

Good Morning; This Is Your Wakeup Call

Ephesians 5:1-14

The Third Sunday in Lent

February 24, 2008

It does seem odd to preach on waking up when we are in an evening service. On the other hand, the growing darkness outside the Chapel reminds us of the true nature of conversion. Once we were darkness, Paul tells us, but now we are light in the Lord. May I ask you, what is more powerful, darkness or light? “The light shone in the darkness and the darkness could not overcome it” (John 1:5).

I. *Leaving the Darkness Behind* – Ephesians 5:1-6

A. Our New Identity – Three Honorable Names: Ephesians 5:1, 3, 8

1. Beloved children
2. Saints
3. Light in the Lord
 - Who we are arises from what we believe and leads to how we behave.

B. Our Old Ways – Six Detestable Practices: Ephesians 5:3-5

1. Immorality (Porneia)
2. Impurity (Defilement, probably with pagan temple prostitution)
3. Covetousness (The discontented soul still looking to slake its thirst urges on the immoral); note: Job 20:20
4. Filthiness (Obscenity – this a word that joins the previous practices with the ones to come, sins of sensuality with sins of the mind and mouth)
5. Foolish Talk (Morologia – a moronic talker; in Proverbs, the “fool” is not simply ignorant or untaught, but dangerously unteachable, dissolute, and determined to live as a parasite and danger to all around him).
6. Crude Joking – the lowest form of wit, often in our beauty-despising culture, producing the highest paychecks in the Entertainment Industry.
 - At the root of this catalogue of destruction – Idolatry. Always, always, always the false worship of the true God and the true worship of false gods leads to desolation and the disintegration of the human persons and society. Ephesians 5:5

C. Our Future Certainty – The Day of Judgment: Ephesians 5:5-6

1. God’s judgment is both temporal and eternal, and both are in view here.
 - future: v. 5
 - present: v. 6
2. God’s judgment is always perfectly just
3. God’s judgment is only avoided in Christ who is the “fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” – Ephesians 5:2

II. *Living in the Light of Christ* – Ephesians 5:7-14

A. Embracing Good Company – Ephesians 5:7

B. Enjoying the Beautiful – Ephesians 5:8-10

- The world is confused; they wrongly imagine our hatred of the abuse of God’s good gifts is a hatred of the gift itself.
 - Minister to the Prostitute: “You’re charging far too low a price.”
- On the contrary, we rejoice in all of God’s glorious and beautiful gifts. Sexuality, Food, Friends, Celebration, Nature, Learning, Music and all the Arts – in all these we rejoice.

- Yet the greedy use of others for personal gain and pleasure we reject; the supremacy of these creaturely gifts over the Creator we reject; we know who has made us and to whom we shall return and render an account for the deeds we have done with our bodies and the stewardship of the resources with which our good God entrusted us.
- C. Embodying the Light of Grace – Ephesians 5:11-13
- We don't expose the darkness by pointing a finger, but by celebrating the gifts of life. "Look at that! A man who rejoices in his wife! Look! A woman content with her home, husband, and children! Look! People who share and give, rather than manipulate and take. Amazing!" Not all will rejoice, but all must see.

III. *Listening for the Alarm* – Ephesians 5:14

Yes, it is dark outside tonight. Yet, because of God's lovely grace there is light in Goshen, though there be darkness in Egypt (Exodus 10:22-23). We are light; let us live the light. Be the hands and mouth of Christ to those yet in darkness, and turn them to the light, before it is too late.