

## The Two Paths: Darkness and Light

Ephesians 5:1-8

(Part 1: The Path of Darkness)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. There are only two paths one can **choose** in this world—the path of darkness or the path of light.
  - A. God’s word is very clear and adamant about this. There is no middle ground.
  - B. The path of darkness is that of sin, ignorance, slavery, and death, which is where all people who come the age of accountability, the age where they know sin, find themselves.
  - C. The path of light is that of righteousness, knowledge, freedom, and life; and it is a path that must be chosen.
2. It is important that we know this because until one comes to the realization that they are on the path of darkness, he/she cannot move to the path of light. For, *light* and *life* can only be truly received in Christ by those who know that they are in *darkness*.
- 3. Today I want to talk about one of these two paths, the path of darkness, because that is both biblically and logically the place to begin.
  - A. So, unfortunately, this is not a happy sermon, except that without this knowledge, one cannot be truly happy, seeing one cannot find the salvation in Christ without it.
  - B. I want to approach this by considering:
    - i. Who is in darkness?
    - ii. How those in darkness are **dead men walking**.
    - iii. Those in darkness are **children of wrath** and what that means!

### BODY:

- I. **Who is in darkness?**
  - A. To *just live in this the world* is to be in darkness.
    1. If *all* that you are trying to do is just *live* in this world, to just make it through day by day, *you are in darkness* (Eph. 4:17-19 – “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles [people of the world, rp] also walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being **darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God** because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; <sup>19</sup> and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”).
      - a. To live like everyone else lives is to live in the futility of your mind.
      - b. To do so is to remain in darkness, in ignorance of salvation, excluded from the life of God, mounting up sin after sin.
    2. Until one faces up to this reality, that one remains without hope (Eph. 2:11-12 – “Therefore remember that formerly you, the **Gentiles in the flesh**, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— <sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time **separate from Christ**, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**”).
  - B. It does not matter that you might see yourself as a good/decent person, without saving faith in Jesus, one remains in darkness (Jn. 12:46-48 – “I have come as Light into the world, so that **everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.** <sup>47</sup> If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. <sup>48</sup> He who **rejects Me and does not receive My sayings**, has one who judges him; **the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.**”).
    - 1. Jesus came to get us out of the darkness we were already in!
    - 2. It is faith that accepts and does what Christ’s word says that saves us, that makes that happen.

- 3. To do nothing is to find oneself condemned in darkness by Christ's words.
- **II. Those in darkness are "dead men walking"**
  - A. I use this expression because it refers to a *condemned person walking from their prison cell to the place of execution* (dictionary.com)
    1. It refers to someone that without pardon or some sort of significant intervention, death is imminent.
  - B. This is the state of most upon this earth.
    - 1. Like the condemned prisoner walking to his execution, if you live according to the flesh, or live life outside of Christ, you **are** walking to your **death** (Rom. 8:13 – "for if you are living according to the flesh, **you must die**").
    - 2. If you live like the world, focused on the here and now, you are a dead person walking.
      - a. Eph. 2:1-2 – "And you were **dead** in your **trespasses** and **sins**, <sup>2</sup> **in which** you formerly **walked** [lived] according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."
      - b. 1 Tim. 5:5-6 – "Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. <sup>6</sup> But she who **gives herself to wanton pleasure** is **dead even while she lives.**"
    3. I know the world has been fascinated with the horror of a zombie apocalypse, but the reality of the world walking about as the spiritually dead is far worse!
    - 4. And, unlike the "mindless zombies" on the TV and movie screen, your condition is by choice and only you can choose to change it.
- **III. Those in darkness are "children of wrath"**
  - A. No one wants to come home to the wrath of their parents!
    1. As a child one of the worst things my parents could do was to respond to my disobedience with "You just wait till we get you home! You are going to get it!"
    2. I hated that because it meant that *punishment was certain* and that *I had time to think about it*, to imagine what pain and suffering was coming upon my poor body and/or mind.
    3. What made it worse was when...
      - a. I had been on my best behavior, telling jokes, etc., for some time only to have my mother as we pulled into our driveway say, "You think I have forgotten, don't you?!"
      - b. If that was not enough, salt could be poured in the wound by my siblings snickering while thinking, and maybe even saying, "You're so dead!"
    4. You know why that was so bad? Because coming home with only the expectation of facing my mother's or father's wrath was not the way it should be.
      - a. Home is to be the place of joy, rest, comfort.
      - b. And that is the way my mother and father wanted it to be...for all of us!
  - B. Living in darkness means coming home to face our heavenly Father's wrath.
    1. To live in the darkness outside of Christ's salvation is to live as "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3 – "Among them **we too all formerly lived** in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature **children of wrath**, even as the rest.>").
    2. For those in darkness—those who do not obey Jesus and His gospel—returning home to come before our Father means only the expectation of His wrath.
      - a. Why, because **God's wrath remains** on you. **He is not going to forget!** (John 3:36 – "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who **does not obey** the Son will not see life, but the **wrath of God abides** [stays, dwells, endures] **on him.**").
      - b. Remaining in disobedience means:
        - i. You are storing up God's wrath and indignation against you (Rom. 2:5-8 – "But because of your **stubbornness** and **unrepentant heart** you are **storing up wrath for**

**yourself** in the **day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who will render to each person according to his deeds: <sup>7</sup> to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but to those who are selfishly ambitious and **do not obey the truth**, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath and indignation.**”).

- ii. Facing Christ’s fiery retribution (2 Thess. 1:6-8 – “For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup> and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels **in flaming fire, <sup>8</sup> dealing out retribution** to those who do not know God and to those who **do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**”).
- c. A **word of warning to Christians**, to those of the light: That same expectation of wrath will be ours if we choose not to live faithfully to His Lord (Heb. 10:26-31 – “For if we **go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,** <sup>27</sup> but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” <sup>31</sup> It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”).

● C. God’s wrath means eternal death and darkness

- 1. What a shame for one’s mortal body to be raised from the dead by God’s power seen in Christ’s resurrection...only to be raised to condemnation.
  - a. Jn. 5:26-29 – “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; <sup>27</sup> and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, <sup>29</sup> and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, **those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment** [condemnation, damnation].”
  - b. Matt. 25:31-33, 41, 46 – “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left... <sup>41</sup> “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘**Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...**’ <sup>46</sup> These will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”
- 2. For the disobedient, the disinterested, and the procrastinator, it will be a final, eternal, condemnation of separation from God into the fires of hell.
  - a. For those who do not obey the gospel, it will be eternal destruction away from God, when there could have been glory and wonder (2 Thess. 1:9-10 – “These will **pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup> when He comes to be **glorified in His saints** on that day, and to **be marveled at among all who have believed**—for our testimony to you was believed.”).
  - b. It will mean the horrific and eternal agony of being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8 – “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and

murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, **their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.**”).

CONCLUSION:

1. With such clear and present danger presented by our Lord in His word, why would we...
  - A. Refuse to obey the gospel, knowing that to do this is to choose darkness, death, and eternal punishment?
  - B. Keep quiet about Christ’s pardon when we know our family, friends, and neighbors are “dead men walking,” prisoners of sin walking to their eternal execution?
2. For, God does not want any person’s homecoming to be one of wrath (John 3:16-17 – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge [condemn] the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”).
3. What a shame it would be to waste your body and mind living as **dead men walking**, living only to face God’s wrath!
4. What will you do with Jesus and His pardon of grace? Will you choose to leave the darkness, death, ignorance, and hopelessness of sin and come into the light?
5. God invites you to come to Him today in F-R-C-B-LF? Will you come as we stand and sing?