

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

TEXT: EPHESIANS 5:8-17

Introduction:

1. We have noted that the word “walk” (Eph. 5:2, 8, 15) is a key word in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (cf. 2:1, 2, 10; 4:1, 17).
2. Ephesians 5:8 says, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”
3. This is one of the great themes of the Bible – we were in darkness, but now are in the light (Eph. 5:8, 11, 13, 14).
4. God’s purpose and plan is for us to influence the world and change the world by letting our light shine in the darkness.
5. Our Lord said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16; cf. Eph. 5:14).
6. This world is getting darker and darker. It is quite disturbing to read the newspaper and see how wicked America has become.
7. Do you know the proposed Senate health care bill will spend billions on sex education and “romance and relationship lessons”?
8. Even though these proposed bills will cost trillions of dollars, and will surely bankrupt our country, most Senators and congressmen have admitted they do not bother to even read them before they vote on them.
9. For a while there was talk about the government paying for sex change operations and abortions, but there was an uproar from conservatives so perhaps those were excluded from the bill.
10. Oprah Winfrey is producing a new dirty TV series for HBO about a LA housewife who leaves her husband and kids to act out her secret sex fantasies in LA’s “seamy underbelly.”
11. The writer of this dirty new show has said that the main character “will embrace darkness with a joyful spirit” (*NY Post*, Nov. 24, 2009).
12. As the world gets darker, we have to keep letting our light shine and keep winning souls. Time is running out.
13. Our Lord said, “the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:5).

I. THERE MUST BE A DEFINITE CHANGE (5:8-10).

1. When a person is genuinely converted there will be a change in character and a change in conduct. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
2. Where there is life, there is change (5:8). And where there is life, there is fruit (5:9).

3. Those who walk in the light produce the fruit of the Spirit:
 - (1) “goodness” (5:9) – moral excellence, in contrast to the moral depravity and immorality of those who walk in darkness (cf. 5:3-7).
 - (2) “righteousness” (5:9) – integrity in our dealings with God and with men.
 - (3) “truth” (5:9) – “Honesty is the best policy.” Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). If we are His followers (cf. 5:1), then we must always be truthful.
4. On many occasions we will have to consider whether certain things are “acceptable unto the Lord” (Ephesians 5:10).
5. God wants us to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21; cf. Eph. 5:10).
6. We are to put everything to the test – every thought, every word, every idea, every action. We need to stop and ask ourselves: “What does God’s Word say about this?”
7. Every area of life should come under His divine searchlight – our conversation, our way of living, the way we dress, the books and magazines we read, the way we conduct our business, the way we entertain ourselves, the way we raise our children, etc.
8. We are to “prove” what is acceptable to the Lord (5:10).
9. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

II. THERE MUST BE SEPARATION FROM EVIL (5:11).

1. There are certain churches that preach the Bible, and follow the Bible – for the most part.
2. However, they will not practice Biblical separation (Eph. 5:11).
3. “The unfruitful works of darkness” would include the ecumenical movement. It would include churches that tolerate sin. It would include the Masons and the Mormons and the Muslims, etc.
4. Less than one month after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Willow Creek Community Church, a weak, wishy-washy “seeker-sensitive” church in South Barrington, Ill (a suburb of Chicago) invited Faisal Hammouda, a Muslim imam, to speak at one of their services.
3. I could give hundreds of similar examples. Right here in the NYC area, we are always hearing about ungodly pro-abortion and pro-

homosexual politicians speaking from the pulpit in churches all over town.

