

**Ephesians 5: 11-14; “Awake, You Who Sleep”, Message # 42 in a series entitled – “The Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall for November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

We must remember what we studied in the last message concerning the fruit of the light. Each and every Christian is given light, from the Father of lights. In God’s light we see light. Our minds and hearts are illumined to the truth of what we will need to do and to become if we would glorify God with our life. This giving or shining of spiritual light will produce tangible obedience to God’s word as we respond to Christ Himself being present with us by the power of His Holy Spirit.

If we know the Lord, we will consciously try to learn what is pleasing to Him. We will try to learn what is acceptable to Him. And so, there are 3 things that we ought to do to rightly respond to the light that God has given to us. The 1<sup>st</sup> is – That we will not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is – That we will rather expose them. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – That we will heed the call to awake from spiritual sleep and rise from the dead.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – If we want to rightly respond to the light that has been given us, we will not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.**

The words that we ought to take notice of in verse 11 are “fellowship” and “unfruitful”. We are commanded not to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. What does this mean? The word in the Greek which is translated “fellowship” in the NKJV, and “participate” in the NASB, is συγκαοινονωεο (sugkoinoneo). It appears to mean that we should not participate in the works of darkness which unbelieving worldly and sinful people participate in. We should not join with them in those works of darkness. It does not mean that we completely disassociate ourselves from people of the world. But rather it means that we would not join in with them in what they are promoting in their works; that is, either in their words or their deeds, for this would, in every case, be unfruitful.

Turn over with me to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 5, verses 9-13. “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.” “Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.” “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a one.” “For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside?” “Do you not judge those who are inside?” “But those who are outside God judges.” “Therefore ‘put away from yourselves the evil person.’”

You can see here that Paul specifically mentions several different kinds of sinners, people who live according to the flesh and according to the world’s perverse and God-denying standards. He mentions that in regard to the sexual immoral, the covetous, extortioners, idolaters, revilers, and drunkards, that they should not keep company with them. It meant that they were not to be continually hanging around with them, or making them their best friends, or in any way approving of their sinful words or actions. If they were to do this, it would mean that they were in some way approving of their sinful lifestyle that they have consciously chosen to adopt.

Of these things, God does not approve, because He has said so in His word. They go against the things that He has specifically said in His word are sinful and wrong. Therefore we also must disapprove of them. And we will show our disapproval by not speaking in an approving way of them when we are around such people. We will not participate in those things with them. We will not have fellowship with these unfruitful works. We will not have discussion and interaction with them, regarding the supposed goodness or value of these sinful things. It would not tend in any way to be conducive to our bringing forth the good fruit of righteousness in our thoughts, words, or actions, were we to participate in those sinful things. For we as Christians are called to be holy and righteous people.

We are called to bring forth good fruit unto God in all of our thoughts, words, and deeds; the fruit of the light. In order to do this, we must understand that our fellowship in the primary sense is with the Father and the Son. Turn with me over to 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 1, verses 1-7. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,

and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life – the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us – that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” “And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” So John is saying the same thing as Paul is saying in our text. But he is also showing us here what it is that we should be pursuing so that our joy may be full. It is that we cultivate our fellowship with the Father and the Son; that we will walk in the light of the truth of the Bible, and in the light of our actual interaction with the Father and the Son in our thoughts and in our prayers, every day.

And John says here that if we say that we are having this kind of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and yet we are walking in the darkness, participating in any way with the unfruitful works of darkness, we lie, he says, and we do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in light, then we have fellowship with one another. This is the basis of our spiritual strength; that is, the fellowship that we have with God, first of all. Engaging in this fellowship we will be being cleansed of all our sins. We will be cleansing ourselves of any of the defilements of the world and our flesh that we have fallen into. The works of darkness are unfruitful to the Christian in every way. Therefore they are to be studiously avoided.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – If we want to rightly respond to the light which God has given us, we will rather expose the works of darkness.**

Verses 11 and 12 – “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” “For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.” Not only is the Christian called to have no fellowship with darkness, but they should go on to expose what is evil; to show that it is evil, because God calls it evil. The word “expose” in verse 11 there, in the Greek, is *ελεγχετε*, has the meaning that you are to expose the sinfulness of the act, and then reprove it. That is, you should attempt admonish that person, to try to convince them of the evil of it, and attempt to bring them to conviction of sin over it. A person has to be convinced that they are in sin in their thoughts and actions before they can be brought to see their need of repentance.

This is not only true of people who are, as of yet, outside of Christ, but it is also true of people who are professed Christians. Turn with me over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 6, verse 14 – chapter 7, verse 3. “O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.” “You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.” “Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open. Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?” “And what communion has light with darkness?” “And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.”

