

**Ephesians 5: 9 & 10; “The Fruit of the Light”, Message # 41 in a series entitled – “The Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall for October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

Tonight we want to think more about God’s gift of giving us His light to change and transform us into people who are pleasing to Him. I think that this process of being transformed by light is so mysterious to some Christians that they have never really thought about it much at all. But these verses remind us that we should think about the light that we are being given, and that we should attempt by God’s grace to live up to the light that is given to us. So let us ask some pertinent questions of the text here tonight. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – What is the Fruit of the Light? 2<sup>nd</sup> – What does the fruit of the Light produce in our lives? And 3<sup>rd</sup> – How will God be well-pleased in our sacrifice and service to Him?

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – What is the Fruit of the Light?**

In attempting to understand verses 9 and 10, I want to remind you of the context which is set for us in verse 8 – “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” There is this tremendous contrast which Paul is setting before us here; of what we once were as unbelievers, that is darkness, with what we are now, which is light in the Lord. Darkness is the name which is given by the apostle Paul and all the other apostles too, to what we were like before we came to know Christ. Darkness is the word picture for sin, and as such we were full of darkness. We were sinners and as such we were darkness itself.

Light is the name given to those who have Christ in their heart. “You are light in the Lord.” If you know Christ you have the grace and presence of His light shining into your mind and influencing your thoughts in many, many ways. We who are Christians are children of Light. Christ is our Light and we are enlightened by His Spirit’s shining in our minds and hearts, making known to us the meaning of the Scriptures, so that we might keep them, and do what Christ commands. Therefore, Paul tells us that we are to walk as children of light.

Paul goes on to say in verse 9 – “For the fruit of the Spirit”, or rather, as it should have been translated – “For the fruit of the Light is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.” John Calvin says – “I wonder how the word Spirit (pneumatoi) has crept into many Greek manuscripts, as the other reading is more consistent, – the fruit of the light.” “Paul’s meaning indeed is not affected; for in either case it will be this, that believers must walk in the light, because they are “children of the light.” “This is done, when they do not live according to their own will, but devote themselves entirely to obedience to God, when they undertake nothing but by His command.” (end of quote) This is well-said, I believe.

It is well for us to think about the fact that the fruit of the light is a part of the gift of the Spirit who was given to us by the Father and the Son when we first believed in Christ. The 3 Persons of the Divine Trinity are inseparable in their Essence, even though distinguishable as Persons in their influences and operations in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit is the One who gives and shines the spiritual light into our minds, and He is the Spirit of Jesus. Both Christ and the Spirit are pure and perfect Light as Persons in the Divine Trinity. Christ is the Light of the world, and as it says in John chapter 1, verse 9 – “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” When people are brought into this world, they are given the light of nature, the ability to reason, and the light of conscience, the faculty to judge whether what they are doing is right or wrong.

This is how we should think of this statement of Christ’s being the true light which give light to every man. It is not that He actually gives saving light to every man coming into the world. But He is, because of the power of His Divine nature coupled with His Perfect Humanity, He is always shining upon all men benevolently as the Sun of Righteousness. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3: 17) He came into this world to bring healing to all men who would believe in Him. It is true, that it is He who is the Light

who is shining, even when men do not believe in Him. Or even if they are not aware that every bit of understanding that they have, either natural or spiritual, has come originally from Him. We really do need to believe that Christ as much greater than our present conception of Him; that is, to grow in our understanding better, the influences of His Light.

Let us also remember that our Father is the Father of lights. He is our Father and our God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And as the 1<sup>st</sup> Person of the Godhead, He is integrally involved in the work of our salvation together with the Son and the Spirit. Particularly that is, in terms of His purposing that we would receive the Divine Light unto our understanding the truth, and in our receiving it, that we would be saved. Look with me at James chapter 1, verses 16-18 – “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”

So, I hope that you can see from these verses that every good gift of the giving of light in relation to our salvation comes down from above, from the Father of lights, from His having purposed the initial shining in our souls in a saving way. And then He governs our progress by ordaining the means of Christ’s light shining on forward on the path of righteousness, on into eternity forever. Proverbs 4: 18 – “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” God the Father’s purpose is most certain. There is no variation or shadow of turning with regard to what the Father will do for the person whom He has purposed to save through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by His Holy Spirit.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – What does the fruit of the Light produce in our lives?**

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.” Since it is God who is at work in us, we need to understand that it is the Spirit’s light shining in our hearts that is leading us to change in a good way which is pleasing to Him. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3: 18 – “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” “For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (ESV) We behold the glory of the Lord. Since the Lord Jesus is full of grace and glory, and because He is good, and kind, and merciful, and loving towards us, we can expect according to His promise, to change.

We will be changed from one degree of glory to another. We will change to become more obedient to Him, and more good and kind towards others around us. We will change to become this way, in order to be pleasing to Him. As verse 10 says – We are trying to find out what is acceptable to the Lord. We are trying to please our Lord. This is the fruit of His giving each of His dear children spiritual light. His giving us light in an everyday on-going sense by the working of the Holy Spirit, is going to result in our being and our becoming good and righteous people in God’s sight. That is, we become people who are preeminently interested in living out the truth of the Bible.

