

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

Good morning. Don't you think they did a wonderful job this morning? You did a good job too. I'm proud of you. Good job. It happens to be that the sun comes out, our mind starts to go elsewhere. We're in a heat wave here in Ohio. You see that? That's just absolutely amazing. We have lots of praise to God about. We've also got a lot to do this morning so take your bibles and let's turn to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians 5. We're in a series that we're moving through the later part of Ephesians. If you're just joining us the series is called Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' life and the whole premise of the series is that there are certain life aspects that once we are called to Christ, we become believers, we join in faith that there are certain life patterns that we have to deconstruct as followers of Christ and there's certain life patterns that we have to reconstruct. Thus, the name of the series. Now, what we've been doing is we've been learning how to do that. We learned last week a very simple command out of chapter 5 what really encapsulates everything that is our calling and that is what we're called to in verse 1 and that is to be imitators. *Mimetes* is the Greek word. Mimic of God.

If you ever wonder what you're to do as a follower of Christ here it is. You are to be an imitator of God. Also, in Romans 8 he says for those who He foreknew He also predestined to what? To be conformed to the image of His Son. So basically what we've been learning through this series is how to conform to the image of His Son. Paul has been telling us what it looks like through this study and he's been using a word – the word walk as the primary metaphor to communicate that. For example, in Ephesians 4:1 he says I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. He's not talking about walking from point A to point B. He's talking about our lifestyle. Same thing when he says in 4:17 you are to no longer to walk as the Gentiles do; those that do not know God. Your walk should represent one who knows God.

Now, as we turn the corner to chapter 5 that same metaphor continues – this idea of the walk; the believers' walk. We saw that last week. We learned that we're called to walk in love. In other words the best way that we can imitate God is walk in love like God loves. How does God love? Well, we looked at this in verse 2. He says then walk in love as Christ, He's the primary example, Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. We looked at some of the details of that construction. The idea that He gave up Himself. That pronoun, that reflexive pronoun is that He initiated that love. We talked about that His love, going to the cross for us was costly love, sacrificial love and self-initiating love. Therefore, He sets the pattern of what our love ought to look like. Do you ever wonder that? Do you ever wonder how am I supposed to love? Our love should be costly. It should be sacrificial. It should be self-initiating. That's what we learned last week.

Now, as we come to verse 8 of chapter 5 today we learn another walk. We're called to walk as children of light. Let's look at the passage. Verse 8, we're going to end up right back to the bottom of verse 14. Listen as I read. He says, for at one time you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light for the fruit of light is found in all that is

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

good and right and true. Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them for it is shameful to even speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible. For anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says, awake oh sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. Alright, let's stop there.

Whenever I sit down and I look at a passage of scripture early in the week the first thing I do is I begin to pray about this passage that I want to teach. I begin to ask the Lord to reveal it to me and help me understand the details of the passage. Then I begin to pray for you and I pray that God would help you to understand what I'm attempting to teach you; that the Spirit of God would join in this process and would illuminate His Word to your mind so that you could make specific application to your life. I pray that every single week as we work through a passage. This passage is somewhat difficult. I'll tell you that right off the bat. There's a difficulty in understanding it. There's also a difficulty in applying it. I don't mean that it's difficult to try to figure out how to apply it. I'm talking about once you understand it you realize what God is calling you to do. That in itself is difficult. So, before we get to the passage let's just pray over it. Let's just pray about this passage; ask the Lord to teach it to us and give us specific examples of how we can apply it to our lives. Let's just bow our heads, take a moment and ask Him that.

