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**C0511 -- Mar. 16, 2005 – Ephesians 5:12-14 – Walk in Light-Part 2**

Last week we looked at Eph 5:7-11, Walk in Light. This is an implication of the previous section Walk in Love. If we love one another as Christ loved us then we will Walk in Light. Paul says, **therefore do not be partakers with them**. Do not start and do not continue to be **partners with them**. Who is **them**? **them** is the **sons of disobedience** mentioned in v 6. The **sons of disobedience** are unbelievers who have no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God so don't become a part of the world system which is anti-God. This doesn't mean don't associate with unbelievers. It means don't associate with the lifestyle of unbelievers. Don't engage in the deeds of unbelievers. Why? verse 8 says **because you were formerly darkness but now you are light in the Lord**. See, you are no longer darkness. That's who you used to be, but now you are light in the Lord. To be **darkness** signifies that you were once alone and responsible for your lost condition. But now, because the Lord saved you, you are **light in the Lord**. You are not alone and you are not lost. Therefore **walk as children of Light**. How do we do this? By verse 10, **trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord**. Remember, verse 9 is a parenthesis and that's why those dashed lines bracket verse 9. Verse 9 is simply there to tell us what the **fruit of the light** is. The **fruit of the light** consists of three characteristics: **goodness, righteousness and truth**. **Goodness** means "moral living which corresponds to God's moral standard and demonstrates generosity toward others". When our lives demonstrate goodness they are demonstrating the fruit of the light. It does not come from us; it comes from Christ and through us. Second we have **righteousness**. **Righteousness** was imputed to us at salvation and whenever we display righteousness we are showing the world that God's character is the standard for right and wrong. That's fruit of the light. Lastly, we have **truth**. **Truth** is that which corresponds to reality and is defined by God. Whenever we display **truth** we are walking in reality as it really is. We are not living in our own imagined world but we are living in reality. Whenever we do this the **fruit of the light** is coming through us. Displaying those three characteristics shows that we are conduits for the **fruit of light** to shine through. Verse 10 shows what **children of the Light** do. They approve of what is pleasing to the Lord. We are approving of what is pleasing to the Lord whenever we do

His will and whenever we agree with His will. We'll look more at knowing and doing the Lord's will next week when we look at Walking in Wisdom. Verse 11 **and do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.** This is where the rubber meets the road. We should not expose the unfruitful deeds of unbelievers but of believers. That's what 1 Cor 5:11-12 teaches us. I'll show you why we should expose them in verse 12. The point here is to show that we are not to expose the person *per se* but the **unfruitful deeds**. We might say the proper method is not to highlight the sinner but the sin. We are all sinners but the emphasis is on exposing the sin. Of course, by implication the person is exposed. But it is the unfruitful deeds that need to be cleansed from among us not the people. They need to be restored. I showed you the four step process for dealing with this last week in a biblical manner. These are found in Matt 18:15-17.

- 1) go to the brother privately, show the fault
- 2) taking one or two more with you so you can get all the facts straight and work it out.
- 3) tell it, that is, the sin, to the church
- 4) let that man be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector

Today let's look at the **reason**, the **explanation** for why we should follow through with church discipline and the **conclusion** of walking in the light. We'll have a short lesson tonight so if you have questions be prepared to ask those.

**b. Reason: Their Works are Shameful (5:12)**

**Ephesians 5:12 For the things which are done by them in secret are a disgrace even to speak of,**

Verse 12 gives us the reason why we should not **participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness**. Because **the things which are done by them in secret are a disgrace even to speak of**. First, let's talk about sinning in secret. Do you feel safe when you sin in secret? Do you think that no one is watching? Even more to the point, have you created an environment where you can sin safely? What attribute(s) of God have you denied when you sin in secret or when you create compartments where you feel like you can sin safely? What attribute(s) of God are you denying? (Wait for an answer) One attribute you are denying is God's omnipresence, that God is wholly present at all places in space and time. You are simply re-playing Adam and Eve in the garden. They thought they could sin in secret and hide that from God but they were only revealing the fact that they had re-engineered their theology of God. That story shows how quickly our depraved minds

distort reality. The depraved mind is a desperately wicked thing. Whenever we sin we have just re-worked our theology in order to feel safe when we sin. Secondly, when we sin in secret we are also denying the omniscience of God, that God knows all things. We are saying God doesn't know about this because it is hidden from His sight. We make God's knowledge contingent on our actions. God's knowledge is never contingent on our actions. God knows everything independent of human action. God's knowledge is never dependent on man. Turn to **Isaiah 29:15**

<sup>15</sup> Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD, And whose deeds are *done* in a dark place, And they say, "Who sees us?" or "Who knows us?"

