Not just in the light, but you are light. You are what the world sees now.

A change has taken place. And so, it's dramatic. And that's what being brought to life in Christ is. It's dramatic.

[9 : 31] For everyone who is brought, not just from darkness, but in the sense of being in it, but being the darkness, to being made light. And being brought from death to life.

It's dramatic. So you are light. Light. And when you think of Jesus himself, and when you think here of verse 1, be imitators of God as beloved children.

When you think of being light, we have to think of Jesus. And we have to go back to the Gospel of John, especially chapter 8. And there in the Gospel of John, chapter 8, towards the beginning of the chapter, Jesus is talking to a crowd then.

And it's at the end of a festival. The festival of booths, or the festival of tabernacles, it was called. And as this festival came to a close, on the last night of the festival, four great pillars of light were lit. Enormous pillars. It was said there was about 65 litres of oil in each pillar burning. And this light shone over Jerusalem as a whole, and shone almost outwith Jerusalem.

[10 : 49] There was so much light. But then as the festival closed, and there was much dancing and celebrating at this festival, as the festival closed, the light would go out.

And it was at that point that Jesus said to them in verse 11, and Jesus spoke again to them saying, I am the light of the world. So he is the light of the world.

That's what he was making so clear there. And he says, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The Christian will have the light of life.

And that's what we see Paul making so clear here. Being imitators of God as dearly beloved children. Walk in love. That's where he begins in this chapter. And then in verse 8 he says, you were darkness, but now you are light.

When you become a Christian, when you're born again, it's not just the surroundings that change. It's you. You are changed. Not just taken out of darkness and put somewhere new.

[12 : 02] You were part of darkness, and now you're light. A change takes place. The Spirit of God awakens us to see the sin in our heart and to seek the Lord.

But we're not just in light. We are light. And so there needs to be a difference. There needs to be a difference in us. If we are to be light in this world, we have to reflect the glory of Christ in our lives. And many people have approached this in different ways. How then are we to live in this world? What are we to be? How is the change to be seen by others?

We kind of find we go from extremes, one extreme to another, where some people say, well, we can be in this world. We can become all things to all men. And they go on in this life just seeking to live almost just like they were in some ways.

Doing the things they once did. But saying, maybe I'm a Christian now. I'm trying to compartmentalise life as a Christian and saying, oh, I can still do these things.

[13 : 10] I'm not that different. And to go to that extreme is dangerous because we often err on falling back into our old ways. And it happens.

Or we downplay truth. We don't hold on to the truth as we should because we don't offend people. So we can be like those who are blowing in the wind.

You think of the decision of the Supreme Court just now and how you see people all of a sudden speaking very differently. When that wasn't the case, when it hadn't been made that clear in law, so many were just going along with what they thought people wanted to hear.

Now it's made law, they've got a different opinion. So it's like blowing in the wind. It's our truth, whatever we want to believe. And that's the danger with a Christian as well.

We can be blown around by the wind of change as well if we're erring in that side of things. But the other danger is that we go to the other extreme where we separate ourselves completely.

[14 : 16] And Paul again makes clear that we are to be in the world but not of the world. So it's finding that place where we don't just bring ourselves out of the world and completely a bit like the Amish people who not wanting to be influenced by a godless culture just take themselves right out of things and live just by themselves in their own ways and over time they've just become so odd to the world.

Same as being a monk. You can think we should just take ourselves right out of things. Sometimes we feel like we just want to get away from the world but we still have to be in the world because that's what this is saying to us.

You were darkness but now you are light. And if we are to be light well that light has to shine. It has to shine into this world.

We are to be light. We know we can't be the perfect light but we are still to be the light that shows the glory of God. Someone once put it like this.

He said when the sun sets and the moon rises we see the moon because the sun reflects its light off it. We sometimes see the moon full and on a bright full moon night it can be so bright at times.

[15 : 44] Other times it might be a half moon or a quarter moon and it's dimmer. And he said likewise it is with the church. When Christ has departed this world the church is to be his witness but it's reflecting that light and there's times he said when the church reflects like a full moon brightly shining into this world.

There's been glorious times for the church reformation times revival times times of great blessing other times when the light has not been so bright.

We could think of our own day is the light shining as bright it's been dark but maybe we are seeing glimpses of more light coming but it's all about reflecting the glory of God.

And our prayer is that we would be this light in this world that people would see the change and that people would desire that change in their own lives and their own hearts.

You were darkness but now you are the light. So we see this change but we also see there's this call to live.

[17 : 01] It's not just about coming to Christ in faith and that's it. You were darkness but now you are light in the world. Walk as children of the light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.

And so he's going on here there's this call to live to walk as children of light you must be children of light. must be the children of God.