Father, this morning we come before your Word because we value it. We believe in it. We believe that it gives us all that we need to live our life as your followers. We come across this passage this morning, Lord and we want to understand it. We have a desire to understand it. So, open our minds. Give us clarity of thought as we work through each verse and as we come to the end, Father I pray that each man and woman and every young person and child here that you would reveal your Word in a personal way so that they may make application to their lives. For those of us who are struggling in the journey of following you strengthen us this morning through your Word. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Alright, as we come to this text we ask a question; first question out of the shoot. What does it mean to walk as children of light? That's a rather strange statement if you think about it. It's easy to understand that we're to walk as children of love or we're to walk in love but what does this mean that we're to walk as children of light? You know, if you're a new believer, if you're new to Christianity you might not quite be sure of the whole metaphor reference of darkness and light. In fact, there are many ways that you could translate this. We want to understand what does Paul mean. In ancient scripture the whole light / darkness symbolism was very popular. It was popular in the Old Testament. It was popular in the New Testament; popular in the Qumran writings, the Dead Sea Scrolls; popular in Jewish Talmud. It goes on and on in the ancient writing. But what does Paul mean here? Well, this whole metaphor of light / darkness could be taken as one or two ways. The first way you could understand as a metaphor for goodness and therefore darkness is a metaphor for evil. There's a number of passages that would fit that scenario. For example, John 8:12 says I am the light

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

of the world, Jesus says. I am the light. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. In other words, you could translate this – I am the goodness of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in evilness but will have the goodness of life. That would be a legitimate translation. Romans 13:12 says the night is far gone. The day is at hand so then let us cast off the works of darkness, evil and put on the armor of light, goodness.

Another way you could use this metaphor of light / darkness is to illustrate the old life that we had before Christ and the new life that we now have in Christ. Again, we see a number of passages that illustrate that. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:5 for you all children of light – this would be the new life, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness or of the old life. In Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved son. We've been moved out of the old life of darkness and we've been put into the new life of light. That's exactly what Paul is moving towards in his writings here. That's the metaphor that fits with one difference. Here, Paul is being didactic in his teachings. He's telling us how to live our life. So what he's saying is, his emphasis is that since you are a child of light; since you've been transferred out of a kingdom of darkness into a kingdom of light, therefore live like it. That's his whole emphasis in this portion of the text. He says because you are children of light walk as children of light. Live like it.

Now we have to ask, ok, well, how do I do that? How do I go about living like a child, been transferred out of this one kingdom and into this new kingdom of light? Well, let's understand the text. There's three aspects of the text. There's a contrast. There's a command and there's a characteristics. Let's look at the contrast. That's verse 8. In verse 8 he says, at one time you were darkness. Now, I want you to notice the first thing is that he doesn't say you were in darkness. He says you were darkness. What do we think of when we hear that verb, that past tense verb? What do we think? Well, we think that's a condition that no longer exists, right? So, we weren't in darkness. We were darkness at one time in our life. When was that? Before Christ. We were people, the scriptures tell us, who were darkness. All aspects of our life were darkness. We were, John 8:44, children of the devil. The dichotomy of scripture is that you are either in the kingdom of light or you're in the kingdom of darkness. That's it. You don't have any other choices. You don't have some third mysterious choice. It's that you are either a child following after God in Christ or you are a child following after Satan.

Now, sometimes that's hard for us to wrap our minds around, isn't it? Because we think isn't there some other option? Isn't there some kind of middle ground somewhere because we know so many good people, philanthropic people, giving, gracious, generous, kind people who are not believers. And we read this and we think you're kidding me? You mean those people are children of Satan, children of the devil? Yes. That's what the scripture is saying. The scripture is saying there are two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are embracing the faith of Christ – children of light. Or there are people who are embracing the

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

darkness – children of Satan. What Paul is saying is don't ever forget where you came from. You were once a child of darkness but, look at verse 8, but now you are light in the Lord. Again, just as in darkness the verb is not modified so it doesn't say we are to be light. Notice it says we are light. Look again at the tense of the verb. This is present condition. This is your state right now. You are light in the Lord. That's the contrast. Why is important to understand the contrast? Because you can not understand the command, which is coming next if you don't understand the contrast. Paul is saying, essentially, look if you're in the kingdom of darkness you need to become part of the kingdom of light in Christ. When you are a child of the light then, here's the command. Therefore, walk like it. Walk as children of light. It's almost like a rebuke. He's just on the edge of a pastoral rebuke where he's saying don't you see where you have come from? Don't go back there. Don't go dabbling in the darkness, why? Because you've been redeemed out of the darkness. You are now called a child of light. Walk like it. May your lifestyle reflect that. In other words, he's saying you are to walk as a child of light because you are a child of light.