That is what this shining of spiritual light into our hearts and minds will produce; tangible obedience to God’s word, as we respond to Christ Himself being present in our heart and life. Our responsibility is to find out what is acceptable to Him. Or as it is worded in the New American Standard Translation – “Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord”. The ESV words it – “Trying to discern what is pleasing to the Lord”. The King James says – “Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.” To put this in a prepositional form: In living our life before God, there should be continual thoughts and acts taking place in your mind and heart which will enable you over time to prove to yourself what is acceptable and pleasing to Him.

Where does this begin? Well turn with me to Romans chapter 12, verse 1. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of

God.” What is first of all pleasing to God, is that you would present your body as a living sacrifice to Him. That is, in terms of doing things with your body, you think about what would please Him. You commit to going to a good Bible-believing church so that you will regularly worship Him. You also start thinking more about prayer. You do not want to take God’s name in vain. And so you begin to pray about everything that you are involved in, in life, everything that you are doing, or going to do. You realize that to be strong in faith, that you have to be consciously be devoted to Him, asking for things agreeable to His will; praying about the things which you think would please Him according to His word.

1<sup>st</sup> John 3: 18-22 – “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” “And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.” “For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.” “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.” “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” This is a very significant step forward in living the Christian life, when you learn to ask and receive things from God in terms of your loving other Christians around you, and other people around you, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

You begin to understand that the things that you are doing with your body are the outworking of the obedience of your mind and heart. You ask yourself – Where are my mind and my heart going to on a regular basis? You begin to understand that the things that you think about and meditate upon, will lead you to a sacrificial giving of yourself to do those things in consistency, in a habitual way, because you will see your life as a course of learning to do what is pleasing to God. You couple this with Colossians 3: 1-3 – “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” “For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

So, to please God, you must learn to consistently cultivate the hidden life with Christ in faith, prayer, and fellowship and communion with Him. This consciously holding fellowship and communion with Christ will lead to a rejection of the world’s sinful way of doing things. And at the same time there will be a renewing of your mind that is going on, as Christ’s light is working in your mind and heart; showing you in accordance with the commands of Scripture, how to keep His commandments in a way which is pleasing to Him. This holy interaction between yourself and the Lord, will lead to many acts of goodness and righteousness towards people around you. It will lead to your better and better keeping of the truth of the Bible; living it out in your life, to the glory of God, in your love for Him, and the love that you show to the brethren and to other people around you.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – How will God be well-pleased in our sacrifice and service to Him?**

What kind of sacrifices is the Lord looking for from us? That great Maxim of Micah chapter 6, verses 6-8, is something that we should really think about, and live out. “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God?” “Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?” “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rivers of oil?” “Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

What these verses teach us about living the Christian life is this: When we think about what we want to do to please the Lord, we should be motivated in the greatest sense by what Christ has done already done for us, and what He is presently doing for us by His light, His grace, and His Spirit. Remembering what He gave; of Himself, out of His goodness, His kindness, and His love for us, in His obedience and sufferings on our behalf, we then live our life to Him out of thankfulness for the strength of His light, the strength of His grace. 1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 7 – “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

We must always remember that we are learning to serve our Lord Christ according to His great power and grace in our lives; according to the light that He gives to us. If you will turn over to Psalm 36, verses 7-10, you will see this. “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!” “Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.” “They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them to drink from the river of Your pleasures.” “For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.” “Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart.”

This is a very humbling truth for every Christian to learn, but it is very necessary for them to learn it if they would grow up into Christ and learn to please Him. It is the truth that in His light we see light. It is He who is the fountain of our spiritual life in every sense. It is pleasing to the Lord when we learn to live the Christian life, depending upon Christ’s strength and wisdom and grace; that it will be supplied to us by faith, as we go about to obey Him. In living this way, we should remember that He ever lives to make intercession for us as we go about to try to obey God. Keeping these very important truths in mind, we then deliberately go about to do good to people around us, because the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness. Since God is good and kind, we will become good and kind people.

Since God is righteous and holy, we consciously study to become more and more righteous and holy people. And since Christ is the Personification of Truth, we consciously think about how we can become more like Him by keeping His word. I would like to close this study with a few verses from Hebrews chapter 13 concerning Him and the sacrifices that we make to please Him. Verses 15 & 16 – “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips, giving thanks to His name.” “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

I hope that you can see that God is well-pleased if you are a person of praise. Praise is a sacrifice it says here. It is a sacrifice which we should be daily offering to our God “by Christ”, giving thanks to His name. Are you making progress in this, dear Christian. God will be well-pleased if you are. And out of that praise and thanksgiving will come great service to Him. You will not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. And then a benediction is given over in verse 20 which we should remember as well.

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.” May you and I, my brethren, be made complete in every good work of service to our Lord, in this wonderful and holy way, so that we will be doing His will, and following Him more closely as the days go by, until we see Him face to face.