We were blind. It wasn't just that we didn't see God's glory we were incapable of seeing it. We couldn't see it. We had no ability or desire to see such a thing.

We didn't even sense a need of the saviour. We didn't understand the justice and holiness of God. They meant nothing to us. Issues of life death and eternity these were just words.

But the call to live is when God comes and opens our eyes to the understanding and seeing things anew. I think it was Morda that quoted the text from 2 Corinthians the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[18 : 18] We have seen that and we are called by God. And we begin then to see our condition as guilty sinners but we also see the wonder of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We see his death on the cross. We see all that it meant and entailed all it showed us of our sin. But then we see the glory of his resurrection.

We see the fact that he is risen and that he is coming again and all of these things they begin to open our eyes and to give us understanding and we begin to live in the light of this truth in the light of the gospel in the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So we come to faith and we go on in faith and we seek to live as children of light but how do we do this? Well the fruit of light as it says here is found in all that is good and right and true.

So you have these three words all that is is good the fruit of light consists of these things.

[19 : 34] Goodness is one of the attributes of God wisdom power holiness justice goodness and truth that is how God is described and verse 1 says be imitators of God.

So this goodness should be in us. Behind the word goodness here is generosity generosity serving the Lord and that can go back to verse 2 walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The goodness of our Lord the generosity of our Lord and that he gave all for us and so in walking in the light we should be marked in that way as well with the goodness of Christ in us.

You are light therefore this goodness should be part of our lives to walk in dependence of him.

Again goodness is seen as one of the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5 and since it's a fruit it can take time to develop in us as we probably know too well change in our hearts is ongoing that sanctification so goodness should always be growing in us that generosity of spirit of God then we see too we are to walk as children of light with this righteousness all that is right we should walk as children of light for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right so righteousness is part of it seeking to conform to the righteous standards of God's word and in every way that we live upright before God and before others that's what's behind this word how do we treat all people

around us how do we show the justice of

God to all around us so the righteousness of this light should be growing in us as well and then the third one there we see we are to be a people of truth honesty and again integrity comes into this as well the life of the unbelievers is those who are deceived those who have believed a lie who are being led astray but we are to be marked out by truth let no one it says in verse 6 deceive you with empty words so we have the word of God we have truth in the word of God and all of these things should be working together in us so that as we see these three then it leads us then into verse 10 trying to discern what is pleasing to the Lord and where do we find where do we discern what is pleasing to our Lord what we find it in his word we don't make up our own truth we have the truth of God and so for this to walk as children of the light we need to be with

[22 : 57] God corporately together informally together and personally in all of these ways making Jesus our priority every day walking in the light and when you look at the light that there is in Christ and coming to him there's this progression in our lives as well there's a few texts just four texts I want to highlight as we conclude one is Exodus 34 and you go back to the time when Moses was up Mount Sinai when he came down from Mount Sinai it says he didn't realize that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God so you have there the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Moses because he had been talking with God so there's the reality for us to be talking with God to be in the presence of God and then you come into the

New Testament and you have Matthew chapter 5 verse 14 so if we have the light in us we are to let that light shine you are the light of the world a city set in a hill cannot be hidden nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house in the same way let your light shine before others so they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven let this light shine before others we have this light you were darkness and now you are light then we have the text here in Ephesians that comes in verse 14 it says there therefore it says awake o sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine in you it's almost like there's a summary there of Paul's letter to the

Ephesians you were dead in your sins awake it is time to awake and to rise and Christ will shine in you so here is the hope that we have as the Christian the Christian life is full of challenges but we must live in the darkness of this world by being lights in this world by allowing Christ to shine in us and so as we go on in this world we also have the hope of eternity as well the darkness that we are taken out of here the light that we are is with the hope of the fullness of this glory and we see that in the gospel of Matthew chapter 13 verse 43 where it says then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father so you have this it's a conclusion in some ways but it's just a beginning in another where you will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father with a

Christian will shine for all eternity that's the wonder that we have we're brought from being darkness in this world to being light letting our light shine before us the light of Christ to being eternally shining in the kingdom of the father so that we have the wonder of the salvation that is ours in Christ the light that we have in Christ in us and the light that we have for eternity with him so let us seek to be those who discern this light we were darkness but now your light walk as children of light let us pray our father in heaven we do thank you for the light of the gospel we thank you that it shines in the hearts of unbelievers not just to bring us from darkness to light but to bring us from being darkness to being light and we pray that each one of us will seek to walk ever closely with you being in your presence that we might shine the glory of

God even in our faces as we think of Moses how he did Lord draw us ever closer to yourself and keep us as the apple of your eye we ask all these things for the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude