



Sermon – August 8, 2021
Tim Skaggs

Verses Covered This Week

Ephesians 5:8 – 15

John 17:15 – 18

2 Corinthians 4:6

Romans 12:1 - 2

The Bible says that the world without the light of Jesus is in darkness. It says that people without the light of Jesus walk in darkness. And I really wish that we could get it darker than this. Because without the light of Jesus, darkness is the reality of people who walk in darkness without the light of Christ. They are without hope. They cannot find their way. They are lost. But Paul's going to challenge us today and he will say, "You are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." And if we walk well as children of light, here's what's going to happen. As He shines on us and through us, the Holy Spirit goes to work, they can move from darkness to light. Now listen, we're on a broken planet, we live and work among broken people. Part of darkness is the broken planet. But in this particular passage, which is Ephesians 5, verses 8 through 14, it's not so much how we relate to a broken world. Paul's going to show us how we relate to broken people. We're going to read it in just a moment, but the text is Ephesians 5:8 through 14.

Now let me give you an example of what I'm talking about on how we relate to broken people. Let's say you're at work and your co-worker tells a racially insensitive joke, maybe an off-color joke, maybe they used foul language, maybe even you're sitting at your office and you get, through social media, an e-mail or a text that is inappropriate. How do you respond? Do you ignore it? Do you just laugh it off? Just pretend they didn't say it? Do you walk away or do you rebuke them? Now I know many of you in here and some of you, I won't name any names, move pretty much straight to rebuke. So how do we relate to them? I've tried rebuke when it was 17-years-old and worked at a business. There was, it was a parts store, there were some customers there and I went to the back to get the parts and when I left, Buddy, who was the boss's son, was sitting there doing what he normally does, using foul language, cussing pretty much every other word. When I came back, Buddy's still talking and he's still cussing every other word. And for some reason, it really bothered me more that day than other days. And he's in front of about four customers. When he finally took a breath, this is what I said. Buddy, are you having a bad day or are you just short of vocabulary? He's the boss's son. Did you hear

me? I'm a 17-year-old wet behind the ears kid. Now I just thought I'd heard Buddy cuss up to that point. But I really heard him cuss then. I can't believe I wasn't fired. But that's what I'm saying. We need to know how to respond to people. This Scripture, this text today will help us know how to relate to people. People walking in darkness. Look at what it says beginning in verse 8 of Ephesians 5.

⁸for you were formally darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

And if we can bring a little bit of the house lights up in case people need to read, will that be helpful? We didn't practice this so let me help them out. Love ya, folks in the back. Thank you.

⁸for you were formally darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light consists in all that goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them. ¹²For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we love You, we desperately need Your truth today and always. And I pray that You would help us to clearly see what it is to walk as children of light. That we would not just hear it, we would believe it, and we would live it out for the good of the world and for Your glory. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Now look at verse 8 as it starts us off. For you were formally darkness, but now you, look at this, are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Some translations say, you were once in darkness. But the point is, you are now are light. Not that you once were in darkness now you're in the light. But we are light. Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father. He's no longer on the planet. You're on the planet, His Holy Spirit is in you, so you are the light of this world. In a, Jesus is the only hope but I want you to hear me, but He's shining on you and through you so you are the hope of the world to walk as children of light. So that is a huge responsibility. If we live in a dark world among people who walk in darkness, it's a huge responsibility we have that we are now ambassadors for Jesus and we are, not just in light, we are light in the Lord.

So let me give you a few thoughts when thinking about being light in a dark world. Here's the first thing. There are two wrong extremes about how to live among broken people. One is over here. We're trying too hard to relate. When Paul says, be all things to all men that you might win some, we're thinking, "I just want to blend in. I just want to win the right to be heard." So you can go to the extremes over here and the world can suck you in. Over here we over emphasize something else. The passage that says, come out and be separate. And so we withdraw from the world, we recoil from the world so much, I don't want to be any part of this broken planet, much like our Amish brothers and sisters or the Monastics, we pull away. Now here's the problem. We cannot live out Matthew 5 if we live over here. Matthew 5 says, you're to be salt and light to this world. And we can't do that if we so pull away from the world. So we

need to strike a balance. And as always, Jesus is always our best example. How do we strike a balance? And in John 17, verses 15 through 18, look what Jesus says as He's praying His high-priestly prayer to Father God in behalf of His disciples which would be passed on to you and me. This prayer is not just for His disciples in that day, but it's for all of His disciples who ever lived on the earth. Now look what He's saying. He's praying for us.

