**Whatever Makes Manifest is Light**

*Ephesians 5:8-14*

**Introduction**

1. One of the most common, and certainly important illustrations given in the scripture for our understanding of God and truth, and sin and error is the contrast of light and darkness.
2. **Ephesians 5:8-14** is a passage which shows practically how our relationship with God affects the way we live, and reflects on how we came into that relationship, as well as enjoins upon us the responsibility to introduce others to it as well.
3. The text accomplishes the very thing of which it speaks – it makes manifest some serious problems in the church today which we would do well to avoid.
4. The Children of Light **(vv. 8-10)**
5. Sons of Disobedience to Children of Light **(vv. 6-8)**
   1. ***“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord…children of light” (v. 8)*** – how did they become children of light?
      1. **John 3:18-21** – they came to the light, submitted to it – obedient faith. (***v. 36 – “does not believe”*** – *apeitheō* – ***“does not obey,” NASB***)
      2. **Ephesians 4:24** – put on (**a decision we make, obey**), created according to God (**power of grace**), ***“in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (NASB)*** (**medium of truth**).
         1. **Cf. Ephesians 5:26-27** – ***“washing of water by the word”***
6. Walking and Bearing Fruit **(vv. 8-9)**
   1. ***“children of”*** – idiomatic expression denoting association with the object, or being characterized by the object. ***(“Son of encouragement,” Acts 4:36***)
   2. **If we are children of light we will be acting that way – *“walk as…”* (verb)**
      1. **Ephesians 4:19-21** – if you are in Christ, you have been taught by Him, and you don’t learn the lifestyle of the darkness by Him.
      2. **Matthew 12:33-35** – good begets good, evil begets evil – if you’re a child of light you will show it by your “walk”
      3. **1 John 1:6** – liar!
   3. **(v. 9)** – explains what that walk looks like – ***“fruit of light” (NASB)*** – i.e. ***NOT: badness, unrighteousness, error*** – **cf. Proverbs 8:6-8**
      1. **(vv. 3-4)** – as a saint you are not to be associated with these things at all.
7. Finding Out God’s Will and Choosing It **(v. 10)**
   1. ***“Walk as children of light…finding out what is acceptable to the Lord” (vv. 8, 10)***
      1. **(vv. 6-7)** – Some who claim to be of the light will seek to deceive – **4:17-19** – they cannot be trusted because they have rejected the truth.
      2. **(vv. 7, 11a)** – no fellowship.
      3. **It is a life of continual growth and transformation.**
         1. **Cf. Proverbs 9:8-9** – wise get wiser, just get smarter.
         2. Diligence – **Ephesians 3:4; 5:17** – read and understand.
   2. **It is still a decision – in growth we will discover things we must correct, and discover more excellent ways where we make improvements.**
      1. **When we find what is wrong we decide between:**
         1. Honesty/dishonesty
         2. Obedience/disobedience.
      2. **When we find that we could do something better we decide between complacency, and improvement** – **cf. James 4:17**
      3. ***If we are children of light, we wish to avoid stumbling, so we always choose to walk in the light of God’s word NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT*** – **John 11:8-10 (cf. John 9:4-5)**
      4. Decide AGAINST darkness always – **(v. 11a**)
8. The Function of Light **(vv. 11-13)**
9. The Light Makes Manifest
   1. ***“whatever makes manifest is light” (v. 13b)***
      1. ***“made manifest”*** – speaking of what happened to the things of darkness.
      2. ***“makes manifest”*** – speaking of the activity of ***“the light”*** as the subject.
         1. If speaking of what has happened to the thing of darkness – ***“everything that becomes visible is light.” (NASB); “anything that becomes visible is light.” (ESV)***
         2. **This cannot be so because works of darkness are still darkness when they are exposed. (Spiritual, not physical)**
      3. I.e. the light’s function is to make things visible, and therefore known for what they truly are.