See that, when you sin in secret you are denying God's omnipresence and God's omniscience. A third thing we are denying when we sin in secret, although not one of His attributes, is God's existence. We are saying God does not exist but I certainly do exist and other men certainly exist and if I can only keep men from seeing me sin then I am safe. Besides, I'm just a victim of my upbringing and my genetics. At this point you've moved into an evolutionary worldview where humans are here by Chance, there is no God (Isa 14:1; Rom 1:18-32). In this sinful thinking, if God exists then he is just a limited god, a god that you've created in your own image, a mere creature. So, whenever you sin in secret or create an environment where you can sin safely you have denied God's omnipresence, God's omniscience, and God's existence.

Hopefully you can see how serious sin is and how quickly and easily our old man re-works our theology, how quickly we can be caught in idolatry. Paul says, these secret sins are **a disgrace even to speak of**. Things can be kept secret from men but nothing can be kept secret from God (Isa 29:15). He knows all and He is everywhere present.

The deeds that are done in secret are **a disgrace even to speak of**. "What one cannot speak of one cannot do." (Herodotus) But if these acts **done in secret are a disgrace even to speak of** then why does Paul tell us to expose them? That is, why bring them up in the Church and deal with them? Basically because there are two important lessons believers can learn when sinful deeds like this are exposed. 1) It reveals the detestable nature of dark deeds done in secret. 2) It impresses on us the importance of producing the fruit of light; goodness, righteousness, and truth (5:9). Since God has determined that the Church is to judge those within the Church then we should never allow deeds of darkness to surround and engulf our local church (1 Cor 5). We cannot just ignore deeds of darkness among us hoping they will just go away. Evil will not go away until Satan is bound and right now he is prowling about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pt 5:18). Nor can we

ignore church discipline simply because we are afraid people will leave the church. Do we leave our children undisciplined because they threaten to run away from home? No, so if we truly walk in love (5:1-6) then we must expose sin in our church (5:7-14) in accordance with the procedures in Matt 18:15-17. To not expose sin is to say in effect that we truly do not love one another. Therefore, the only course of action left to follow is to confront evil deeds whether we like it or not. Our goal is not to find out how we can sweep them under the carpet but to learn how to expose these deeds in love (Eph 4:15). Not with the purpose of destroying the person but with the goal of restoring the person.

So, we should walk in the light producing the fruit of the light. We should refrain from unfruitful works of darkness and even expose them when they are among us. What will happen when those works are exposed?

**c. Explanation: Light Shows True Character of Works (5:13)**

**Ephesians 5:13 but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.**

When the unfruitful works are exposed **by the light** they become **visible**. That is, they become clear. Whenever something is exposed by the light it becomes visible to the human eye. Whether we do good deeds or evil deeds whenever they are exposed to the light they become visible. Light, by definition, makes things visible. Not long ago Robin, Riven and I were touring the Longhorn Caves. When we got deep in the cave our guide turned off all the lights to show us how dark it was. It got really dark. You couldn't see anything and no matter how long you stayed there your eyes wouldn't adjust to the dark. He told us a story of some kids who broke in and while they were deep in the cave their flashlight went out. But these kids got out of the cave without their flashlight. How did they do it? They used the indiglo on a watch. Just that much light was enough to make things visible so they could find their way. Just a little light makes things visible, whether good or evil. It is interesting that Christians never hesitate to expose the good but they hardly ever expose the evil. But according to the last phrase of 5:13 the results of exposing evil are better and more important than the results of exposing the good. Our society has turned into a praise society. We are supposed to praise our children for everything they do whether it is good or not. The last thing we are supposed to do is to criticize or correct because that apparently destroys the child's self-esteem. That is silliness. Being corrected develops character. I suppose this new optimism is the reason modern Americans don't have half the character of their forefathers. They've been told they are alright just the way they are and don't need to change. The light has never been shined on their deeds. We can't act this way in the

Church according to Scripture. We must expose evil deeds for what they are. We must confront and be changed.

