

080 - Once Darkness, Now Light - Ephesians 5:8-14 - 2016-02-14

Call to Worship: Psalm 89:1

Scripture Reading: Psalm 89:2-15

Sermon: "Once Darkness, Now Light" Ephesians 5:8-14

Benediction: Psalm 89:15-16

## INTRODUCTION

The sons of disobedience; that is, the fornicators, the unclean persons, the covetous men, have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God, and the wrath of God is coming upon them for their sins. The Word of God tells us, then, the dear children of God, in order to walk worthy of the calling we have received, we are not to be partakers or companions or partners with the immoral in their sins.

That was the matter we studied last time, and we take up the apostle's doctrine at that point today. We find a reason given for what has just been commanded, expressed in the ancient figures of darkness and light. Why are you not to be partners with the sons of disobedience in their immorality? because although

**You were once darkness, now you are light in the Lord.**

## TEXT

Ephesians 5:8-14 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (9) (for the fruit of the Spirit [light] is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), (10) finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. (11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. (12) For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. (13) But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. (14) Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

## BODY

**To walk in a way that is worthy of the calling with which you have been called, do not be partners with the immoral in their sins, because you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.**

- I. You were once darkness: let's understand what that means
  - A. Understand this by "you were once" or "at one time"
    1. G4218 Greek *pote* "in the past"
    2. Eph 2:2-3 in which you **once** walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now

works in the sons of disobedience, (3) among whom also we all **once** conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- a) we walked according to the course of this world, according to the devil
  - b) we conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh
  - c) we were by nature children of wrath
3. Eph 2:11-13 Therefore remember that you, **once** Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- (12) that **at that time** you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- a) we were outside of Christ; without Christ
  - b) we were aliens from Israel and the covenants of promise
  - c) we had no hope
  - d) we were without God
4. Col 1:21 And you, who **once** were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled
- a) we were alienated from God
  - b) were were enemies of God in our minds by wicked works
5. Col 3:5-7 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (6) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, (7) in which you yourselves **once** walked when you lived in them.
- a) we walked in fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry
6. Tit 3:3 For we ourselves were also **once** foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.
- a) we were foolish
  - b) we were disobedient
  - c) we were deceived
  - d) we served various lusts and pleasures
  - e) we lived in malice and envy
  - f) we were ourselves hateful
  - g) and we hated one another
- B. Understand this by "darkness." Here the apostle, writing just a brief letter, uses the figure of darkness to represent a condition that is described elsewhere in the

scriptures. Let's use one of those places to understand what he means by being darkness. see Isaiah 59

1. The condition of sinners is summed up under the figure of being in darkness

Isaiah 59:9-10 Therefore justice is far from us, Nor does righteousness overtake us; **We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness! (10) We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes; We stumble at noonday as at twilight;** We are as dead men in desolate places.

2. The sinner's condition, summarized as being blind or in darkness, is described in the rest of the chapter; see some of the features that make up this darkness
  - a) you were in darkness in that your sins had separated you from the favor of God

Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you,
  - b) you were in darkness in that when you spoke, lies and perversity came out

Isa 59:3b Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.
  - c) you were in darkness in that you did not want justice based on truth; instead you wanted evil based on empty words and liles

Isa 59:4 No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
  - d) you were in darkness in that you were often thinking about sin and were eager to do more of it

Isa 59:7 Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths.
  - e) you were in darkness in that you were looking for salvation from God's wrath, but it was far from you

Isa 59:11 We all growl like bears, And moan sadly like doves; We look for justice, but there is none; For salvation, but it is far from us.
  - f) you were in darkness in that your many sins testified against you before God

Isa 59:12 For our transgressions are multiplied before You, And our sins testify against us; For our transgressions are with us, And as for our iniquities, we know them:

C. Understand this by both

1Pe 2:9-10 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of **darkness** into His marvelous light; (10) who **once** were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

1. you were in darkness in that you were not the people of God
  2. you were in darkness in that you had not obtained mercy from God
- D. Understand this by the directness of the relationship between darkness and us
1. It would be right to say you were *in* darkness
  2. But it says here that we were ourselves darkness
  3. This is meant to put the point to you very strongly
  4. It may help us understand the nature of God's grace in salvation
    - a) Is there in us a small bit of light?
    - b) Is the problem our environment?
  5. Which of these sounds true to that doctrine
    - a) He was created in a state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but, through the temptation of Satan, he transgressed the command of God and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity **inherit a nature corrupt and in bondage to sin**, are under condemnation (1925 BFM)
    - b) Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity **inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin** (1963, 2000 BFM)

