

Sermon March 22

May the Grace, Mercy, and Peace of Christ Jesus rest upon each and every one of you.
Amen.

The basis of my sermon this is Ephesians 5:8-14

8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light* **9** *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)* **10** *and find out what pleases the Lord.* **11** *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.* **12** *It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.* **13** *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.* **14** *This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

I was not going to use this reading as my text for my sermon, until all that has happened due to the Corona Virus took place.

A great challenge for us to be lights of Christ in these interesting and challenging times!

Light and Darkness is something we deal with every day.

We deal with it physically as night turns to day and day back to night.

We deal with its spiritual side as we see what the world is capable of doing.

We see the darkness in the actions of people and in the virus which has been allowed to change our lives in a very big way.

A virus which has its origins in the affects of sin brought into God's perfect creation by Adam and Eve.

It is the spiritual realm of Light and darkness and its effects on our world that I want to deal with in my sermon.

Spiritual darkness is being eternally separated from God. Separated from His Love, strength, forgiveness and presence not only while on earth but for all eternity in hell.

Spiritual darkness clouds the mind, the heart and eventually the soul.

Spiritual darkness permeates everything and everyone. It distorts the value God has placed on human beings. It distorts a persons perception of who is to be most important in their lives.

Spiritual darkness is all about me, myself, and I.

Spiritual Light is the opposite. It is emulating Christ the Light of the world who came, not to be served..... but to serve!

We have seen how Christ, the light of the world, has been dimmed and spiritual darkness has focused people inward.

Amazing to see just in the last few days, empty shelves in store after store, due to greed, I Need, I Want, I can not do without, I don't care if others get any or not! I am sure you have heard of the stock piling of hand sanitizer, toilet paper, water etc.

We see it in the reality that those who actually need certain things can not find it or buy it even though they have money.

It is times like this when the light of Christ needs to shine even brighter!

It needs to shine because when the Light of Christ shines there is no darkness and His love is seen as one on one people help people. I am sure you have seen these stories also! Donations to hospitals, food banks, etc.

The darkness of sin and all its effects are clearly exposed and in Christ and His love in and through His children. In the love and Light of Christ darkness is defeated.

So How does this Light shine? Through the perfect? Holier than thou!? NO through You, but you need to remember where you started so you can shine as the light of Christ even brighter- verse 8 *For you were once darkness,*

Notice Paul's statement! You were **Darkness!**

He did not say, "like", "part", "somewhat" *darkness!*

He stated- You were **Darkness!** God was NOT in you and you were NOT a part of God! YOU were sin, lived in sin, enjoyed sin and..... Dead in your SIN!

And even more.....you liked it that way! John 3:19-20 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.*

By nature you were condemned to eternal death, i.e. hell

By nature you did not want anything to do with Christ, the Light!

In your sin, you knew that if you came close to that light, ALL your sin would be seen by HIM the all knowing God and Lord!

He, The Light, would shine (and still does) into the deepest crevasses of your sinful thoughts, feelings and actions.....And He would point out all too clearly every sin you have ever done!

He would make it clear that YOU MUST acknowledge your sin, repent of your sin, and turn away from that sin you enjoy so much, in and through the work of the Holy Spirit.

In His Light Christ had to enter your darkness and show you vividly that you were spiritually dead! You were outside of God's grace, love and forgiveness!

You were destined to hear the words of Christ on Judgment Day - "I NEVER KNEW YOU!"

On that final judgment day you would be on your way to rightfully inheriting the eternal judgment of Hell!

That fact should send chills right down to the very core of your eternal soul.

If it does, you are ready to look at a little more of verse 8 ***For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.***

Again notice Paul's words! "Were Once", "But Now"!

A Change has taken place and it is just as powerful! He did not say, "like", "Might be", "could be"- Paul's words are YOU.....ARE.....LIGHT!

In the Grace of God you have been given a new nature! The nature of Christ, the Light of the World! You have been changed from the darkness of Satan, to His Light! His Child of righteousness.

It is Christ the Light, who came into the darkness of this world to be its Savior and Lord!

It is Christ who was raised up on a cross by His Heavenly Father, for the world to see as He gave His sacrifice for the sin of the world!

And In the Glorious Light of His Easter Victory, God the Heavenly Father proclaimed to all who would believe in His Son as Savior and Lord,.....It is ***In that Living Light, Jesus Christ, that you over come the darkness of this sinful world and live in an eternal light!***

It was Christ who came into the darkness of your heart to be YOUR Saviorand by faith He IS Your Light and Life!!

That is the light you are now a part of!

In Christ, You are no longer in the outer darkness of unbelief! You are no longer outside the boundaries of His Grace!

In the Light of Christ, you have life here on earth and You will live for all eternity in the Joy and presence, of God your heavenly Father!

That Light and victory in you, allows you to live in a different way than the world you live in, but not to be a part of!

That is the challenge of verses 8 & 9 *Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)*

In the times of today as it has through out all time, the light of Christ in you is to shine for all to see!

The Light of Christ is not to be hidden or even dimmed!

In Christ your Lord you are able to live your faith which shines in all that it does.

Reaching out to those in need in the same way He has blessed you!

There are many ways you can add to the darkness as people horde, clean out shelves and panic.....

But there many more ways to shine the light of Christ, like the single match lit deep in the total darkness of a cave....

By being aware of the physical needs of those around who can't or shouldn't go out.

By giving out of the blessings and abundance God has given to you.

By lifting people up in prayer. Phone calls out of the blue to break up another day spent in the same four walls.

Many ways to let your light shine!.....

BUT the best way of letting your light shine is

living each day in the confidence of faith which KNOWS that Christ the Light has overcome the darkness of this world.

That Christ has promised to be with you through all trials and temptations.

That Christ has given you victory over all that the world can do to you.

In your shining light may the Holy Spirit work in those who are watching you, learning from you and wondering what is different about you in these dark and different days as you to bring the Light of Christ into their lives in a way only you can as God's Light!

14 This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Know and be comforted as Christ shines on you through faith!

May His Light and grace keep you strong in body and in spirit!

May His light shine warmth into your heart and give you confidence in these uncertain times, because He is in control of all things and knows your every need and will fulfill them.

May Christ the Lord shine through you on all around you in the days ahead and everyday. Amen.

We pray.

Dear Heavenly Father we ask that You continue to guide our national, state, and local leaders with the light of Your insight during this time of sickness. We ask that you continue to be with and strengthen all in the health care industry, keep them healthy as they care for those who have been affected by the virus. Our prayer is that the virus and its affects decrease instead of increase.

Continue to be with all those in our congregation who have recently had surgeries, Neal, Dawn, Bria, Austin, give them healing and strength and keep them healthy as their bodies use energy to heal and mend.

Continue to be with others being challenged by various things, David, Betty, Jeff, Wendy and those You are aware of but we are not!

Keep all of your children strong in faith and strong in witness, that the Light of Your Son and all that He did for all people of all time, can be seen clearly, proclaimed boldly and lived clearly before a world still in the darkness of sin and its effects.

We pray this in the name of Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray.....Continue with the Lord's Prayer and any other personal requests you may have.

Take Care in the love and blessings of your Heavenly Father, Pastor Dan