4. These wicked politicians should not be honored.
5. Rather than fellowshiping with wicked men and apostate leaders and organizations, we should “reprove them” (5:11).
6. “It is a shame even to speak of those things” which these wicked unbelievers do (5:12). That is why it is difficult to even preach about some of these things.
7. Their behaviour is so vile and filthy, Paul says “it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (5:12).
8. And now they are not only doing it in secret, but on television. Perhaps you heard about that sleazy sodomite Adam Lambert who was smooching with another man on TV recently.
9. He also groped a female dancer and shoved a male dancer’s face into his crotch. But almost as soon as ABC canceled Lambert, CBS signed him up. Hours later, David Letterman announced that Lambert would be on his late-night show.
10. “He’s a newsmaker, and we wanted to give him a chance to explain his side of the story,” a CBS spokeswoman said.
11. Newsmaker? His side of the story?
12. What is really tragic is that this sort of wickedness and foolishness does not even shock people anymore. People sit mesmerized like zombies in front of the TV watching perverts like Adam Lambert.
13. No act of indecency is considered off-limits these days.
14. This constant bombardment defiles the mind. We are seeing the results on every hand.
15. It is because Christians are opposed to all of this filth that we are vilified and hated vehemently by many unsaved people. It is because their darkness is “made manifest by the light” (5:13).
16. Our job as Christians is not just to reprove but to awaken those that are slumbering (5:14). The great Bible teacher, Matthew Henry, said that this verse serves to remind us “of the great stupidity and the wretched security of sinners, how insensitive they are of their danger, and how inapt they naturally are to spiritual motions, sensations, and actions.”
17. Therefore, we must “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (5:15). Webster’s Dictionary defines “circumspectly” as “cautiously, with watchfulness.”
18. This same Greek word is translated “diligently” in Matthew 2:7 and 8, and “perfectly” in I Thessalonians 5:2.

19. In other words, Christians are to walk carefully and wisely in this wicked world. Our walk in this world should demonstrate that we belong to Christ (cf. Eph. 4:1, 17-20).
20. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col. 4:5).
21. John Phillips, in his commentary on the book of Ephesians, gives an interesting illustration. He said that in certain European countries property is often protected by a high wall, the top of which is covered with embedded broken glass to discourage intruders from climbing over the wall.
22. Dr. Phillips said that sometimes one can see a cat walking along the top of one of these walls. “The cat walks circumspectly, carefully, precisely, and assiduously. It picks up one paw and carefully places it where there is no glass. When that paw is in place, the cat reaches forward tentatively and gingerly with the next one.”
23. That’s a good example for us – we ought to walk just as circumspectly as that cat up on the wall. But too many Christians walk carelessly.
24. Harry Ironside wrote, “Christian, your path leads you through a world of sin, a world of folly, a world where you are exposed to all kinds of temptations and unholy influences. Snares and traps abound for your unwary feet. Therefore, walk circumspectly... be careful as to the company you keep.”
25. Harry Ironside said that back in 1937. How much more dangerous and wicked is this world in 2009!
26. “As wise” – “not as fools” (5:15) men and women, we are to be “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (5:16). To redeem the time means to “buy up the opportunities.”
27. Each and every day brings new opportunities, open doors, new people – people who are lost and need to be saved.
28. “Redeeming the time” means “buying up the time.” Matthew Poole says this is “a metaphor taken from merchants, that diligently observe the time for buying and selling, and easily part with their pleasure for gain.”
29. In other words, we deny worldly pleasures in order to better serve God.

III. THERE MUST BE A SEEKING AFTER THE WILL OF GOD (5:17).

1. One cannot know the will of God without knowing the Word of God.

2. When a person first gets saved he doesn't know much about the will of God. But after he is born again he is to make it his business to find out.
3. He is to walk circumspectly – “not as fools” and “not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:15-17).
4. FB Meyer preached much and wrote much about the will of God. Many years ago, he was sailing from northern Ireland to England. It was nighttime and as he looked ahead all he could see was a confusing jumble of lights. He wondered how the captain would be able to navigate the ship safely into the harbor.
5. So he went and asked the captain. The captain took him up to the bridge and said, “Do you see that big light over to the left? And do you see that other big light to the right of it? And now, do you see that outstanding light farther still this way? Well now, keep your eyes on those three lights and see what happens.”
6. As FB Meyer watched, the big outer light on the left gradually moved in till it coincided with the middle light. Then as the ship slowly turned, the light gradually merged into the third light.
7. “There now,” said the captain, “all I have to do is to see that those three big lights become one; then I go straight ahead.”
8. FB Meyer saw this as a vivid illustration for discerning the will of God. He said when Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and Divine Providence are lined up we can move straight ahead with confidence, knowing the Lord is directing us.

CONCLUSION:

1. Our text is connected to verse 18 by the little word “And” (Eph. 5:18), reminding us that a foolish and worldly man will get drunk with wine, whereas a wise and sensible Christian will be filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. Christian – are you filled with the Holy Spirit?
3. Unsaved friend, are you tired of walking foolishly? You need to turn to the Lord. Repentance means to turn around.