You were once darkness

- II. Now you are light in the Lord
- A. When we were in darkness, we were children of wrath
    1. but the Lord Jesus is not a child of wrath, but the beloved Son of the Father
    2. through the Lord Jesus, God has granted us adoption as sons
    3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
  - B. When we were in darkness, we were aliens and strangers, outside of God's covenants and outside of Christ; we were afar off
    1. but the Lord Jesus is not an alien to God, but is Himself God in the flesh
    2. by the blood of Christ shed for us, we are brought near to God in Christ
    3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
  - C. When we were in darkness, our sins had separated us from God.
    1. but the Lord Jesus Christ is not separated from God
    2. John 10:30 I and My Father are one."

3. so, in the sense that darkness is being separated from God, we who are in Jesus Christ by faith are in unity with God rather than separated from Him; so though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- D. When we were in darkness, our wicked works made us enemies of God
1. but the Lord Jesus Christ is not an enemy of God, but the dear beloved Son of God the Father
  2. and that Beloved Son Himself has reconciled us to God
  3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- E. When we were in darkness, we walked in all manner of sin, serving our various lusts
1. but the Lord Jesus Christ does not walk in sin, and never has sinned; He serves only the Father, not any lusts of the flesh
  2. and He has granted to us repentance from these works, that we may serve not our own lusts, but the living God, as disciples of Jesus Christ
  3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- F. When we were in darkness, we spoke and lies and perversity came out
1. but the Lord Jesus Christ does speak lies and perversity
  2. John 12:49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.
  3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- G. When we were in darkness, we did not want to see justice and righteousness done based on the truth, but instead we wanted evil to be done based on empty words and lies
1. but the Lord Jesus loves justice and righteousness; He always does what is right based on what is true
  2. in fact, He is the very truth itself
  3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- H. When we were in darkness, we were eager to do more sin because we loved it
1. but the Lord Jesus does not love sin, but hates it
  2. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- I. When we were in darkness, salvation from God's wrath was far from us
1. but the Lord Jesus Himself is our salvation, having taken God's wrath upon Himself for our sake
  2. salvation is not far from us; we have it! Christ has secured it for us, paying for it with His own blood shed on the cross. And He has given it to us freely.

3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- J. When we were in darkness, our many sins testified against us before God
  1. but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself died for our sins; and through faith in Christ God Himself has justified us
  2. Romans 8:33-34 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
  3. so, in that sense, we who are in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, though we were once darkness, now are light in the Lord
- III. Do not be partners with the sons of disobedience in their fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, or coarse jesting. Let these things be not even named among the saints in Christ's church. Why not?
  - A. Because the sons of disobedience are doing these works of darkness; they are walking in this darkness; they are so thoroughly darkened that they are rightly described as being darkness itself
  - B. And although you were once darkness, and did the deeds of darkness
  - C. The Lord Jesus Christ is not darkness, and has no darkness in Him, but is the very light of the world
  - D. And you are now light in the Lord

## CONCLUSION

**To walk in a way that is worthy of the calling with which you have been called, do not be partners with the immoral in their sins, because you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.**

John 3:14-19 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (15) that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (18) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Turn, therefore, from those evil deeds of darkness, believe in the only-begotten Son of God, who has been lifted up on the cross for you. Believing in Him, then, do not be partners with those who still love darkness. You once were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord



Luk 2:30-33 For my eyes have seen Your salvation (31) Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, (32) **A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles**, And the glory of Your people Israel." (33) And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.

Joh 1:4-9 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (6) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (7) This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. (8) He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. (9) That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

Joh 3:16-19 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (18) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Joh 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Joh 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Joh 12:35-36 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. (36) While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Joh 12:44-46 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. (45) And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. (46) I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.



Rev 21:23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

Rev 22:5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

1Jn 1:5-7 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (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.

