

Ephesians

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 December 2016

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 0 0] In your scripture sheet, we are on page 5B, and I plan to move on unless you have questions or comments that you would like to voice in connection with the unfruitful works of darkness in verse 11.

Verse 12, it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret, but all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.

That's just reading from the bold print, which is the King James there. And the apostle goes on to say, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

And then he continues to contrast the distinction between light and darkness. And we know, of course, that that's very real in the physical sense, but it is just as real in a spiritual sense.

And that's what he's talking about here when he is referring to the deeds done in darkness and that they are made manifest by the light. And then he caps this off in verse 14 with a wherefore or a therefore to kind of sum up the thought that he has established there.

[1 : 1 1] Wherefore, in other words, this is why he says, awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light. This, I take it, is an address to the unbeliever.

And Paul is inserting in this context the same person that he is talking about who is engaged in the unfruitful works of darkness in verse 11.

And I think the context bears this out, that the message that is to be delivered to those is the gospel message that can bring men and women from moral spiritual darkness into light.

And that's the upshot of this when he says in verse 14, this is why he says, or therefore he says, awake thou that sleepest. What is it that awakens people?

It is only the penetration of the gospel. And it is expressed in a number of ways. And one of my favorite ways is found way back in Acts chapter 2.

[2 : 1 9] And this is one of the most captivating, mesmerizing passages, I think, in all of Scripture. It has to do with Peter's message on the day of Pentecost. And when Peter stood, and bear in mind that this is the same man who not many days earlier was denying that he even knew Christ.

And now, fortified by the resurrection and the certainty that that brought to him, and the Spirit of God empowering him, put a boldness into this man that has no human explanation.

And he stood and delivered that message to thousands of people. And here, for all practical purposes, is a relatively uneducated Galilean fisherman with almost no credentials at all, humanly speaking.

But he had the credentials of three years with Jesus Christ and the ministry of the Spirit of God. And he stood before that crowd, thousands of people, and said that God, through him, did miracles and signs, as you yourselves also know.

Through him being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have, with wicked hands, slain and crucified the Lord of glory.

[3 : 43] But God raised him from the dead. And one of my favorite verses there in Acts 2, it says that, And when they heard this, heard these words, they were pricked in their heart, that King James says.

And that means the message penetrated. It got through. The Spirit of God took the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ and drove it home to the hearts and minds of those hearers like a pile driver.

And they got it. And boy, when you get it, it is a light that comes on that is like nothing else. And these people who heard that message were shocked.

They were stunned. This was a wake-up call they had never anticipated. And they turned to one another. I can just see this scene. I can see these people. Their eyes are big.

Their mouths are open. They got it. And they turned one to another and must have said something like, He's right. The man's right.

[4 : 57] What he just said is true. And it started connecting. And boy, they were a change group. And they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

In light of this information that we have heard that we cannot deny, what are we going to do about it? What shall we do?

And Peter said, Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And that would require a 180.

That's what repentance is. It means a complete turnaround. It means you change your mind from having been convicted of one thing to now being convicted of another.

Which also means you're convicted that you were wrong before. And you have to reverse yourself in order to be right. And Peter said, And if you are willing to do that, then you can back it up by being baptized with the same baptism that you earlier rejected.

[6 : 14] Remember the thousands of people that came out to be baptized of John? And we're told that the scribes and the Pharisees and the chief priests rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized by John.

They wrote John off and his ministry as a prophet, not son of God. And they rejected John's message. And they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ the same way.

And now Peter is telling them after the fact, death, burial, and resurrection, you need to reverse yourself and take a position that you earlier rejected.

And we are told that 3,000 of them did. All because of this one thing. They got it. The message penetrated. And Bill Fay, who has distinguished himself as a premier evangelist, had made the observation, I don't know where he got the statistic, but he came to the conclusion that in order for the average person to be able to intelligently respond to the gospel, he has to hear it something like 7.2 times before it sinks in, before he can get it.

Because the first time we hear the gospel, and I know this was true in my case, first time you hear the gospel, it usually just goes right over your head. Just doesn't compute.

