

Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

Ricardo Campos, Pastor Grace Chapel, Orange, CA July 26, 2020

I. Introduction

Why does it feel like there's a constant darkness hanging over us, in fact, it hangs over the entire human race doesn't it? It drains us of all hope. You can dismiss it but the darkness is real. Is there any way to escape it? What if God had a light that could break through EVERY darkness and we could actually live in it instead of the life-killing darkness that surrounds us?

II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

Chapter 5

When we got to Ephesians 5:5-6 we took a detour to address the idea that if your life doesn't look Christian, i.e., if it's full of sin instead of good works, then you're not really a Christian and therefore doomed to hell. We saw from Ephesians and other passages that this is not true. As Christians God may discipline us, even severely, for living in sin, but He'll never disown us. Once you're His child, you'll always be His child no matter what you do. As we continue our study in Ephesians 5:8, let us review what God has said to us thus far in Ephesians:

Chapter 1: God the Father adopted us into His family, forgave our sins through the death of His beloved Son Jesus Christ, made us fellow-heirs together-with Him, made His Holy Spirit the guarantee of our inheritance, gives us clear understanding of the hope we have in the midst of our darkness, uses His mighty power to help us—the one He used to raise Jesus from the dead and seat Him far above all earthly and heavenly powers, and He also made us part of His Son's Body, the Church, which means that Jesus is our never-ending lifeblood. No wonder God deserves all our praise.

Chapter 2: We used to be under Satan's darkness; it was his spirit that led us. Like all sons of disobedience, we were dead in our sin, driven by every lust and wicked desire. But God's tremendous love for us drove Him to save us: He made us alive, raised us up, and seated us together-with Christ in heaven, i.e., He gave us the gift of salvation by grace; we simply believed; our works had nothing to do with it, though God want us to do the good works He prepared beforehand. Prior to Jesus' sacrifice, the Gentiles were without God or hope in the world. But through His death Jesus reconciled Jews and Gentiles to God in Himself, i.e., from the two, He created one New Man, His Body, the Church, which is why through Jesus' Spirit we all have access to the Father, are members of God's family, and are God's dwelling place.

Chapter 3: This mystery was previously unknown, i.e., the fact that through the Gospel Gentiles would be Messiah's fellow-heirs, part of His Body, and partakers of God's promise in Messiah. And God chose Paul to reveal it; it was his job to let the Gentiles know of all the riches they had in Christ. And through the formation of the Church God also revealed His plan to Satan and his minions, which centers on Christ Jesus, through whom we have confident access to God the Father. It is God's desire that we be thoroughly strengthened by His Spirit deep within. His ultimate goal is that we fully experience and comprehend Christ's love so that every cell in our body would be filled with everything that He is. It is clear that God is able to do far beyond anything we could ask or imagine. No wonder He deserves our eternal praise.

Chapter 4: In light of our new identity in Christ, everything about us must be different: we should be an active part of Jesus' Body who works to keep it united and helps it grow. Jesus is the Head that leads, guides and nourishes us. This means we're not to think, speak, or act like we used to; that former life was led by a darkened mind. Jesus didn't teach us this way; He taught us the truth: we used to be part of an old dead body, but now we're part of His new and alive Body. Therefore, we must remind each other of the truth and not give Satan a foothold. This means we control our emotions. We don't steal but work to give to those in need. We refuse to sin or harm people with our language, instead, we build them up. We are kind and forgive as Christ forgave us. In other words, we don't grieve God's Holy Spirit which beats inside us.

Chapter 5:1-7: since God is our Father and Jesus is the new Body we wear, which means that His love colors our every action, we should copy our Father's behavior and love the way Jesus did. This is why our speech mustn't be sexually explicit, foolish, or indecent. Anyone involved in idolatry, sexual or otherwise, will get no inheritance in Christ's Kingdom. We mustn't be fooled by those who say otherwise, after all, the sons of disobedience get God's wrath because of these things. So we must not join in with them.

5:8-10, 1 John 1:5 tells us that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. What is God saying to us this morning? What is true of us now that we're part of the God of the universe (His Son Jesus Christ)? He's saying, "For you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." Do you see what He's saying? He's not just saying that we're in the Light but we are the light. We used to be part of Satan's darkness, "you were darkness," but that's no longer true of us. Every form of darkness that this world experiences comes from Satan; he's the architect of it all: the darkness we feel personally, the darkness we see on TV in all the riots and looting all over America; Satan is behind it all. But God is saying, you don't have to live there anymore, "Walk as children of light." There is something fundamentally different about us now and we must live in light of that, *in* the Light of that. You and Jesus are now one; He is light and you're wearing Him, 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 14-16. Therefore, when you open your eyes what do you see? When you look at your problems, what do you see? When you look at the riots on TV, what do you see? Hopelessness, misery, chaos, no answers in sight? Jesus is saying to you this morning, "Let Me show you the way out of this mess." If this is you and you actually live in His Light, you will react to life the way Jesus did because His mind guides you, 4:21, no matter the dilemma: Trump/Biden, Racial Unrest, COVIV-19, Unemployment, etc., etc.