1Jn 2:11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

2Co 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Col 1:12-14 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. (13) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

1Th 5:4-8 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. (5) You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. (6) Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. (7) For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. (8) But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

Gill:

as light is opposed to the darkness of sin; he is pure and holy in his nature and works, and of such pure eyes as not to behold iniquity; and so perfectly holy, that angels cover their times before him, when they speak of his holiness: and as light is opposed to the

darkness of ignorance, he is wise and knowing; he knows himself, his own nature, being, and perfections, his Son and Spirit, and their distinct modes of subsisting; he sees clearly all things in himself, all things he could do, or has determined shall be done; he has perfect knowledge of all creatures and things, and the darkness and the light are alike unto him, nor can the former hide from him: he is knowable, and to be discerned; he is clothed with light, and dwells in it; he may be known by the works of creation and providence; even the invisible things of him, his eternal power and Godhead, may be clearly seen and understood by them, and especially in his word, and most clearly in his Son; it is owing to the darkness of men, and not to any in and about God, who is light, that he is so little known as he is: and, like the light, he illuminates others; he is the Father of lights, the author and giver of all light; of the light of reason to men in general; and of grace here, and glory hereafter, to his own people, which are both signified by light; in whose light they see light; and he refreshes and delights their souls with the light of his countenance now, and with his glorious presence in the other world:

**For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.**

Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world.

Proverbs 4:18-19 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day. (19) The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

JRY:

The Lord Jesus is perfect light  
He has none of those things that make up the sinner's state of darkness

The Lord Jesus knows where to go; He does not grope for darkness

In this place 1 Corinthians says, "And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified."

There is darkness  
-where no light shines  
-where light shines, but the eye can't perceive it

Foes can sneak up on you.  
You can't find your way.  
You don't know things even if they are right before your eyes.

Bayne:

threefold darkness

1. of ignorance
2. of sin
3. of misery

Poole:

either now, being in Christ, ye are light, or rather, ye are enlightened or made light by Christ, being furnished with spiritual knowledge, faith, purity, and holiness

Hodge:

by virtue of union with the Lord, ye are enlightened, sanctified, and blessed

### **Walk as children of light**

JRY:

the Lord Jesus said, "Let your light so shine that they may see your good works . . ."

Bayne:

1. by searching out and practising that which is pleasing to God
2. by declining evil, which hath two degrees
  - a. that they should not communicate in the fruitless works of darkness
    - i. why? because they were things that could not honestly be named
  - b. that they should reprove them
    - i. why? because they should thus bring the wicked to a sight of their sin

**(for the fruit of the Spirit [light] is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth)**

**finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.**

**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**

JRY:

Hillary Clinton and her advisors are being accused of having used their computers improperly, in ways that were against the law and dangerous to the safety of other people. If they really did that, we are right to condemn those actions. But what about you? Do you ever use your computer improperly, in ways that are against God's holy law? Do you ever do anything that allows evil into your home, endangering the souls of the members of your own household?

**but rather expose them** KJV reprove YLT convict greek *elegchete*

RWP:

convict by turning the light on the darkness

Geneva:

Make them open to all the world, by your good life.

Trapp:

At least by your contrary courses

Poole:

not only by your words, but especially by your actions

Gill:

both by words and by deeds, which last seems to be the design of the apostle here nor are all saints proper to reprove verbally, nor are they qualified for it; but all should, and may by facts

Bengel:

by words and deeds worthy of the light

JFB:

in words, and in your deeds

Ellicott:

open reproof in word and deed

Henry:

We must prudently and in our places witness against the sins of others, and endeavour to convince them of their sinfulness, when we can do it seasonably and pertinently, in our words; but especially by the holiness of our lives, and a religious conversation. Reprove their sins by abounding in the contrary duties.

Hodge:

not simply to reprove in the sense of admonishing or rebuking. It means to convince by evidence. It expresses the effect of illumination by which the true nature of anything is revealed. When the Spirit is said to reprove men of sin, it means that he sheds such light upon their sins as to reveal their true character, and to produce the consequent consciousness of guilt and pollution.

B.H. Carroll

I do not say that we ought to go out on the streets and denounce them. Our lives will reprove them if we show by the way we live that we do not touch those things. We cannot walk down the street without condemning them.

**For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.**

**But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.**

**Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**

JRY:

Verses 3-7 have been a plain-language statement, to be followed verses 8-14 with the doctrine given in figurative language (just as the Lord Jesus did personally).

