

The Two Paths: Darkness and Light

Ephesians 5:1-8

(Part 2: The Path of Light)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In our last lesson on this subject, we presented the biblical principle that there are only two paths a person can take in this world—the path of darkness and the path of light.
 - A. We saw how God’s word is very clear about this.
 - B. And there is no middle ground or safe space between the paths one can **choose** to inhabit.
2. In the first lesson we examined the path of darkness and saw how it is...
 - A. The path of least resistance upon which most will walk out their lives, as Jesus said (Matt. 7:13-14 – “Enter through the narrow gate; for **the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.** ¹⁴ For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, **and there are few who find it.**”).
 - B. The path of ignorance, separation from God, and hopelessness (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— ¹² 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.**”).
 - C. The path of “dead men walking,” people walking from their prison cell of their sins to their execution (Eph. 2:1-2 – “And you were **dead** in your **trespasses and sins,** ² **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.”).
 - D. The path of disobedience, unbelief, and God’s wrath (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 on him.**”).
 - E. The path of retribution and eternal condemnation that Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 will come “when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ **dealing out retribution** to those who **do not know God** and to those who **do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** ⁹ These will pay the penalty of **eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”
3. Today I want to turn our attention to the path of light, the narrow way that leads to life, that stands in great contrast to the path of darkness. To do this I want us to consider...
 - A. How this is a path provided by God
 - B. Who is on the path of light?
 - C. What does the path of light offer those who will choose it?
 - D. What does walking on the path of light require?

BODY:

I. God has provided the path of light

- A. In contrast to the path of darkness we put ourselves on by our own sin, God in His grace chose to provide the path of light and life through His Son Jesus (John 12:44-46 – “And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵ He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. ⁴⁶ **I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.**”).
 1. This is different from the path of darkness, seeing entering it is by our doing!
- B. God provided this path because of his love for condemned sinners.
 1. Because of His great love God sent Jesus to give life to “**dead men walking**” (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**.¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but **that the world might be saved through Him**.”).

- a. God chose through Christ to change sinners’ sentence of death to the hope of eternal life!
 - b. They do not have to face condemnation and eternal execution!
2. God sent Jesus though His love was unrequited (1 Jn. 4:9-10 – “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.¹⁰ In this is love, **not that we loved God, but that He loved us** and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”).
 - a. The whole of love in connection with our salvation in Christ was one-sided!
 - b. Man did not love God. It was God’s love of mankind that caused Him to act!
 3. God’s love caused Him to send Jesus that He might justify the sinful and rebellious! (Titus 3:3-7 – “For we also once were **foolish** ourselves, **disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures**, spending our life in **malice** and **envy, hateful**, hating one another.⁴ But when the **kindness** of God our Savior and His **love for mankind appeared**,⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His **mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through **Jesus Christ our Savior**,⁷ so that **being justified by His grace** we would be made heirs according to the **hope of eternal life**.”).
- C. The path of light is the path of God’s love, kindness, mercy, grace, and hope created by God for sinners!

II. Who is on the path of light?

- A. I remind you that the path of darkness and death requires nothing of you.
1. You can just live your life going with the flow and you will find yourself there. For, as Eph. 2:1-2 says, the course of the flow of this world is darkness and death!
 2. For, in living this way you will either sin by doing what you should not, or by not doing what you should, which is why everyone finds him/herself guilty (Rom. 3:23 – “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”).
 3. And, sadly, “...the wages of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23).
- B. Unlike the path of darkness, **one must consciously choose** to walk on the path of light.
1. You must choose to **believe** in the Light, in Jesus, to be a child of light (Jn. 12:35-36 – “So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. **Walk while you have the Light**, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.³⁶ While you have the Light, **believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light**...”).
 2. You must choose to **follow** Jesus to have the Light of life in your life (Jn. 8:12 – “Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; **he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life**.”).
 3. You must choose to **obey** Jesus to walk on the path of life (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 on him**.”).
 - a. Why, because true faith, true belief, requires obedience!
 - i. That is something the religious world needs to learn.
 - ii. But that is also something **we** need to know so that we do not take false comfort in the fact that someone is a “good person” or even is “religious.”
 - iii. Until a sinner obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ, he/she is not saved and will not enter heaven.
 - b. Only those who believe in Jesus enough to follow and obey Him can enter the path of light.