What are the properties of the Lord's light and what can it produce? His Light consists of Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth. If you had such a flashlight, how would it change your life? Do you understand what God is saying about what you have at your disposal? If I gave you a secret pair of glasses that revealed everything about everything, would you wear them? Would it make your life easier? Would it get rid of your depression, your anxiety, your frustrations, your worries, and on and on? Every time you faced a problem, all you had to do is put these on and you could tell who was lying to you, who was seeking to do you harm, who to trust, which school to pick, which person to marry, the disaster that would've happened had you said "yes" to this person or that opportunity. That's what God says you have at your disposal. When you walk by the light of His Truth, when you stop to ask for His opinion about this boyfriend, that career choice, this presidential candidate, that racial problem on TV, that nasty comment that made you feel like a loser, the broken heart that you can't seem to get over, and on and on, do you know what the Lord will do? He will set you free; He will show you what is good or bad about that person or situation. He will show you what is right and wrong and what is true and false about all of it. Could you use such a pair of glasses? God is handing them to you right now.

“Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord” means that we’re supposed to use His light to question everything, to define everything. Every time we get in trouble, experience anxiety, get depressed, get frustrated, feel suicidal, and on and on, guess what Jesus is saying to you, right at that moment? “Please ask Me, I’m right here. There’s no need to struggle by yourself. Please stop listening to My enemy.” Satan never takes a break; he’s constantly there hurling his arrows at us, 2:2; 4:17-19; 6:11, 16. Are they penetrating? God’s telling you, “There’s no need for that. Take My shield, I will protect you.” Every second of our lives we must ask ourselves this simple question, “Is that what Jesus wants me to think and do or Satan?” Whose spirit is leading you, the Lord’s or Satan’s?

5:11-12, the Lord has urged us several times not to go back to our former lives, our former selves. Instead of producing Satan’s fruit, we’re supposed to produce the Spirit’s fruit, 5:9. So our Lord says, “Don’t have fellowship, don’t hang out with everything that Satan’s darkness produces.” This includes thoughts and actions, from the negative thoughts in our heads which suck the life and hope right out of us, to the overt sinful acts we commit. Everything that is wicked and evil and disastrous to our lives, the Lord wants us to do three things with: don’t live in them, don’t talk about them, and expose them. That is, instead of living in it or talking about it, our light is supposed to expose Satan’s darkness all around us. Guess what that means when we see or hear our family or friends being devastated by Satan’s darkness (it could be a bad relationship, drugs, depression, etc., etc.)? We’re supposed to bring the Lord’s light to set them free. And if you’re thinking, “But I hate to confront people,” there’s no need to worry. We’re going to do it from a place of love. So it’s not going to be a confrontation; it’s going to be an act of love; it’s us rescuing them the way Jesus rescued us, 2:1-9; 4:15-16, 29; 5:2.

5:13, here the Lord is basically saying, “My light exposes all things, it makes all things visible.” What’s being exposed? ALL thoughts, ideas, words, actions, everything that doesn’t line up with Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth. Who is doing the exposing? The Lord, the One before whom all things are laid bare; nothing escapes His light (Hebrews 4:13).

5:14, some think this is a quote from Isaiah 26:19 or 60:1 (or a combination of verses from Isaiah: 26:19; 51:17; 52:1; 60:1); some even suggest Jonah 1:6. Because the wording is very different from the passages suggested, it’s likely not an Old Testament Scripture citation. It’s likely from a Christian poem or hymn of that day, which we have no record of. Why did Paul quote it? Because it speaks directly to everything God has been saying to us, “You’re My children. I need you to live in My Son’s light. Let His Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth show you the way to every conflict, every dilemma, every person and situation you’ll face in this life. That’s where you’re to live not in Satan’s darkness. I don’t even want you to talk about those dark things. I want you to live in My light and use My light to expose Satan’s darkness wherever you see it. So I need you to wake up! Come out from among the dead sons of disobedience [2:1-2] and My Son’s light will shine on you.”

III. Conclusion

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."