Now, what should you be thinking right now? You should be thinking, alright well, what does that look like? How do I know for sure I am a child of light? Sometimes the Christian life, it can be fuzzy. It can be confusing. There are times when we're involved in some aspects that we would understand as sin or darkness. And yet we have a desire to be part of light but because we're in the darkness we have this juxt of position where we say well, where what am I? Why am I doing this? I really want to do that but I'm doing this. That's the struggle of the Christian life. The struggle of the Christian life is that we don't always do what we want to do. That's the battle. Paul says there are characteristics that you can look at in your life to determine your desires; determine the real you. So, we looked at the contrast. We looked at the command. Now let's look at three characteristics that demonstrate if we truly are children of light.

Look at verse 9. He says, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. Hear what he is saying? He's saying the fruit of a child of light reflects all that is good, right and true. Good – denotes that which is morally excellent. Right – the idea of righteous. That you have a desire to be an instrument of righteousness. True – this is internal integrity. You have a desire to be a person of truth. Is that your bent? Is that now your desire? Is this what you want to lead as your life reflecting goodness, righteousness, truth. We're not always going to be able to achieve that but is that your hearts desire? Because here's the key. He calls these fruits. These characteristics are fruits of what? Of the new life in Christ. We will naturally reflect these if we are children of righteousness. Everybody gives some kind of fruit. Think of yourself kind of like a tree. You're either going to give fruit that leads to evil or fruit that leads to righteousness. We're all going to have some kind of fruit bearing element in your life. Is your fruit bearing element reflective of goodness, righteousness, truthfulness? You say, how do you live out these characteristics? How do you know if this is a part of your life? Well, there's going to be three things that are going to be evident. We're

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

going to see this in verse 10 through 14. Ready? He's going to show us three things that show up as how we can live our life; how we can demonstrate that fruit of righteousness.

First is to learn. The second is to avoid. The third is to confront. Let's work through these strategically. First we're going to be people who have a desire to learn. Look at verse 10, connected to verse 9. He says and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Will you write down in your notes the word test because the word discern can mean learn but it has this connotation that means to test. In other words, we are to put to test what? The genuineness of our faith; whether it is good; whether it is right; whether it is true. We are to test that. We don't worry about it. We don't speculate about it. We don't philosophize about it. We test it. We can test out lifestyle. That's what he's saying.

Now, we're powering through this. We're working on it. We're trying to understand it but the thing that you should be asking yourself is well, how do I do this? How do I test myself? Let me just take you through some spiritual disciplines that I've been practicing. It's not the only way. It's my way. Maybe it will help you. One of the things that I'm constantly trying to do in my spiritual walk is I'm trying to keep my life centered in the truth. I come out of the darkness. I come from a life without Christ. I was redeemed out of that life just like you. I notice in my own life that I have a tendency to kind of tilt towards darkness if I'm not careful. If I'm not consistent and diligent in pursuing Christ my heart tends to wander back toward darkness. And so one of the things I do is everyday I just do it systematically. I'm just reading through the scriptures. I just kind of developed my own plan. I don't necessarily read the bible in a year, although that would be wonderful. I just kind of read through the text. Do you know why I'm doing that? Because I realize I live in a dark environment. I live in a world fallen in sin. I am fallen to sin. I have a tendency to move toward the darkness therefore, I want to flood my mind with the truth of scripture, with light. And so I'm constantly doing that. I would suggest that for you that you just come up with some kind of plan. You can get them online. You can stop out at the Connect Kiosk – one of our pastors I'm sure could pull up one and help you find one. But just some systematic approach where you are embedding the Word of God in your life. And then, when you're doing that then you're ready to listen to the Spirit because occasionally I'll break away from here and I'll find a place where I can get away and I can get alone and I can listen to my heart. I'm busy like you all are. I know you all live busy lives. Sometimes you have to break away from the busy-ness of your life just to see what's going on in the inside of your life. Now, I begin to pray. I begin to ask the Lord what are the desires of my heart? What are the, like Jonathon Edwards would say, what are the affections of my heart because if the affections of my heart are leaning away from you Lord then draw me back. You know what I find is that if I'm not diligent the affections can go to things that are not necessarily bad, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying there are other things that are not central, as important in my life as Christ is. And so I like to place these in priority. Something might get into my life where I'm fascinated by it. I'm enjoying it. I'm putting all my resources, all my time into it. And if I'm not careful that thing, whatever that thing might be starts to become like an idol in my life – almost like