¹⁵I am not asking you take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸Just as You sent me into the world, I also sent them into the world.

Now this is the passage, if you're wondering, we've heard this saying all our life, that as Christians we are to be in the world, but what, not of the world. We're to be in the world, not of the world. Someone didn't just think of that and put it on a bumper sticker. Hey, that's a great idea. It's found in John 17. The high priestly prayer of Jesus. So we know that that is the balance. So if we're to be light as we're in the world but not of the world, what does it mean to be light? 2 Corinthians 4:6 will help us with this. I'm just giving a little more of an introduction before we get into the text. Look what he says. Here's what it means to be light. If I'm to walk as a child of light, I've got to know what it looks like. Here's what it says. 2 Corinthians 4:6

⁶For God who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," as the one who has, here it is, shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, look at this, in the face of Christ.

So here's what it means to shine as light. In the face of Christ, the glory of the knowledge of God so that the way I live in this world doesn't shine on me. It doesn't point people to me and my morality. I know a lot of moral people who are not followers of Jesus. They're good people. So it doesn't mean that I'm to shine the light on me so they see my morality or my goodness; it shines so that others see Jesus. That's exactly what it means. To be light is I want to every day go, "Heavenly Father, I want to shine today that everyone will see Your Son. Not me, but they will see Your Son." And then the third thing is the main point on how to live out being in the world but not of the world. This is the cliff notes version of this sermon. If you're going this week and they said, "Hey, I didn't get to go to church and I hear Tim preached, what did, what did the preacher say?" Well, we're to be, here's what you tell them, we're to be in the world but not of the world and here's how you do it. You walk as children of light, you expose deeds of darkness. That is point one and point two to the sermon today. You walk as children of light and you expose deeds of darkness.

Now let's look at what it means. If you're walking as a child of light, if we are 4 things will be true of us. They're found in verses 9 and 10. Let me read them to you again. For the fruit of the light, in other words, the way we help point people to Jesus, the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth. And then a fourth thing in verse 10, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Now here's the first thing. If I'm walking as a child of light, number one, I will be good. If we walked as children of light, number one, we will be good. Now it says the fruit of light consists in all goodness. And that Greek word means a rightness of heart, watch this, and life, meaning the way you live it out. The highest expression is how we relate to others. Philippians 2, let each esteem others better than themselves. Don't look out for your own

interests, but look out for the interests of others. I want to have this goodness of Jesus planted in me by the Holy Spirit of God so that I think more of others than I do myself. And I am, it's very specific, goodness is talking about, I'm good to other people. It's how I relate to other people. That's the goodness it's talking about. And as a matter of fact, I want to give you what I think's a pretty good illustration. Every church I've ever been in, especially long-time church members, they have their spot on the pew. Or in our case they have their chair. Amen? Yeah, they got, and I pretty much can point you out this morning. I've been here about a year now, I know where you sit. I have my spot, except when Jamie sings in the Praise Team and then I move over here. But we all have our spot. Nothing really wrong with that. A lady recently joined our church and we were talking about churches being friendly and welcoming and she said ours was. That's good. But she said, I don't know if it was here or somewhere else, not in this church, but I mean in the Brazos Valley or someone outside the Brazos Valley, she said, "One time I went and I got there early to get a seat and I sat on the end of the pew. And a little old lady walked up and she stood there, she just stood there, and she looked at me. And I looked up and I said, 'Hey, how are you today?' She didn't say anything. Then she did this and went, she cleared her throat. And I said, 'Can I help you?' She said, 'You're in my spot. This is my pew. You're going to have to leave.' She said, 'Ok.'" So she got her Bible and her purse. She said, "Then I moved to the middle of the pew thinking, no one's spot is the middle more than likely. So maybe I'm going to be OK." Listen, if we shine as children of light, we will be good to other people.