[7 : 48] Doesn't make any sense. You just don't put it together. You don't connect the dots. But repeated hearings starts building a case in your spirit.

And it is added to over a period of time. And I call this spiritual gestation. Whereby from the time the seed of the gospel is sown, it needs to be watered and watered so that the case can be built and it is increasing and increasing.

And finally, you get to the place of a crisis where you have to make a decision. And the decision is always based on the information that you have.

And when enough information is built up in your human spirit that you're able to connect the dots and it makes sense, then it is time to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

That's what repentance is. And it is a beautiful thing. We don't know how God enters the human heart and regenerates us and makes us new on the inside.

[8 : 57] All we know is that's what he does. Nobody understands that dynamic. But that's what regeneration is. And it is the entrance of the light. This is what he is talking about here.

This consists of our message that we deliver. Awake thou that sleepest. And he's talking about those who are spiritually asleep. Actually, they're kind of spiritually dead.

You know. And only the gospel has the power to awaken someone who is spiritually dead. And by the way, guys, that just goes to show you how powerful this spiritual life and death really are.

You know, Paul talks about this in one of the most enlightening passages in 2 Corinthians 4 when he says, If our gospel, if our good news is hid, it is hid to those that are lost.

Whose minds. Think of that. Whose minds. That's their thinking process. Their ability to compute and connect. Whose minds. The God of this age.

[10 : 13] And that's Satan himself. The God of this age hath blinded. Blinded minds. Lest. So that. The glorious light of the gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So, man is born, if you will, with two strikes against him. One is his old Adamic fallen nature that is only self-centered. And the other is satanic blindness that wants to keep him in that.

And they are really powerful, powerful forces. So powerful that nothing but the gospel can overcome that.

And that's why Paul said, I'm not ashamed, I'm not embarrassed by the gospel. For it, this good news, it is the power of God.

The dunamis. From which our word dynamite comes. It is the dunamis that brings men to salvation. The power of God.

[11 : 18] Through faith unto salvation. So that's to be our message to those who have engaged in and are engaged in the unfruitful works of darkness. We are to reprove them.

And you reprove them by having a standard against which you can evaluate their unfruitful works of darkness.

And that standard, of course, is the standard of righteousness. It's a biblical standard. The world does not and cannot come up to that. So, we do not preach a gospel of self-help.

We do not preach a gospel of betterment. We do not preach a gospel of turn over a new leaf or try harder or whatever. We preach a gospel of the grace of God because nothing else can do that job.

Comments or questions? Anyone? Okay, let's go on. Rise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.

[12 : 14] See then that you, and here he's talking again to believers, the context he is addressing those who are Christians. See then that you walk circumspectly.

Take heed how you walk, strictly. Coney Bear says, see then that you walk without stumbling. And this word circumspectly is a word from which we get the English word, of course, circular and circumference.

And it means that we are to walk in such a way that we reveal the same side of ourselves, no matter who is looking at us, or from what angle, or from what situation.

We are to be people who appear to be the same, no matter how we are viewed, or in what setting we are viewed, or in what circumstance we are viewed.

Sunday or Monday. Yeah, Sunday or Monday. Yeah, we are to be the same. We are to be the same on Monday as we are in church on Sunday. Some people put on their Sunday behavior when they go to church, because that's the day when you're supposed to behave Christianly.

[13 : 38] But for the rest of the week, hey, it's dog eat dog. I mean, you just got to get down and get dirty sometimes, you know. And Paul is decrying against that.

He's saying, no. What you are supposed to be, you are supposed to be 24-7. So that no matter whether a stranger is viewing you, or your wife and children are viewing you, you are to come across as the same person under all circumstances.

Our walk is our lifestyle. The way we conduct our daily business, our routine living, that's our walk. And we are to walk in this circular kind of fashion, so that no matter how the world views us, we're the same from every angle.

And that ties in with being people of integrity. Integrity, you know the word integrer and integrate, has to do with oneness.

