

LIVING BY EXAMPLE Sunday School- December 23, 2012

Unifying Topic: LIVE IN THE LIGHT

Lesson Text

I. The Word And The Light (John 1:1-5)

II. Imitating God's Love (Ephesians 5:1-2)

III. Walking In The Spirit (Ephesians 5:6-14)

The Main Thought: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. (Ephesians 5:1, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People sometimes think their thoughts, fears, and actions are hidden or secrets from others. What happens when these secrets are exposed to the light? The writer of Ephesians tells us that as Christians we always live in Christ's light that overcomes all kinds of darkness, and the wise men received a light into their lives when they found the baby Jesus and were overwhelmed with joy.

Lesson Aim: To examine Paul's admonishment toward holy living in the Christian community of Ephesus.

Life Aim: To help learners appreciate living in the light of Christ as an example for others.

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

5:6 That Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

HISTORY:

Christ as our example came with humble and simple beginnings. His life was already great in heaven; in eternity. He came in the flesh and He offers eternal life to us. John makes it clear that Jesus is not just a man who would be our best example of living life that honors Him, He is the eternal Son of God; fully God. Jesus is able to reveal to us God clearly and accurately. He is the light of the world because He offers this gift of eternal life to all mankind. The Light of the world will reveal and offer the right light, which causes us to live right. If we are children of God, then we ought to imitate our Father and walk as children of the light.

LESSON:

John 1:1-5 The Word And The Light

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, — John starts his book in the same way the Bible starts and says, "*In the BEGINNING...*" (Gen.1:1). When time began the "Word" was already in existence. How was John going to present Christ so that a Gentile could understand? The answer lay in the idea of the Word, for the Word was understood by both Gentile and Jew.

- The Jews saw the word as something more than a mere sound. It was power—it possessed the power to express something, to do something. This is seen in the many Old Testament references where the Word of God was seen as the creative power of God, the power that made the world and gave light and life to every man (Gen.1:3, 6, 11; Ps.33:6; 107:20; 147:15; Is.55:11).

- The Gentiles or Greeks saw the word more philosophically. Therefore, they said that behind the world was a mind, a reason, a power that made and kept things in their proper place. This creative and sustaining mind, this supreme reason, this unlimited power was said to be the "Word." The "Word" was also seen as the power that enabled men to think and reason.

1. The first thing John wants us to understand is that **in the beginning the Word was here**, therefore, Eternal—Preexistent—to exist before something else; before Creation. When time began, the "Word" had always existed. This is "Word's" relation to time. I need to not get ahead of myself, but we will come to see that the Word is Jesus. Well, maybe I need to make that clear now!

- The "Word" is a Person and the "Word" also means the Message of the Gospel He gives. John wrote about the life this Person gives and what He produces through the Good News.
- The "Word", always existed. He was alive before time and the world began. The "Word" and the message of life came from God. This was God's purpose from before Creation that the "Word" would come into the world to achieve the purpose of Creation for the world and man.

1:1b ...and the Word was with God —

2. Second, *The Word was with God*, therefore, He Coexistent—exist together or at the same time; having the idea of both being with and acting toward...—This is the "Word's" relation to the Godhead.

The words "**with God**" could be rendered "*face to face with God*." ¹The name "God" is common to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, whereas "*the Father*" is the special title of the first Person only. John writes about Jesus in the hopes of convincing both Jews and Gentiles who had not yet decided what to believe about Jesus of Nazareth. He wanted to convince them that Jesus was the Son of God—the Savior of the World, not just a mere man.

1:1c ...and the Word was God — Third, "*the Word was God*", therefore the Revealer—This is Christ's relation to the Holy Trinity. John concludes the verse with an emphatic statement that the "Word" was completely God. This shows the Deity of God. Jesus Himself said, "*The Father and I are ONE; he that has seen ME has seen THE FATHER.*" (John 10:20; 14:9). He is from the beginning. In His glory He was "*with God*." In His nature He "*was God*."