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

it's becoming more important, more central than Christ. I like to realign that so that I know I'm about following after light. I'm about following after Christ. I'm seeking that which is good, which is righteous, which is true. And so that's one thing I learned. I try to discern. I try to test what it is in my life that is pleasing to the Lord.

And then notice the next place that Paul takes us. He says there are certain things that you have to avoid. There are certain things in your life that you have to cut out. Look at verse 11. He says, take no part, remember that, take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness. Now, what did he just talk about? He talked about the fruitful works of light. Now he's saying look at the parallel. There unfruitful works. These are fruits of darkness. He says take no part. Literally it says have nothing to do with it. Run from them. Avoid it. Don't shimmy up close to it and try to get kind of as close as you can. Get as far away from fruits of darkness that you possibly can. Now, will you notice in the text that he does not give us a specific list of darkness? Do you see that? It's because he doesn't need to. You and I come from darkness. We know the fruits of darkness. He says don't go there. Not only that, but don't even talk about it. Look, for it is shameful, verse 12 even to speak of things that they do in secret. They - pointing towards those in darkness. He says do not even talk about what's going on in darkness. You know there's a sense in this text that it's also don't talk about what you've been involved with in darkness in the past. There's a sense, there's this leaning in the text as if to say don't bring up what's been going on that's been in your past. I had to step away from the text and think about this. In fact, I was really perplexed about this for a period of the week and then I started to realize you know, there's a part of us all that given in the right circumstance, the right conversation we talk about what we used to do as if it was the good old days. We talk about the dark days - the days before Christ - those things that we were involved with and we almost glorify them. I think what Paul is saying is don't do that. Don't elevate what was part of your life before Christ as something that was good. It might have been fun. It might have been enjoyable but do you remember where it took you? It took you to despair, to emptiness so that when Christ came into your life and lead you away from that there was a sense of joy. Don't go back there. Don't even talk about those. Those days are not good. Those are days of darkness. He say avoid that. Have no part in it.

And then the third thing, do you see what he tells us to do? He says we need to confront. The word literally is to expose. End of verse 11 he says but instead expose the unfruitful works of darkness. Drop down to verse 13. But when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible. For anything that becomes visible is light. We've learned that we have to learn what pleases the Lord, avoid unrighteous fruits of darkness and third to confront or expose. Literally this concept is to correct or to reprove. I know that there's no one in here who enjoys doing that. No one in here, in fact, we avoid this like the plague. We would rather allow someone to remain in their sin than to ever stand up and say, you know what, I don't think your lifestyle here is jiving with the light. We don't do that do we? Do you know what happens when we don't do that? We allow them to go into that sense of leaning into darkness. I'm talking about children or light; people who have been redeemed. When we see

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

their lives get caught up in sin our responsibility is to gently come along side of them and to move them back towards righteousness.

James, chapter 5. Turn there with me. End of the book of James. James 5. Last two verses. James tells us in almost a pastoral, gentle way he ends his book. He says, my brothers, which is a term of affection. Verse 19 he says if any one among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, that would be you, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his would from death and will cover a multitude of sin. You literally step into someone's life and say I'm going to lead you back towards righteousness. I'm saving you from a multitude from sin that that path takes you on; that the path of darkness takes you on.

