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LIGHT IN THE LORD

Walking in the Grace that has Brought Us from Darkness into Life

Ephesians 5:8–14

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The Christian life begins with remembering. Scripture often calls the people of God to look back with clear and thankful hearts at where we once stood apart from Christ. This remembrance does not trap us in shame. Instead, it magnifies the mercy of God. The apostle Paul reminds believers in Ephesians 2:12 that we were once “separated from Christ... having no hope and without God in the world.” When we reflect honestly on that reality, we begin to understand more deeply the grace that has been shown to us.

In Ephesians 5:8–14, Paul speaks with striking clarity:

“For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

Notice the strength of this statement. Paul does not simply say that we were surrounded by darkness. He says that we *were* darkness. Before the saving work of Christ reached us, sin shaped the direction of our lives. Our thinking, our desires, and our actions all bore its mark. Scripture describes this condition plainly. We were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Our understanding was darkened and we were separated from the life of God (Ephesians 4:18). Apart from God’s mercy we had no power to rescue ourselves.

These words are sobering. They prepare us to see the beauty of the gospel.

God did not leave His people in darkness.

Through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the light of salvation has shone into hearts that were once blind. Paul writes in another place, “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). What we could never bring about through our own strength, God has given through His Son.

Because of Christ, those who once walked in darkness are now described in a remarkable way. Paul says, “you are light in the Lord.”

A New Identity in Christ

This statement reaches deeper than outward conduct. It describes a real transformation. When a person is united with Christ through faith, God grants new life. Scripture speaks of this as new birth and new creation. Those who were spiritually dead are made alive together with Christ.

The Christian life grows out of this new identity. Believers begin learning how to live according to what God has already done in them through Christ. For this reason Paul follows his declaration with a clear command.

“Walk as children of light.”

The life of faith is the grateful response of hearts that have been changed by grace. The believer begins to love what once seemed distant. The truth of God becomes precious. His ways are recognized as good. His Word becomes a lamp that guides the steps of daily life, just as Psalm 119:105 declares.

The Fruit of the Light

Paul then describes the character of this new life.

“The fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true” (Ephesians 5:9).

These three words describe the shape of a life that has been touched by the gospel.

Goodness reflects the kindness and generosity that flow from the character of God. Righteousness speaks of conduct that aligns with the standards of God’s Word. Truth describes a life marked by sincerity and grounded in the reality of Scripture.

This fruit grows as believers seek to “discern what is pleasing to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:10). Over time the heart becomes increasingly attentive to a simple question: What pleases the Lord?

Turning from the Works of Darkness

Paul also addresses the believer’s relationship with sin.

“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them” (Ephesians 5:11).

The works of darkness yield no lasting fruit. Sin offers satisfaction but leaves the soul empty. Paul adds that many of these deeds are so shameful that they are not fit for open discussion (Ephesians 5:12). Sin prefers secrecy. It hides from the light.

The gospel brings something different. The light of Christ reveals what must be brought before God so that forgiveness and healing may follow. The conviction brought by the Holy Spirit is an act of mercy. When the Lord reveals sin in our lives, He is drawing us toward grace.

Many believers recognize this moment well. The Word of God shines into the heart and reveals what must be surrendered to Christ. In that moment we come honestly before the Lord. We confess our need and place our trust once more in the sufficiency of Christ.

There we find rest for our souls.

The Call to Awake

Paul closes this passage with a call that echoes the voice of the gospel.

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you” (Ephesians 5:14).

These words call people out of spiritual sleep and into the light of Christ. For those who have not yet come to Him, the invitation stands open. Turn to Christ and receive the life that He alone gives.

For believers these words remain a steady reminder. The Christian life involves daily turning toward the light of Christ. Each day we trust His truth to shape our hearts and guide our steps in love for God and love for one another.

Living in the Light

Paul’s message in this passage is both humbling and full of hope.

Once we were darkness. Now we are light in the Lord.

Because of that grace, believers remember the mercy that saved them. They pursue the fruit that grows from new life in Christ. They turn away from the works of darkness and walk each day in the light of their Savior.

As Christians live in this way, the power of the gospel becomes visible. Lives shaped by grace point others toward the glory of God. In God's good time, many see that light and glorify the Father who is in heaven.

May the Lord grant His people grace to walk faithfully in that light, trusting in the finished work of Christ and reflecting His goodness for the good of many.



*At the heart of Redeemer's ministry is the pastoral leadership of **Jason K. Boothe**, who serves as pastor of Redeemer Church in Piketon, Ohio. Known for his warm, Gospel-centered preaching and careful exposition of Scripture, Pastor Boothe consistently points listeners to the finished work of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the Christian life. His ministry emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ, the comfort of God's promises, and the assurance believers have through faith alone. Through preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, he seeks to help ordinary people see the extraordinary grace of God at work in His Word and in their daily lives.*

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