

20.05.07 Coromandel Baptist 10:00 a.m.

The Beloved Family of Light

Bible Readings = Eph. 5:1-14 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Introduction:

- (1) Last week we considered one aspect of what it means to live in the new man we have put on when we believed the gospel: i.e. the putting on of forgiveness and the putting off of anger and its large family. In so doing, we do not give the devil a foothold.
- (2) This week we continue with a related theme: the putting on of genuine love (i.e. love that is pure) and the putting off of false love (especially that which is immoral or impure). The passage speaks of this in terms of Light and Darkness.
- (3) The goal of the ministries of the word bestowed upon the Church by the ascended Jesus is that we be rooted and grounded in love. The word gifts exist to bring to us the knowledge of the great love with which we have been loved by God in Christ, and to keep us fresh in that love.
 - a. What we need to recognise is that love is the great dynamic for all living whether pure or perverse (see G. C. Bingham, *Ephesians*, p. 56). We have been created by the Father who is love, to live in his love, so love is the power for life. However, as much power may flow through us and exercise its control over us through an illicit object of love as a legitimate!
- (4) The twisting and perversion of love lies at the heart of all the evil ones' strategies.

The passage before us this week in Ephesians sets out the difference between the deeds of darkness and those of the light. As the Father's beloved children we are called to walk as children of the Light, and to leave the darkness behind. Once we were darkness, but now we are light, in the Lord. To walk in the Light is to walk in Love.

1. There Are Two Families in View

(1) We are told that we belong to the family of the Father (Eph. 5:1-2) and are his 'beloved children', adopted into his family by his own gracious action of forgiveness and grace (Eph. 1:3-6).

- This relates to Paul's prayer in Eph. 3:14ff. and to the fact that love is the goal of maturity as seen in Eph. 4:14ff.
 - Imitation is only natural where there is love. It is not seeking to be like someone because you are different from them, but because you are one with them!
 - Such imitation of God the Father lies very much in the area of forgiveness (as in Matt. 5:43ff.) about which Paul has just been speaking (Eph. 4:32). In such an experience of forgiving we share in the reality and outworking of the Cross.

(2) But in contrast to this family of the Father, there is another family.

- We see this in places such as Eph. 2:1-3, and this compares with comments that we hear elsewhere (e.g. John 8:44 cf. Gen. 3:15; Matt. 13:38; 1 John 3:8-10, 12).
- This family is shaped up to bear his image...full of all the things he is full of (e.g. pride, arrogance, bitterness, hatred etc.)

- The great mark of this family is that it is self centred, self referential, self preferring etc. All the sexual and other sins mentioned in Eph. 5:3ff. and like passages (e.g. Col. 3:5; Rom. 1:29; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rev. 21:8) are characterised by their self-centredness.
- There can be no doubt that such who practice such things do not belong to the Father. They bear the likeness of their wicked 'father'.

2. The Father's Family of Light

(1) The Father is the Father of Light...i.e. all actions are utterly pure, with no shadow of darkness at all (James 1:17).

- This is the message that we heard from him (Jesus) that God is light (1 John 1:5). That He is Love means that his love is such that it cleanses the darkness of sin and evil (1 John 4:10ff.).
 - His love is holy, and therefore purifying in its action.
- Jesus comes as the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5) because he is the Son of the Father, who is Light. He walks in the Light (of the Father) and thus sheds Light wherever he goes (cf. John 12:35-36).
 - Through him, the Father brings his children to birth. Jesus, the Light of the world, plunges into the darkness of evil on the cross...and the darkness could not overcome him!

(2) This Light (of the Father's love in Christ) is transforming, and causes a family to be born, out of darkness and into light (cf. 1 Peter 2:9-11).

- We are thus, 'sons of Light' (e.g. Luke 16:8; John 12:36 cf. Col. 1:12), who imitate our Father and shed his light along the way (Matt. 5:14-16).
 - This is what 'exposes' the deeds of darkness (Eph. 5:11-12). Not acting as 'moral policemen'. G Bingham *Ephesians* (Redeemer Fellowship Commentaries, p. 69). 'Trying to expose such things by investigating and describing them does, in fact, give them the power of prurience (that is, characterised by lascivious thought).'

(3) That the Light of God is transforming is clear: see Eph. 5:8...we *were* darkness!

- Compare with the difficulty of translating Eph. 5:13...literally But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light What does this mean?
 - Possibly that the things exposed may be transformed, from darkness to light! Cf. Phillips' translation: 'Light is capable of showing up everything for what it really is. It is possible (after all, it happened to you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light'.

3. Darkness Does Not Belong to Us!

(1) That we are the family of the Light, does not mean we are sinlessly perfect. This family needs still to forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us!

- See also 1 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin...where we have an advocate, for the sins which commit while walking in the Light!

(2) Note the importance of Eph. 5:6. It seems as though the problem was exacerbated by false teaching, which is always an issue in the Church!

- Two errors: legalism and antinomianism, appearing at various points even in the New Testament congregations.
- The need to ‘wake up’ (Eph. 5:14) is because some folk may have been giving ear to such false teaching, and assuming that they could walk as they once did, without any care or consequence!

(3) We note how important the matter of thanksgiving is (Eph. 5:4), and note the difference between thanksgiving (i.e. personally directed) and ‘celebration’ (i.e. not personal being to give thanks to).

- Negatively: lack of thankfulness is the root of all sin as in Rom. 1:21ff. Positively, thankfulness and sin cannot exist at the same point. See also the great theme of thankfulness in other places (e.g. 2 Cor. 4:15; 9:10-12; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:9; 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:1; 4:3-4; etc.)
- As we walk in such thanksgiving we are giving thanks to Him who is Light, and thus enjoy life as his beloved children.