1:2 **The same was in the beginning with God.** — Christ existed in the beginning, was long before being born of Mary. He was Self-existent— Christ was, eternally, "with God existing in the beginning and owing His existence to no one.

1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1. Christ is the Creator—This verse establishes Christ as the subject of Creation and not the object of Creation. He was the Creator not the created.

"All things" (*panta*) mean every detail of Creation. Each element and thing, each being and person—whether, angelic or human—has come into being by Christ. The words "**were made**" (*egeneto*) means, *came into being or became*. Note what this is saying, Nothing was existing—no substance, no matter whatsoever. God did not take something outside of Himself; something less than perfect (evil) and create the world. He took nothing; created every single thing out of "*nothing*" (*ex nihilo*) and spoke it into existence. Christ was the active Agent; the Person who became what was spoken by the Spirit's power. The words "**not anything**" (*oude hen*) mean not even one thing, not a single thing, not even a detail was made apart from Him. Therefore, *without Him nothing was made*.

1:4 In him was life; —

2. Christ is Life — In Him was life— the power to exist. Life is in Him, within His very being. All things exist and have their being (life) in Him.

- a. Life is the quality and essence and principle of being.
- b. Life is purpose, meaning significance of being.
- c. Life is perfection; all that man must be and possess in order to live perfectly. The distinct thing about life is that it is eternal; it lasts forever. It manifests and illuminates.

1:4b ...and the life was the light of men.

¹ http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/John/john_02.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

3. Jesus Christ is the light of men — This light gives everything the power to be. If a person receives this Light, it gives them the power to receive eternal life. He is their "*light*" both physical and spiritual. This relation pertains to man being in Christ. He is the way to life; He is the truth of life; and He is the very substance of life!

1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.— Since man had brought darkness into the world (by sin), the life of Christ was the light of man, the beam that showed man the way, the truth, and the life. Christ is the answer to darkness. The verb "*shineth*" (*Gr phainō*) is the Greek present tense. Christ, who was the Light, continues to shine as the Light. The darkness referred to here is the unbelief and sin of mankind. The darkness could not grasp, comprehend, put out or seize with hostile intent. Darkness was not able to put out the Light.

Ephesians 5:1-2 Imitating God's Love

5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;— Just imagine, the great pattern for the believer is God Himself. The believer is to follow the Person of God. To follow God he is to first become a follower of God. The idea is that of commitment, attaching oneself to God; surrender and devotion; bear allegiance to, be attentive, and then, begin to follow after God. The focus has to be on God to be able to grow in the likeness of God's image as His dear children. We are to resemble who we're following.

5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. Our walk is our lifestyle; what we practice. Our walk should be practiced and lived in love. Christ is our greatest example as He showed tremendous love in following His Father in giving Himself to the cross. This was His offering of love; His sacrifice was of a sweet smelling savour unto God. The idea of sacrifice to the Jewish and pagan mind of that day was the idea of a life given in another's place. And that's what Christ did for us. The words "*Christ gave Himself...an offering...to God for a sweet smelling savour (smell)*" gives a higher meaning to the death of Christ than just meeting our need. In giving Himself as an offering to God, Christ honored and glorified God. God had been terribly dishonored by the first man, Adam, and by all those who followed after him. That would not happen with the Son, Jesus Christ! The point is: the believer is to walk in love, just as Christ has. There is to be no limit to the offering and sacrifice of our lives to God and to men. Remember: God's love is an acting love.

NOT A PART OF THE LESSON (5:3-5)—

²If we are going to walk in love we must abstain from evil practices (v. 3). He warns us against the sexual sins (fornications) which were so prevalent in that day and still are today. Then he lists covetousness which is only a different expression of the same basic sin which is an uncontrolled appetite. People who have sinful appetites usually also have sinful speech. Warren Wiersbe says, "*two indications of a person's character are what makes him laugh and what makes him weep.*" This means, conversation that is offensive to Christian decency, and makes light of sin. The gift of wit is a blessing but attached to a sinful mind it becomes a curse. Don't use dirty or foolish or filthy words. Instead, say how thankful you are (v. 4). At the time Paul was writing this there were false Christians who argued that believers could live in sin and get away with it. He makes it clear that people who deliberately live in sin will not share in God's kingdom (v. 5). These warnings deal with the habitual practice of sin and not a one-time act such as David.