And that means we are to be the same on the outside as we are on the inside. As opposed to being contradictory or duplicitous.

[14 : 55] We are to be outwardly what we are inwardly, and inwardly what we are outwardly. This is the whole person. It's a beautiful concept. And only in the gospel can we be that and do that. Thoughts, anybody?

Feel free to jump in. Dan. I think I totally agree with what you say. I've come to this Bible study on Thursday morning to get a little bit of momentum to get through the day.

Great. Well... You know, and I think the same way when you go to church. Absolutely. I mean, yeah, you're there, and you need to walk your talk. I mean, that's a given.

But sometimes, you know, you get around the middle of the week, and all of a sudden you feel like your strength's being sacked. You're running out of gas.

You're running out of gas. You know, and you need a good kick of the posterior of the message. Well, we need to sharpen one another.

[15 : 53] You know, as iron sharpens iron. We are gathered here for a whole lot of reasons. One of which is to be of mutual encouragement. One to another.

To edify one another. And this is largely what church is really all about. You know, someone has made the point that church is really... It's not for aints. It's for saints.

Really. I mean, the aints are welcome, and we'd love to see them exposed to the gospel. But the basic concept of the church is that believers might band together and encourage one another and build up one another in the faith.

And Paul said, let all things be done unto edifying. And the edifying, from which we get the word edifice, structure, is to build up one another. As opposed to what often goes on in the world, tearing down one another.

Belittling one another. Belittling one another. So, there's a real valid place for the body of Christ to be together wherever it can and whenever it can, just for the mutual encouragement.

[16 : 58] You lift me up and I lift you up. And you may be down this week and maybe I can offer a word of encouragement. An arm around the shoulder. And next week it will be reversed.

You have to do that for me. And that's the way it's supposed to work. We are to encourage one another in the faith. You know, Barnabas is referred to as the son of consolation.

It literally means also son of encouragement. And right after Saul of Tarsus was converted, nobody who was a believer believed him.

They thought this was some kind of a scam that he was running. And he was going to use his supposed conversion as a vehicle to get a whole bunch of Christians together and then arrest them all.

Take them back to Jerusalem. After all, that's why he came there. And apparently there wasn't anyone that would believe this guy. One man by the name of Barnabas.

[18 : 02] And he is called the son of consolation. And he came alongside Saul of Tarsus, put his arm around him and said, Brother Saul, I believe you. And I have no difficulty believing that you have had an encounter with our living Lord.

And I want to be of help to you. And we all know the story of how that became the first missionary team. And this was years after, you see. Paul and Barnabas never took that first missionary journey until about 15 years after Paul was converted or Saul of Tarsus was converted.

And his chief encourager, one who builds up. And that word for courage is the same word for heart. It means to enhearten one. When you encourage someone, you pour heart into them.

And literally encourage them internally. And it's a great thing. It's a great concept. We all need that, guys. Every one of us needs that encouragement and that building up.

Nobody's talking about flattering. Flattering, flatter is insincere. We're talking about genuine, genuine encouragement. And we need to learn to encourage by complimenting someone, too.

[19 : 21] And again, a sincere compliment can be something that really builds people up. And nobody's talking about inflating someone's ego. That's dishonest and it's unproductive.

But when you see something that is worthy of note, there is certainly nothing wrong with saying, hey, brother, I saw what you did the other day or I appreciated what you said.

And that really was encouraging to me. And I thank you for that. And you'd be surprised. It's just kind of like giving out attaboys. And we ought not to do it indiscriminately, but credit should be given where credit is due.

And sometimes we can be remiss in that. Okay. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools or unwisely, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Making most of the opportunities that we have because some of them will never come back again. And it's an important thing to realize that we have a commonality with everybody else in that each of us has 24 hours a day.

[20 : 40] That's all you get. Nobody gets more. Nobody gets less. And we ought to be careful how we use them. Raj? Something that gives me great joy is when we go out to eat with a couple in church or otherwise.

We keep things in the life of the dinner. Yeah. And when we do it in church, we go out to church. Yeah. We talk about what the pastor said or what this verse said.