The last phrase is difficult but understandable in context. Paul says, **for everything that becomes visible is light**. There are several views of this phrase but I think the best understanding is this. Paul is saying that unfruitful deeds of darkness are exposed in order that offending believers might produce the fruit of light, namely goodness, righteousness, and truth. Their deeds are exposed in order to cause a change in behavior. When we confront the sin problems of others in the church we direct them toward **walking as children of light** rather than **darkness**. That's Paul's intent here.

### 3. Conclusion: Enlightenment of Christ (5:14)

**Ephesians 5:14 Therefore it says,  
“wake up, O Sleeper,  
and rise up from the deaths,  
and the Christ will shine on you.**

**Therefore it says** is Paul's typical way of introducing a quotation from the OT (cf *dio legei* 4:8). But what OT passage is Paul quoting? Some have suggested Isa 26:19, others have suggested Isa 60:1, still others Jonah 1:6, and some have even suggested a phrase from the Secrets of Enoch. But the Greek text does not really resemble any of these suggestions. The majority of scholars have suggested that Paul is quoting an early hymn sung in the church. This is probably the best view. The structure is a parallelism, much like that of Hebrew poetry. It was common for the early church to compose hymns and sing them when they met (1 Cor 14:26). Therefore, this was probably an early hymn that was written to stimulate believers to repent and be encouraged. This hymn was designed to expose the deeds of spiritually lazy believers so they will wake up and change their lifestyle.

It begins with the imperative **wake up, O Sleeper**. This is like trying to wake up a teenager on Saturday or Sunday morning. This Christian is known as “the sleeping one”. He sleeps spiritually. It describes a Christian who is so out of it spiritually that if he went to a spiritual doctor the doctor would diagnose him as having a curable disease known as “spiritual laziness”. He is in a state of “spiritual stupor”. This laziness is demonstrated by the fact that he won't make time to study the Bible daily or listen to Bible doctrine on tape. He won't take time to pray for ten minutes because he falls back asleep. He's lazy and Bible doctrine just bores him to death. The fruit of “spiritual laziness” is unfruitful deeds of

darkness. Paul says, **Wake up, O Sleeper!** Wake out of your spiritual slumber and indifference. You've been deceived by Satan into thinking that you're all right! All you like to do is spend your time in darkness, slumbering away. This is an interesting metaphor because most sleeping is done in the dark. It is also interesting that **sleepers** don't know what is going on around them. They are often unaware of their spiritual condition. This is the way Christ described the Laodiceans. Turn to **Revelation 3:17** *'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,'*. See how they are so dead asleep that they do not even know their true condition. **Wake up!** Christ says, you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

It's not enough however, to **wake up**. As everyone knows, we can often **wake up** a teenager, but that doesn't mean that he gets up. So, the hymn says **rise up from the deaths!** This is an aorist tense meaning hurry up, do it now, don't lay around half-conscious in bed, get up! It's singular too, just like the command to **wake up**. This is directed to you personally. You **wake up** and you **rise up**. Don't worry about the other lazy Christians, you **wake up** and you **rise up** now! The text does not say "from the dead", but **from the deaths** plural. In other words there are many spiritually lazy Christians. But you (singular) **wake up** and **rise up**. Don't be like other spiritually lethargic Christians. Rise up now from among them. Don't waste any more time. If you are a spiritually lazy Christian you are acting like a son of disobedience who is under the wrath of God. Unbelievers are the one's who are not interested in the things of God and if you are not interested in the things of God then you're acting just like them. What is your problem? You're a child of light in the Lord. Why are you sleeping like a lazy, spiritually dead corpse? You have no excuse. You should never act like a person who has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. If you keep up this spiritual lethargy then your deeds will catch up with you and may get exposed.

If you **wake up** and **rise up**, that is, if you realize you have an illness known as "spiritual laziness" and you do something about it then there is encouragement. Paul says, **Christ will shine on you**. What does this mean? This means Christ will approve of you. He will shine on you, He will be delighted by you, He will therefore shine His light on you because you will start producing the fruit of goodness, righteousness and truth. He will approve of you because you are walking like a child of the light. That was the point of this early hymn. To stimulate us to repent and to be encouraged.

**Wake up, O Sleeper,  
rise up from the deaths,**

**and Christ will shine on you.**

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