Second thing is this: we will be righteous. Then it says righteousness. And when I saw that immediately I realized, I'm not born with righteousness, righteousness is something given to me by the Holy Spirit of God based on the blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus. And 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, He who knew no sin, Jesus, became sin so that we might be made, it can be imputed to us, made the righteousness of God in Him. So if I'm righteous, there's going to be evidence, there will be, that will be an evidence of my salvation. In 1 John chapter 2, here's what it says. All, listen to this, all who practice righteousness. You don't go, "Hey, I'm righteous." No, you have to practice it. All who practice righteousness are born of Him. So it's like this. If I'm righteous, there's the proof that I'm born of Him and His righteousness is all over me. And I like to think of it this way. Jesus made all, His righteousness is He made all the right decisions. He never sinned. He loved everything His Father loved. He hated everything His Father hated. And so He lived right. He made all the right decisions. We have decisions every day, especially how we relate to others, and if I'm made righteous and the righteousness of Jesus is really in my life, then I'm going to make a decision based on how Jesus would make a decision. So let's go back to that spot on the pew. Let's say Jesus has a spot on the pew, OK. And He walks, you know, up and you're sitting in His spot. Does He cross His arm and go, "Ahem." "Hey Jesus, how are you today?" He just shakes His head. "Can I help you." "Thou art in my spot." Is that what Jesus is going to do? "Thou shouldest move. Whatsoever thou doest, doest quickly." Now first of all, we know He's not going to speak in King James. So it's just made up. But if I'm going to walk in righteousness, I'm going to make all the right decisions based on how Jesus would want me to live in that moment.

Now look at the next one. I like this. We will be people of truth. The last thing there in verse 9 says, truth. Now it doesn't mean we're just always going to tell the truth. Because, let's be honest, we don't always tell the truth, do we? We don't. For good reason. Someone comes up to you and says, "How do you like my new hairdo?" If it's not becoming of them, my guess is, now I know some of you, you will tell the truth. OK. But most of us will not tell the truth.

We'll go, "Yeah, it's not bad." We'll try to, we'll try to, we're not going to say the truth so we're going to try to make it sound a little better. "Yeah, it's good. It looks good on you. Not bad. I like it." Lie. You just walk away. We're not going to say, "That look horrible. Looks like you have a dog on your head. You know, it just looks bad. If I was you, I'd go change it." You have to start all over, have the Tim Skaggs cut, maybe it'll grow back out and you'll be alright. So what does it mean that we'll be people of truth? Here's what it means. Think biblical context. Jesus said, now listen to this, Jesus said, "I am the way." Listen. "I am the truth. I am the light. No one comes to the Father except through Me." He said, "You want to know the truth? Look at me. I'm the truth." And we saw in John 17 where He's praying to the Father, sanctify them in truth. What did He say then? Your word is truth. So when He says to us, we are to be, if we're going to walk as children of light, we need to always be people of truth. It means when we do speak the name of Jesus, when we do speak in behalf of God, we will always tell the truth about Jesus and this book. We will always tell the truth about Jesus and the word of God. We are not going to be ashamed of the Gospel. Now the longer we live, it's going to be harder and harder to do that. But if we're people of truth, even though it may cost us, we're going to be honest about Jesus and what the word of God says.

And then here's the last one in verse 10. We will learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And that word learn means prove. And when I thought of the proof of what pleases the Lord, I thought of Romans 12. Look what it says in Romans 12:1 and 2. A very familiar passage to you, but I want to point out based on what does it mean to please the Lord. If I'm going to try to learn or prove what pleases the Lord, here it is.

¹Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Look at this. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may learn or prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Some of your translations say, that you prove what the will of God, that which is pleasing. You know what pleases the Lord? I don't fit into the world's mold. I don't conform to the world but instead, I'm transformed, I'm changed. I am different. So the first thing is this. If I'm going to live out being in the world but not of the world, I'm going to walk as a child of light by living out, here's how we do that, verses 9 and 10, goodness, righteousness, truth. Always striving and doing my best to please the Lord Jesus. I don't want to be a man pleaser, I want to be a God pleaser.

Now we get to the second part. I said it had two parts. Walk as children of light, expose deeds of darkness. Now some of you right now, not all of you, just a few of you, got your hands together, "Alright, now we get to the good part. We get to point out where people are wrong. I love to do this. We get to expose deeds of darkness." It says it right there in the Bible that a major part of my living as a child of light is to expose deeds of darkness. I get to preach people up. As a matter of fact, some of you, it's to the point that you think your spiritual gift is confrontation. Spiritual confrontation is not a spiritual gift. Sorry to tell you that. So what does it mean when it says we get to expose deeds of darkness? Don't miss the context of what Paul is saying. Here's what he's saying. And I'll prove it to you in verse 13. He says, expose deeds of darkness, watch this, by walking as children of light. Primarily not by preaching people up.