And bounce it off. Yeah. Absolutely. That's really valuable. That's what real Christian fellowship is all about.

It's with Christ at the center. And you're focusing on the things you know about him or about what he's revealed in the word. And this is mutual encouragement, one to another. And it just has a very positive effect.

Tom? Part of the truth is what Rod said. But also, you shouldn't duck and take cover when you listen to people with hearts. Or the same ideas as you are.

[21 : 45] In other words, in here it says take responsibility. Yeah. And that means that you can't really even to people who aren't even arguing with you.

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think this is part and parcel of being a believer and being a witness. And the tendency is to just dummy up.

You know. I think we do take cover too often. I'm sure we do. I'm sure we do. Yeah. Joe? Well, and I think that also means you want to be a Christian. What are we to do then? You know, we would be about good works then.

Then we would be about good works. Then we would become a Christian. Then we're supposed to be about that. That's right. We should take the opportunity to help people do kind deeds for people. And they'll present themselves to it.

Absolutely. And all of them every day. You know, I can help this person this way. Do that. He calls me on the property. Yeah. A good work. Support the person. All good works. You know. You know, we talk with no, you know, we can save a good work.

[22 : 44] So often, yes, we don't. But after you're saved, though, then they should be there. Absolutely. And that's what I think in giving the time here, take all that opportunity you've got to be kind and healthy to other people and face them.

Because that's like, that's how you bring it back to God. God doesn't need anything we can give Him. The people that we associate with do. And that's how you love God. You love God by loving other people. That's right. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you. Dan? I have to say this about Joe. When I was having my knee replaced. Yeah. One of the most enlightening visits I had when Joe stopped in on his bicycle and visited me.

That meant so much to me. Yeah. It's a pick-me-up, isn't it? Yeah. It really is. Absolutely. To think, you know, when something like that happens. Absolutely. He just dropped out of the clear blue and there he was and a great time in fellowship.

And that's what I think this should be about. That's what ministry is. And so often we tend to think that ministry is what happens in the pulpit. But there's a lot more to it, isn't there, Brian?

[23 : 41] I mean, that's just the beginning, you know. That's just something to fuel the fire. And someone has said that when the service is over and the benediction is pronounced, then the ministry begins.

When people go out there and fan out and have an influence and an effect on others. You never know. You never know what a deed of kindness or a word of encouragement can mean to somebody.

And if you reply to that, all I'd say is praise the Lord. Because without the Lord, you wouldn't have got a difference. So ultimately, who gets a credit? The Lord. The Lord does. He's the only one that deserves it.

Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. Right back to you, Lord, like it always goes, you know. I've never been there. Thank you. Any other thoughts?

Anybody? Okay. Be not unwise, foolish, senseless. Knox says you cannot afford to be reckless.

[24 : 41] There is too much at stake. And it isn't our reputation. It's his. And we just really need to be committed to conducting ourselves in such a way that we will be a positive reflection on our Lord.

And that's not too much to ask because God does not demand anything from us that he has not already equipped us to be and to do.

So it's just a matter of someone who said living the Christian life is really just being what you are. And that's traveling first class.

Opposite is be not drunk with wine wherein is excess or debauchery or riot. And several translations are offered here.

Be not getting drunk with wine in which is dissoluteness. Do not drink wine to excess for that leads to profligacy. Do not indulge in much wine in which excess is so easy.

[25 : 46] Stop getting drunk on wine for that means profligacy. Do not besought yourselves with wine that leads to ruin. Really, the kind of wine, from what I understand, that they usually drink in biblical days was radically different from wine that is served in most places today.

And we don't have this problem. We can't appreciate it. But I guess they do this still in certain countries in Europe, places around the world, where the water is so lacking in its drinkability that some kind of alcohol content is needed to make the water more drinkable.

And they, in biblical days, would mix water with wine. It was never just pure wine with a high alcohol content.

You wouldn't have to drink much of that to get swacked. But if you drank it as most people drank it at meals, and just about everybody did, it was not considered a negative.