Ephesians 5:6-14 Walking In The Spirit

5:6 That Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. There are deceivers walking all around us. There are people who will tell us...

- sex is the normal and natural thing for man—that a one-time affair will not hurt—that it is acceptable and will not harm us. It's innocent pleasure; it's my weakness, and don't forget, others do it, nothing happened to them.
- securing possessions is normal behavior and banking and storing up is acceptable. It builds position, ego, and self-image; getting to get.

These people love to twist the truth, justify wrong doing, and assure us that God is too kind to do anything to us. These would be vain hopeless, worthless, empty, and misleading words. "*Stop*" (a Greek present imperative) letting anyone (false teachers) trick, con, or misinform you with groundless arguments of the character and consequences

² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/ephesians-51/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

of sins mentioned from vv.3-5. For sin will reach its highest peak when we will call evil good and good evil (Is.5:20). The wrath of God is real and will surely come upon the children of disobedience. The Greek present tense implies its certainty and its imminence. These are they who selfishly and fleshly abandon all moral and religious restraints.

5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. Stop being a partaker with the children of disobedience. By separating oneself from the unclean, you grow closer to God. Darkness and light do not mix. Separation is important because...

- close association influences our lives and pull us into evil.
- we can only impact the world for God if our Christian lives are real and strikingly different.

However, in separating we are to avoid two things:

1. We must not think that separation from sin means isolation from people. The salt must come out of the shaker to do its work; being in the world but not of it.
2. We must not become self-righteous, contrasting ourselves with the sinners' outside, as the Pharisees did (Lk.18:9-14). We have to remember that we are still sinners saved by grace and that we need God's patience daily. A self-righteous, judgmental attitude will kill our ability to reach people for Christ.

5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:— Paul had to remind them that they used to be in darkness, but are now in unison with Him who is light. Darkness and light represent evil and good. Darkness meant they were at a time ignorant of God's Word. They had not come into the Light of knowing Jesus Christ. It describes the character of the life of the unconverted as void of truth and virtue in intellectual and moral matters. The realm of darkness is presided by the "*power of darkness*." Apart from God is darkness and no man knows the truth. But now the people have come into the light of the Lord, walking as children of light. That means the light has been immersed into our very nature. They are the embodiment of light itself; in unison with Him who is light. Truth has been enlightened within the believer. We are to walk possessed by the Light and radiating the Light.

5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)— The light bears all good things—the fruit of the Spirit. This speaks of that which is produced by walking in the light. A life that will illuminate light will give off three things in this verse.

1. Goodness is love in action; moral excellence, benevolence in thought, word, and deed.
2. Righteousness is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men; moral rectitude, integrity, and rightness as God sees it and in relation to man.
3. Truth— moral reality, honesty, sincerity, and straightforwardness, as opposed to all that is false.

Fruit grows in a natural way. It is its nature to grow when in the Light of the Lord.

5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. ³The desire of a true Christian is to please God in all that they do, and all that they are. With the Holy Spirit guiding, all our fruit would be pleasing to God. By so living you will make a fair trial of what is acceptable to the Lord. As we walk in the light of the truth, the knowledge of the Lord's Will becomes clear. Paul also states that after presenting ourselves as living sacrifices... "*...we prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect Will of God*" (Rom.12:1, 2). Everything the believer does is to be "*unto the Lord*."