-light and darkness

darkness

light in the Lord; walk as children of light

walk not as fools but as wise

redeeming the time because days evil

not unwise, but understanding will of the Lord

be filled with the Spirit

-speaking

-singing and making melody

-giving thanks

-submitting yourselves

(Exodus 10) When God was delivering Israel out of slavery in Egypt, one of the plagues God sent against Egypt was a plague of darkness. A think darkness was on the land, but the Israelites had light. God's chosen people have His grace, His undeserved favor, but God's enemies are in darkness.

(Exodus 13) As Israel traveled through the wilderness, God went before them as a pillar of fire at night, go guide them where to go. When their enemies tried to attack them, God covered the attacking army with darkness, so they could not see where they were going, while to Israel He gave light. to show them the way they should go.

In the beginning, when God created the universe, He left the world at first in darkness, showing that creation does not natively have light. Unless and until God gives light, creation is in darkness. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Before making the sun to generate light for the earth, God made light itself.

Ever since then, since that first day, God has used the physical light that He created for the universe to reveal Himself to us, and to reveal our condition to us.

- I. What does it mean that you were once in darkness?
  - A. You were in the woeful condition of saying that the good ways of the Lord are evil, and that your own sinful deeds of rebellion against God are good. Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness.
  - B. You listened to things that were false, and did not listen to the bible, the Word of God. Isaiah 8:19-20 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? (20) To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.
  - C. You did not trust the Lord; you did not believe in Him; you did not have faith in Him Isaiah 50:10 Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God.
  - D. Your iniquities had separated you from your God; and you did not know the way to return to Him; you had made yourself sinful before God and did not know how to find salvation from His wrath
    1. Your feet ran to evil
    2. Instead of the way of the Lord, you followed crooked paths that you made for yourself
    3. Your lips had spoken lies; your tongue had muttered perversity
    4. You did not plead for truth; but trusted in empty words
    5. Your thoughts were thoughts of iniquity; your mind conceived evil and bring forth iniquity
    6. You had departed from God, revolting against Him
    7. Your sins had multiplied before God, and testified against you
    8. Isaiah 59:9b-11 We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness! (10) We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes; We stumble at noonday as at twilight; We are as dead men in desolate places. (11) We all growl like bears, And moan sadly like doves; We look for justice, but there is none; For salvation, but it is far from us.
  - E. What, then, does it mean that you were once in darkness?
    1. You called good evil and evil good
    2. You listened to lies instead of to the Word of God in the bible

3. You did not have faith in the Lord
  4. You were separated from God by your sins, and guilty before Him, and did not know how to find salvation
- II. What does it mean that you are now light in the Lord?
- A. Note that you are not light in or of yourself, but you are light *in the Lord*
    - 1.
  - B. Note that you are not merely *in the light*, but you *are light*
  - C.
- E. Understand this by the figure of darkness; a very powerful metaphor
1. consider for a moment all the problems for us of being in the dark
    - a) you can't see where you are going
      - (1) you can't get where you intend to go
      - (2) you can't avoid what you don't intend to hit
    - b) you can't see who or what is coming
      - (1) a robber or murderer
      - (2) an enemy
      - (3) a wild animal
    - c) you can't do what you need to do
      - (1) can't work
      - (2) can't read
  2. consider for a moment how frightening, even terrifying it can be to be in the dark
  3. consider all the human effort expended to dispel darkness with artificial light
    - a) think of the whaling ships
    - b) electrical generation and transmission
  4. consider how debilitating a condition it is to have the darkness of being blind
    - a) we have modern methods and attitudes, so that the blind can function pretty well
    - b) we have surgeries, eyeglasses, and contacts, so far fewer people are blind than used to be
    - c) so some of the power of this part of the figurative language doesn't hold for us
    - d) but still we get some understanding of this figure of darkness by considering that blindness is a permanent darkness

- IV. That you were once darkness, but now are light in the Lord has been given as a reason why you are not to be partners with the immoral in their sins; but the apostle then uses that truth to give the affirmative side of the prohibition he has just given
- A. He has commanded against these six sins
  - B. He has commanded the opposite: given of thanks
  - C. He commands the opposite here in another way: Walk as children of light.
    - 1. If God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all
    - 2. If Jesus Christ is the very light of the world
    - 3. The if we are the children of God by adoption, and brothers with Christ, we of course are children of light, and are commanded to walk as such
  - D. Recall that this is what the Lord Jesus said in the sermon on the mount
    - 1. You are the light of the world.
    - 2. Let your light so shine that men may see your good deeds and glorify your Father which is in heaven.