III. What does the path of light offer those who choose it?

- A. Forgiveness of sins (1 Jn. 1:6-7 – “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”).
1. Remember that the price we pay for our sin is death (Rom. 6:23)!
 2. Thus, to offer forgiveness, cleansing from sin to those who will walk in the light is nothing short of amazing.
 - a. We need to ponder God’s forgiveness, to know its magnitude, its wonder, its power to change our hearts and lives.
 - b. For as Peter reminds us in 2 Pet. 1:5-9, **forgiveness** of our former sins is the **reason** for conforming our lives and character to Christ’s will.
- B. Mercy, love, and salvation instead of wrath, life and glory instead of death (Eph. 2:3-8 – “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.** ⁴ But God, **being rich in mercy**, because of **His great love with which He loved us,** ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),** ⁶ and **raised us up** with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.**”).
- C. Justification for the ungodly, and reconciliation for God’s enemies (Rom. 5:6-11 – “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood,** we shall be **saved from the wrath of God through Him.** ¹⁰ For if **while we were enemies** we were **reconciled to God through the death of His Son,** much more, having been reconciled, we shall be **saved by His life.** ¹¹ And not only this, but **we also exult** in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now **received the reconciliation.**”).
- D. What an amazing God! Would not you want Him to be your God today?!

IV. What does walking in the light require?

- A. One must leave the darkness and seek the light.
1. Scripture:
 - a. Rom. 13:11-14 – “Do this, **knowing the time,** that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us **lay aside the deeds of darkness** and **put on the armor of light.** ¹³ Let us **behave properly as in the day,** not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh** in regard to its lusts.”
 - b. 1 Thess. 5:4-11 – “But you, brethren, are **not in darkness,** that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for **you are all sons of light and sons of day.** We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of the day, **let us be sober,** having **put on the breastplate of faith and love,** and as a helmet, the **hope of salvation.** ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether

we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”).

2. So, as those who walk in light, we must...
 - a. *Know the time* of your life, that you are living in the time between the ascension of Christ and His return for judgment or salvation. And how you live will determine which one!
 - b. Be aware that the “night,” the time of sin and immorality, is almost gone, and the “day,” the time of the light of eternal salvation, is near.
 - i. How could this be said when that was 2000 years ago?
 - ii. Well, with every day spent, the time for either evil’s end/punishment, or of righteousness’ eternal reign/reward is much nearer in our lives.
 - c. With these things being true, we must awake from the sleepiness of sin and...
 - i. **Put away** sinful deeds, like carousing/drinking parties, and drunkenness, sexual immorality, unbridled lust, as well as strife/contention and jealousy!
 - ii. **Put on** the armor, or literally *weapons*, of light, or that which conforms to God’s will and is described here as soberness, faith, love, and hope of salvation.
 - 1) In other words, know that you are in a battle for your eternal life!
 - 2) Carelessness and lack of vigilance on the battlefield generally means death!
 - iii. **On** the Lord Jesus Christ, or His ways of goodness, truth, and righteousness, and make no provision for the flesh, or do not make it easy to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
- B. One must leave behind their close fellowship with those who walk in darkness.
 1. Scriptures:
 - a. Eph. 5:6-16 – “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore **do not be partakers with them;** ⁸ for **you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light** ⁹ (for the **fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth**), ¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ **Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness,** but instead even **expose them;** ¹² for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴ For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.” ¹⁵ Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”
 - b. 2 Cor. 6:14-17 – “**Do not be bound together with unbelievers;** for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or **what fellowship has light with darkness?** ¹⁵ Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or **what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?** ¹⁶ Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹⁷ **“Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.”**
 2. There is to be a change in our inner circle.
 - a. Why, because close, unguarded interaction with those in darkness will lead you back into darkness (1 Cor. 15:33-34 – “Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” ³⁴ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”).
 - b. And, if you live as you should, those friends of your past darkness will think you strange anyway (1 Pet. 4:1-5 – “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

² so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³ For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. ⁴ In all this, **they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;** ⁵ but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”)

CONCLUSION:

1. With these things said I have something to say to...
 - A. Those who are in the path of light. If you are there, know the value of the path of light God has opened for you in His mercy and grace found in Christ Jesus!
 - i. Do not forget the forgiveness, reconciliation, life, and glory offered you on this path, and how with each step you come closer to your eternal reward of life with God in heaven!
 - ii. And when sin is tempting you to return, remember the words of Paul (Rom. 6:20-22 – “For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? **For the outcome of those things is death.** ²² But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, **resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.**”).
 - B. Those anyone who has ever sinned and has not obeyed Jesus Christ to become a Christian, you are in darkness and with each day you come closer to death and eternal condemnation.
 - i. So, I plead with you to trust Jesus as your Savior, that you show your faith by obeying through confession of Jesus as your risen Lord, by repenting of sin, and by being baptized into Christ so that your sins can be forgiven through the blood of Christ.
 - C. Those who may be Christians but have been seduced by sin to leave the path of light, I plead with you to come back today by repenting of and confessing your sin, while also seeking God’s forgiveness, whether for private sin which can be taken care of in private, or for public sin, which you must address publicly.
2. Will you leave the darkness and enter the path of light and life today?