   2. Fundamental function of light at its creation is bringing order where there is chaos – **Genesis 1:2-4**
      1. Gives sight, and thus orientation and order.
      2. Reveals direction, also obstacles/danger.
   3. Spiritually – **Psalm 119:105** – God’s word.
      1. Reveals righteous path.
      2. Reveals unrighteousness to avoid.
   4. **Ephesians 5:8, 10** – you have found out, become children of light, so keep finding out – through the light making things manifest.
10. Light at Work **(vv. 11-13)**
    1. **(v. 11)** – a continuation of the activity and responsibility of those who are now ***“children of light”*** – a part of the ***“walk.”***
       1. Really, we are stewards of light – **cf. 1 Corinthians 4:1; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 5:11** (***“knowing,”*** i.e. having been enlightened)
    2. If we have the light, are of the light, this is one of the ways we are obligated to let it work in us – **(vv. 11-13)**
       1. **(v. 11)** – expose unfruitful works of darkness.
       2. **(v. 12)** – through such exposure, bring shame upon those practicing the works.
       3. **(v. 13)** – because that is what the light is meant to do, and you are light (i.e. so do it).
       4. ***“expose”*** – *elegchō* – “1 to scrutinize or examine carefully, bring to light, expose, set forth; 2 to bring a pers. to the point of recognizing wrongdoing, convict, convince” (BDAG); “generally with a suggestion of shame of the person convicted” (THAYER)
       5. ***“shameful even to speak” (v. 13)*** – not shameful for us to speak, but shameful for them in hearing us speak by reproof of those things. (**cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15**)
       6. ***“done in secret”*** – not in relation to the public forum.
          1. While some things are so perverse they are hidden by the ungodly, generally, they are unashamed and public about their sin – **Isaiah 3:9; Jeremiah 6:15**
          2. **In relation to the light** – **John 3:20-21** – PRACTICALLY: doing them ***“in secret”*** is doing so in rebellion, or willful ignorance.
             1. Thus, the shame brought them when they are exposed to the truth!
             2. They won’t come to the light, so the light must come to them – ***“Let your light so shine before men” (Matthew 5:16).***
11. When Light is Not Light **(v. 13)**
    1. Gospel preachers, elders, and teachers = LIGHT BEARERS – **2 Timothy 4:2** – convince, rebuke, exhort – EXPOSE DARKNESS.
    2. **Is this preacher/teacher/elder a child of light? Are they a bearer/wielder of light?**
       1. Are they exposing darkness with their teaching? – ***“whatever makes manifest is light”***
       2. **Opposite – WHATEVER DOES NOT MAKE MANIFEST/EXPOSE/REPROVE/REBUKE IS NOT LIGHT.**
    3. **“Soft” churches/preachers/preaching – “I don’t understand what the problem is with them. They aren’t teaching any error. They aren’t saying anything wrong.”**
       1. IS THEIR TEACHING “MAKING MANIFEST” THE WORKS OF DARKNESS? – i.e. specifically, practically, were those who are practicing them are brought to shame, and demanded to change?
       2. “The preacher should never address a crowd without remembering that his ultimate citadel is the citadel of the human will. He may travel along the line of the emotions, but he is after the will. He may approach along the line of the intellect, but he is after the will…[Preaching] is successful only when it is able to storm the will, under the will of God. The preacher comes with good news; but he does not come with something to be trifled with. His message has an insistent demand, because he comes from a King.” (Campbell Morgan, G.. How to Preach (p. 10). CrossReach Publications. Kindle Edition.)
       3. **But what he’s preaching is gospel truth!** – IS IT WHOLE? – **cf. Acts 20:27**
       4. **But he preaches “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2)!** – BUT DOES HE CONVICT THE CONGREGATION SPECIFICALLY OF THEIR SINS THAT PUT HIM ON THAT CROSS, CALLING THEM TO REPENTANCE? – **cf. Romans 6:11**
    4. **When “light” does not “expose” and “make manifest,” then light is not light!**