“As God has said: ‘I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM.’ “I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.” “Therefore ‘COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD.’ “DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU.” “I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.” “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” “Open your hearts to us.” “We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one.” “I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.”

Once again we see why Paul is speaking in this way. It is to establish the righteous fellowship of God with His people, and Christians with one another, as well. Paul reproveth them here in regard to the unfruitful deeds of darkness which these Corinthians were engaged in. It was in their having fellowship with idolatrous unbelievers, having fellowship and communion with those who were

walking in darkness. This was probably either relatives of theirs, or people who they were friends with before they were saved. This led them at times into their having fellowship with them. Perhaps even going occasionally to their temples. And so Paul reminds them that he had spoken to them openly; his heart was wide open to them. He wanted them to be open with him.

Could they really think that they who were righteous could have fellowship with those who were unrighteous? Could they really be yoked together with unbelievers? Could light have communion with darkness, or Christ with Belial, the Devil? What agreement has the temple of God, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, with idols? And he reminded them that they were the spiritual temple of the Living God. Paul is exposing their false thinking and their unrighteous compromising actions here. But he is also doing it out of his great love for them. He says in 7: 2 – Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. I do not say this to condemn; for you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

What a wonderful way of exposing the darkness of their compromised actions! We should remember to be the same way with dear brethren who have fallen into false thinking on maintaining purity in their thoughts and actions! He reminds them of the great promises of God's word. I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be My people, if they would come out from among them and be separate, and not touch the things which were unclean. He would receive them and be a Father to them, and they would be His sons and daughters. This is how we ought to expose the darkness with regard to professed Christians. We do so by not only telling them to avoid the evil, but showing them the great glory and true joy that come from fellowship with God.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – If we want to rightly respond to the light which God has given us, we will heed the call to awake from spiritual sleep and rise from the dead.**

Verses 13 and 14 – But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.” “Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’” So we see here that sin is made more plain to people when it is exposed by the light. People are reprov'd by the light of the word of God being shined upon them by faithful Christians; pastors and people. Sin is seen for the awful thing that it is when the word comes with power through the words and godly example of Christians who are being faithful to the shine the light. God's word, as it says in Psalm 119, verse 105, is “a lamp to my feet and light to my path.” It not only show us, as Christians how to think righteously and act righteously, but when we shine this same light of the word to others, then they learn righteousness as well.

Matthew 5: 14-16 – “You are the light of the world.” “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” “Nore do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp-stand, and it gives light to all the house.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Every Christian is one of God's lights. All together as Christians we are a city set on a hill when we shine our light. Christ's glory cannot be hidden when our light is evidenced, or made manifest, in the good works that we will do in order to glorify our Father who is in heaven. The light that we have as Christians is not only the light of the truth of the word. But it is also the light of Christ Himself by His Holy Spirit shining through our words and our deeds to people around us.

This is by God's deliberate design, that these things are so. By our words in preaching the gospel, of the glory of Christ, and the great salvation which can be found in Christ, we shine to those who sit in darkness. Isaiah 60, verse 1-3 – “Arise, shine; for your light has come!” “And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.” “For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.” “The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” People are pictured in our text in verse 14 as being in darkness and asleep because they are comfortable in the darkness of sin and ignorance. Our mission is to awaken those who sleep, so that they will arise from their death in trespasses and sins and believe in Christ who is the Light of the world, and the One who will give them spiritual light. Christ gives light so that people will awaken to their need of Him and His grace. Our mission is to turn sinful people from darkness to light if we can.

But these words also, I believe, apply to Christians who will try to call to one another to awake from their spiritual lethargy and death-like state when they see that they are backslidden or not being watchful against sin in the way that they should be. James give us words which speak in this way. In James 1: 12 he says – “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” “Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” “Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

It is at this point then, that James then says in verse 16 – “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Do Christians need to be awakened from the sleep that can bring another form of death other than physical death, or even being dead in trespasses and sins? Yes, sometimes they may. It is the sleep and death that lie inherently in any sin being tolerated in your life; that sleep and death that will ultimately dishonor God, and thwart your progress in becoming more like Christ. It is that sleep and death that will not lead to your making progress in holiness and in living righteously and godly in Christ Jesus.

Many Christians need to be awakened from this kind of sleep and rise from this kind of death, of not seeing what God has called them to. It is to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. This is why we pray that we would be personally revived and that revival would come to our churches and to our nation. We pray for a Great Awakening once again. Romans chapter 6, verses 22-22 are good for us to close this study with. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.” “What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed?” “For the end of those things is death.” “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”