It was just considered automatic. And they drank this wine with their meal, and that made the water drinkable, and it put a little flavor in it.

[27 : 00] But if you didn't cut the wine sufficiently and made it stronger, then the lesser amount could actually intoxicate you. And then in addition to the wine, of course, there were even stronger liquors that were a lot more potent.

So what Paul is saying here is that when you drink too much wine, you become intoxicated, and you leave your better sensibilities.

Your, what shall I say? Lack of judgment. Yeah. Well, lack of judgment. You don't control your mind. Exactly. The moral standards and everything change because you don't have that control in your mind that you had before.

It's a mind-altering thing. Because alcohol is not a stimulant at all. It's a depressant. Yeah. People have to realize, a lot of times people think alcohol is a stimulant. It makes you feel good and go, go, go.

Yeah. No. What it's doing, it's a stimulant. It's a depressant. It shuts off those sensibilities that you're talking about there. Then you do things that you wouldn't normally do, like people are real sociable and everything.

[28 : 10] Yeah. Yeah. And so the thing is, the reason you shouldn't drink any alcohol at all, you shouldn't, because you never know where that level is for you that it's going to cut you off and make you different.

Yeah. And you don't know where that's at. So you start drinking a little, oh, a little bit's okay. No, no. A little bit numbs those senses, is a depressant, and therefore you lose your normal control. So alcohol, it's just like gambling.

You know, people say, oh, a little gambling, fine. Well, you know, you have out, gambling, what do they call them? Gambler's an arch-reaster, a football player. He got into it, whatever. Oh, yeah. Because he gambled too much.

You never know where that level is. It's an addiction. So you should never drink any alcohol at all. But I see what you're saying, what they did, because of sanitary purposes and stuff. Well, and then, you know, Paul wrote to Timothy to take a little wine for your stomach's ache and you're off in infirmities, because alcohol, alcohol properly applied, does have some medicinal qualities.

And I think the whole medical profession realizes that. And you'll probably not be able to take a spoonful of cough medicine that doesn't have some alcohol in it, you know. So the problem is controlling it rather than it controlling you.

[29 : 26] And when people get under the influence, their inhibitions evaporate. And this is the guy who is ordinarily a wallflower when he's at a party and really gets swacked.

He's the one that's dancing around with the lampshade on his head, you know, completely out of character. I well remember a neighbor of mine way back when I was a kid.

And this guy would drink, go down to the corner bar, and he would spend the afternoon there and stagger back. And he was just terribly depressed. And he would sit there at the table with his hangover and just cry and carry on and moan and groan.

And he wasn't that way at all when he was sober. But that's what the influence did. And then there are others. There are others who are more even keel when they're sober. And when they get under the influence, they get nasty.

Oh, yeah. I mean, really mean. And there is a whole lot of spouse abuse connected with this. And when a guy who is having struggles in life, maybe he's got financial problems, maybe he's got marital problems, maybe he's got employment problems.

[30 : 42] And he thinks he's going to drown his sorrows, you know. Because what happens when you're living in a world that you consider really miserable and painful, and you can take something that will help you create another world, that's what alcohol and drugs do.

They deliver you from reality into another world that is free of pain. And this is why it's called getting a high, getting a buzz.

You really feel good compared to the way you felt before. But, of course, it's not long-lasting. And it is addictive. And when you come down off the high, then you hit a lower low than where you were before.

So, it's a vicious circle that is deadly. In the newspaper just this morning, I read this on the front page just before I came here, talked about the number of ODs in Clark County had doubled in the last 24 hours.

And they don't know what's going on. The opioids. And these people are overdosing right and left. And it is getting to be a real problem. It's gotten so now that our whole law enforcement community has been equipped with the injection to give people when they go in on a call and somebody has OD'd, they are equipped and they have with them this syringe.

[32 : 26] And they can actually administer this drug that is designed to bring them back from the OD. And that's, you know, that's as old as Ephesians 5, this kind of stuff goes way back there.

So, any other thoughts before we conclude? We'll continue this next week. We'll continue this next week.