Paul says we ought to be people who learn, avoid, confront but he's not done there. Look at verse 14. He says awake oh sleeper, arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. What does that mean? Have you ever done that? Have you ever come across some things in scripture and you're thinking that doesn't make any sense whatsoever? It doesn't make any sense to the context. Do you know Paul does here? Paul, many commentators think that this is actually an early church hymn, a song that probably almost the whole church in Ephesus knew and most Christians of the day knew. He's borrowing from some kind of contemporary music of the day and he's saying you know that song you all sing? That song? Do you know what that song is saying? That song is saying if you're moving into darkness as a child of light wake up. Don't do that. Stop that you sleeper. He says rise from that dead part of life. Move towards the light – that Christ will shine on you. Do you know what he's doing here? He's calling us back to repentance. We need to hear that because I tell you. This is what goes on in the Christian life. We become children of light. We begin to follow Christ but like I said – we live in a world of darkness. We come from a world of darkness. We battle sin, temptation, the flesh and if we're not careful we can start to gravitate towards darkness. We he's doing here is he's saying if that's you, if you've done that, if you've traveled that road then come back to the light. Repent. Confess. Walk as children as light. And here's what we do in those scenarios. We receive Christ in our life. We receive that joy. We begin learning and understanding what that means to walk in Christ. Then we get captivated by something and we start moving towards the darkness. Sin begins to wrap around and get entangled into our lives. Then we hear the call. We hear the call to return and it's as if a voice whispers in our head – you can't go back. Do you really think He's going to forgive you again for the exact same thing that you've done over and over again? He's exhausted His mercy on you. There's no more. That's what the darkness is speaking, is whispering into our ear. You want a great remedy for that? Read through the book of John. John – fourth Gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. John is filled with stories. Do you know what the stories are about? A merciful God. Over and over again we see stories of a merciful God.

John chapter 8 – one of my favorite stories in the book of John. Jesus is teaching in the synagogue. I'll tell you this real quick. Jesus is teaching in the synagogue and the Pharisees

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciples' Life Part 8

Walk in LIGHT

Ephesians 5:8-14

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 03.06-07.10

drag a woman in from the streets, into the synagogue. She's half dressed, crying, weeping, frightened to death. She was just caught in the act of adultery. We don't know where the guy is. Just here's this woman. She's been dragged there by the Pharisees. Now, side story. The religious leaders of the day could have cared less about this woman. They could care less about her sin. They could care less about what she's feeling, her embarrassment. They could care less that she's frightened to death because likely, what's going through her mind right now is that this is the last day that she's going to spend on earth; that they are going to take her outside the city walls and they are going to hurl rocks at her until she's dead. That's what she's expecting. But they could care less about that, do you know why? Because they're bringing this woman in here simply to trap Jesus. Jesus, right away knows what's going on and He bends down and He starts to draw in the dirt. Scriptures don't tell us what he's writing – the names of men or their sins or maybe He's just doodling. We don't really know what He's doing but He's there. It's as if He's taking a break. It's as if He's causing everything to have a huge pause for a moment. And then He stands and He says to the crowd well, whoever is out there who hasn't sinned before in the past you throw the first stone. Then He knelt back down and He begins to draw again in the dirt. Again, almost like this divine pause He's created. And then the text says, one by one, from the oldest to the youngest these men who had brought their rocks and their stones dropped them and walked out of the synagogue. Next part of the text, now it's just Jesus and this woman and He picks her up and He says where are those who have condemned you? They are all gone. Then He says these amazing words. Neither do I condemn you. And He gives us this beautiful picture of the mercy of God. Should she have been condemned? Absolutely she should have been condemned. She was wrong. She had broken the Mosaic law but yet what do we see Christ doing? Extending mercy. Go, don't sin any longer.

Those words are echoing from our good God this morning. He's saying, as a child of light, if you've been messing around with the darkness leave that alone. Come back to the light. Walk as you are – as a child of light. That's His call to us this morning. That's the call of the text. But don't miss what wraps around it – this good, merciful God who's issuing the call to come back. Let's pray.