Primarily not by verbally assaulting them right off the bat. OK. Expose deeds of darkness, that is our job, by walking as children of light. I'll prove it to you. Look at verse 13. You say, "Tim are you really right? I mean we need to verbally say some things. We're going to get to that in a minute. Look what it says in verse 13. But all things become visible when someone's preached up. Nope. All things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. Or a better translation, light makes all things visible. Light makes all things visible. My wife and I go to the deer lease about every Saturday, seriously. We check game cameras. We fill feeders. We clip branches. It's therapy for us. But lately, even if it's not rainy, it still makes your truck dirty, but especially when we went through all that rain. My truck would get a little dirty when I come back on Saturday. And one time Jamie even said, "You know your truck looks a little dirty." And I said, "Eh, it doesn't look that bad." I've got a blue Dodge so sometimes it shows a little dirt. But I got to noticing something. Because every Saturday I dirty up my truck. Most of the time I wouldn't wash it. Well, our staff parking is all right out here, you know that. And one morning, I pulled in, Sunday morning, and I'm walking away and I'm trying to get my fob to work and I turn around and look and I'm going, "You know what, my truck is filthy." Now why did I then realize how dirty my truck is? Because evidently the real Christians on staff wash their vehicles on Saturday to be ready for Sunday. The wannabe doesn't do that. But I looked and I thought, "Man, look at all these shiny vehicles except for mine." See, the cleanliness of their vehicle exposed how dirty my vehicle was. You say, "Tim, how does that work in real life?" This is a story that I heard years ago. I probably have shared it from this pulpit back in the day. Friend of mine is pastor of a church outside of Austin. Been there a long time. Ever since seminary, I believe. And we were going to seminary together. We were commuting. And he told me this story about a friend of his named Charlie. Charlie, they were in high school, and had a buddy that never went to church, was not a Christian, and so Charlie told my friend, he said, "Look, I'm going to start hanging out with him. See if I can't build a bridge to win him to the Lord." So he started going to parties with him on the weekend. He would always take him home and before he let him out he said, "Hey, you want to go to church with me in the morning?" That was his big opening. The guy always said, no. Finally one Saturday night, he said, "You know, look man, we're best friends. We do everything together. But you won't go to church with me. Why is that?" He said his friend looked at him and said, "I'll tell you why. Because, Charlie, the only difference between your life and my life is you go to church and I don't." That got his attention. He went home and he prayed and he said, "Lord, I love him so I'm not going to stop hanging out with him. But help me to live holy in front of him." So he started doing that. Still going out on the weekends, living like Jesus would want him to live, being light. And after about 6 weeks, he decided to kind of pop the question again to him and he said, "Hey, going to church in the morning, you want to go?" And to his surprise, his friend said, "Yeah, Charlie, I'll go with you to church. What time will you pick me up?" He told him. Well, he was all excited, couldn't sleep that night, kept praying, "Lord, pray for the Gospel to really penetrate his heart." They get in the pew and he reaches for a bulletin. Bulletin was a sheet of paper back in the day. It's now in a museum but it's real awesome. Anyway, reach for the bulletin and he saw that it was stewardship Sunday. Great. Everybody, a lot of people don't go to church, I don't want to go to church, all they're going to talk about is money. And sure enough, preacher preached on money. So he was pretty down about it and at the end during the "Just as I am" when it kicked off imitation, Charlie's on the end, his buddy came out and said, "Hey, I need out." Well, he figures he's going to take a right, go to the restroom. Instead, he hung a left and he went down to talk to the preacher. Charlie's thinking, "What in the world's going on?" Well, at the end of the invitation, pastor

stood his friend up, said, “This young man just put his faith and trust in Jesus. We’re going to be talking to him about baptism. After the service be sure and come down and welcome him to our church.” Then church was over. Well, Charlie ran down there, grabbed his pastor, pulled him to the side, and he said, “What could he have possibly said to you? I’m the one that brought him. First time he’s ever been in church. I haven’t yet shared the gospel. You certainly didn’t share the gospel. All you talked about was money. What in the world’s going on?” He said, “Yeah, when he held my hand, I said, “How can I help you today young man?” He just said this, it really shocked me because I never heard this before. He said, “I need you to make me like Charlie. Whatever Charlie has, that’s what I want.” It works. When we shine the light of Jesus, it exposes their sin, gives the Holy Spirit a chance to work. Now listen, listen very carefully. It’s OK, as a matter of fact, it’s a must to have non-Christian friends. You have to be in the world of the person that is not a follower of Jesus so you can be salt and light. It’s absolutely critical that we do that. But your closest friends that you’re really in community with had better be, not just Christians, but maturing Christians. We can help you do that here. We have a disciple, it’s called a discipleship, “Well, how do I mature?” Discipleship. And tonight Re-Gen starts. Tonight in the Grand Room Re-Gen kicks off. And what Re-gen is is a discipleship program where you can walk side by side with other children of light or those that perhaps are about to be children of light and you can sharpen one another so that you’re ready to go out into a dark world and shine for Jesus.