5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,— Paul's instruction is plain and direct. Christians are to faithfully live in righteousness and purity and have nothing at all to do with the evil ways and works of Satan. These works of darkness yield no profit or reward. Darkness suggests actions and habits characteristic to a life of sin. And sin destroys the fruit of those living in the light. **...but rather reprove them.** Our task is to live and reflect so much light that all the works of darkness around are exposed and expelled. One's life reproveth (*exposes, rebukes, and convicts*) people of their sins and dark works. Remember, when light appears, the darkness is always extinguished in a room. But if the light leaves or is turned off, the darkness reappears. We must also bear fruit—the right kind which brings the sin to light to expose, rebuke, and convict it.

³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/ephesians/09.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. Many have done evil by exciting improper feelings, and then to speak of it would be offensive and shameful. These references may be to the vices which were secretly practiced in those days or even now. In the days of our parents or grandparents certain things were not discussed in front of children or mixed company. Certain words were not even said in front of our elders. You watched what you said because it brought shame to even say those things. But today explicit words and images pour out into our homes and through the airways. Just because it comes forth, it does not have to come forth from our mouths. Therefore, Christians are not to have anything to do with the works of darkness. He must not even dabble in or talk about the things others have done secretly. It brings shame even to mention those evil things. The description creates polluting images before the imagination. If you know of someone else's secret sin, it doesn't warrant you to speak of it, but we are to show the grace that God shows.

5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Light reveals and converts everything it touches. It makes things clear. The wicked hide their worst deeds in the dark, but the righteous show up the deeds of darkness for what they are. That is one reason Christians are resented by many unbelievers. Even if we said nothing our lives are suppose to manifest the light on the lives of the wicked. Lives are to be converted and changed by the light. So long as evil is done in secret it thrives, but when it is dragged out of the dark corners and closed rooms into the light, it dies.

5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. The unbelieving sinner is like someone asleep who doesn't understand what is happening. In his sins he is spiritually dead, but he arises to life as he comes into Christ. Light awakens the sleeping, those who are spiritually dead. Remember this passage is written to believers. Too many professing believers are passing through life just like unbelievers—asleep—living in the darkness of spiritual sleep and spiritual death—fellowshipping with and too often participating in the works of darkness. We get lethargic and unconcerned. Awake—come out of your sleep. Arise—come up from lifeless death. And Christ shall give light. He showed proof to us by His resurrection that there is a God and He has victory over death

SUMMARY:

John 1:1-5—⁴The plainest reason why the Son of God is called the Word, seems to be, that as our words explain our minds to others, so was the Son of God sent in order to reveal His Father's mind to the world. What the evangelist says of Christ proves that He is God. He asserts, His existence in the beginning; His coexistence with the Father. The Word was with God. All things were made by Him, and not as an instrument. Without Him was not any thing made that was made, from the highest angel to the meanest worm. This shows how well qualified He was for the work of our redemption and salvation. This eternal Word, this true Light shines, but the darkness comprehends it not.

Ephesians 5:1-2—⁵Paul continues his discussion on the conduct of believers. He says that each Christian should be an imitator of God because he is a child of God (v.1). Just as children imitate their parents, so should a believer imitate God. This should begin by walking in Christ-like love (v.2). Jesus' love was shown as He gave Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God which was like a sweet smelling perfume. We are to be imitating God's love.

Ephesians 5:6-14— Don't let anyone trick you with foolish talk because the anger of God punishes the children of disobedience (v.6). ⁶Having passed from darkness to light in coming to Christ, we should also "walk as children of light". This includes producing the fruit of the Spirit such as goodness, righteousness and truth, thereby demonstrating what is acceptable to the Lord. We cannot participate in the shameful works of darkness, but instead must expose them. This we do by letting Christ's light shine in us, for such light will naturally make the darkness manifest by way of contrast (vv.7-14).

APPLICATION:

Be the light that God is calling for in a world of darkness. As we are being a light we are being examples imitating the One who lives within us. The Word and the Light go together. As we use the Word of God the light flows from us.

⁴ <http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?b=43&c=1&com=mhc>

⁵ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/ephesians-51/>

⁶ http://executableoutlines.com/ep/ep_05.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>