       1. Is the common denominational sermon, devoid of much substance, but touching on the most basic, surface details of the story of the gospel, accurately called “light?”
       2. IF IT ISN’T EXPOSING DARKNESS, IT ISN’T DOING THE MAIN WORK OF LIGHT, AND IS NOT LIGHT.
12. The Invitation of Light **(v. 14)**
13. The Exposure is an Invitation **(v. 14)**
    1. ***“Therefore He says”*** – i.e. this is what is happening when the children of light use God’s word to expose works of darkness, bringing shame to those who practice them.
    2. **Isaiah 9:1-2** – Messianic prophecy.
       1. Fulfilled – **Matthew 4:12-16** – Jesus’ ministry began the fulfillment of this prophecy.
       2. In this way – **(v. 17)** – REPENT (light exposing darkness, calling to change) – KINGDOM AT HAND (inviting into the kingdom)
14. The Darkness Must Be Abandoned for the Light **(v. 14a)**
    1. **Sleep/death** – **Ephesians 2:1** – in trespasses and sin/darkness.
    2. **Awake/arise** – **John 5:24-25** – by the power of Christ’s word, BUT IN RESPONSE TO IT!
       1. He does not say, “I will raise you from the dead.”
       2. **He utters imperatives, “[YOU!], AWAKE, ARISE!”**
       3. **While it is an invitation, it is an imperative that must be obeyed to receive fully what is offered!**
          1. ***“Awake…arise…And [then] Christ…”***
    3. **Quotation from sermon on God’s grace (member of the church)** – “God does not first demand that Paul achieve a level of spiritual purity or righteousness in order to receive grace. **God lays no prerequisites on him**…and what I want to tell you is that the same thing is true for us.”
       1. Equating “prerequisites” with “achiev[ing]…spiritual purity or righteousness” is a false comparison.
       2. **Prerequisite is another way of saying – IT IS CONDITIONAL.**
       3. **Unconditional offer, conditional reception – Titus 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:10**
       4. **Conditional** – **John 1:12-13** – ***“gave the right*** (authority) ***TO BECOME*** (future)***”*** – had to be born (baptism required).
    4. **The text shows that change on our part is required to receive fully what is offered – awake/arise from sleep/death (v. 14).**
       1. **Quotation from sermon on God’s grace (different from above, but member of the church) (mocking the scripture’s call to change to receive God’s grace)** – “’You need to **believe better**. You need to **believe more**. You need to **trust in God**. You need to **soften your heart**.’ Like, we know how to do that. Like, what do I do? How do I do that? Do I just like marinate it? How does that work? **You soften your heart. You change your attitude. You go get yourself some faith**, and we’ll say, ‘Read the Bible,’ but mainly it’s you do it. Then you take that new heart that you made and go do what’s right. And after you have done this and that, God will come in and He’ll start doing stuff.”
       2. Change required before salvation – **Acts 2:38** – repent **(cf. James 1:21** – lay aside)
       3. “You soften your heart…Then you take that new heart that you made…” – **Ezekiel 18:31; 36:26** – GOD TELLS US TO REPENT, AND GET A NEW HEART, AND HE GIVES US A NEW HEART – i.e. we certainty have a part to play in this or we don’t receive God’s grace.
15. Christ is Our Light **(v. 14b)**
    1. ***“And Christ will shine on you.” (NASB, ESV)***
    2. When we respond to the light’s invitation, and come out of the darkness, we enter into fellowship with Christ, and are given perfect direction/protection for our life as we walk by faith in Him – **Luke 1:76-79** – Zacharias’ prophecy concerning John preparing the way for Jesus **(vv. 78-79** talking about the Messiah).
    3. This guides us through a world of darkness, giving us supreme confidence – **Micah 7:7-8** (when speaking of Israel’s sin, and how untrustworthy everyone is – look to the Lord for light)

**Conclusion**

1. As Children of Light:
   1. We must bear the fruit of light and avoid darkness.
   2. We must expose the darkness with the light of God’s word.
   3. We must invite all to come to the light and receive the salvation Christ offers.
2. If we claim to be light, then let us act like light – ***“whatever makes manifest is light.”***