Now your walk as a child of light is the first thing. But it’s the set up to using words. Don’t go out of here saying that all you’re supposed to do is live for Jesus, you don’t preach the Gospel. Not saying that. I’m sharing that what Paul is saying is the precursor, the setup, for sharing the Gospel. You need to speak truth is walking in the light. But then you, when the opening comes through the Holy Spirit, then you do something else Ephesians has already told us. You speak the truth in love. When you have the chance to speak, and here’s the deal, the reason you walk as a child of light first is because what you say will not be believable if you don’t walk in goodness and righteousness and truth and try to please Jesus. It will not be, it doesn’t do you any good to speak truth if you’re not living it first. But you definitely speak the truth in love.

Last verse is verse 14. Most scholars believe it’s an apostolic baptismal hymn. It says, Awake sleeper rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. Now the main focus would be that last phrase. Christ will shine on you. Don’t miss this. Jesus needs to shine on you every single day. You don’t know what the day holds. He needs to shine on you so He can shine through you every single day. Now I heard this years ago. I probably heard it here. I can’t remember who said it, but I’ve always remembered it. In Exodus 33, here’s what it teaches, 33 and 34. Moses goes on top of the mountain to meet with God to get the 10 Commandments. And he’s so amazed by the power of God he says to God, “Show me your glory. I want to see your face.” God says to him, I’m going to paraphrase this, God says to him, “You can’t see my face. If you see my full glory, it will kill you. So I’m going to just crack in the rocks, I’m going to put you in the crack in the rocks, I’m going to cover you with my hand. When I pass by then you’ll hear me say, ‘Now, go.’” That’s that paraphrase part. It doesn’t say that. Work with me, OK. “Go. Then you take a quick glance. You can only see my back.” That’s what Moses does. He comes down from the mountain. He just met with God and he has, he comes down with the word he got from God directly. And his face would shine so brightly, this happened for days and days and days, that the people said, you’re going to have to veil your face. Even the afterglow of God on him was so bright, he had to put a veil over his face or they couldn’t even look at him. That’s

amazing to me. But watch this. When he gives that very same word of God to the people, many of you've heard this some of you haven't but listen, when he gives that very same word of God, the 10 Commandments, to the people, their face doesn't shine. You notice that? Go back and read it. Their face doesn't shine. Now listen to me. Here's what I think that means. Make sure you get your word directly from God every single day. We call that a quiet time. We call that a time alone with God. But listen. I'm not saying you can't read a devotion book. I read a devotion book from the Puritans called Voices from the Past. It's a great devotion book. I love it. I read it every day. But if all you do is read your devotions, say your prayer, and quit. Or if all you do is get your word from God, even though it's a great word every Sunday here at this church, if it's 9:30 to 10:30 and that's all the Bible you get, that's all the word of God you get, both of those, you're getting your word second hand. You want to shine? You want to walk as a child of light? What I love about what I heard years ago in Exodus 33, and I think it's a good example of what we're talking about, if you'll get away, go up on your mountain, the mountain of God, get away with just God's word, maybe a journal to write down what He's telling you. And you get face to face with Almighty God. You don't read a devotion book, you're not listening to a podcast, you're just listening to the voice of God. Promise you, because I've done both alright, if you get your word directly from God firsthand, you will shine. That's when you shine. That's when you shine. That's what I love about that last statement. And Christ will shine on you. That's the key. Every day when His light is shining on you and through you, that will help a dark world see the light of Christ.

Let's pray.

Father, we need You, we thank You for Your word today and the truth of it. We know we don't deserve Your goodness, Your righteousness, Your truth. But You've give it to us and we are the bearers of Your goodness, Your righteousness and truth to this world. Help us to really desire to please you. Help us to really desire to be who we are, light in the Lord. Father, help us to find a discipleship group to sharpen us. Helps us to spend time daily in the word. We don't care if people see us. We do care if people see Your Son. Thank You for this truth today, Holy Spirit, make it real in our life.