

Walking in the Light

Ephesians 5:6-10

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, September 14, 2020

Well, good morning to you. And if 2020 was not apocalyptic enough, now we have fire, so it's been a strange year, hasn't it? It's really been an interesting year. We were studying the book of Daniel yesterday with the men in the Bible study, and one thing we talked about in the life of Daniel, it's very interesting, is that you know, it wasn't prayer that kept Daniel out of the lions' den. It was prayer that got him in there. And it wasn't faithfulness that got Shadrach Meshach and Abednego in the fire. It was faithfulness that put them in there. But it's the same faithfulness that saved them in the midst of it. And in a time like this, it's good to remember that. This has just been an incredible year. We'll talk about this in a moment, but it's just been a year of so many ups and downs, but you know what God wants you to be in this year? He wants you to be faithful. That's it. He wants you to stay close to Him, whether you're in the fire, whether you're in a lion's den, whatever you're going through, He just wants you to stay close to Him and His word. And I just want to remind you of that this morning. Even as you drive around right now, you can just feel the weirdness in the year just by the fires, and our God is bigger than all of that. Amen? We serve a wonderful Savior.

Just a few announcements before the sermon begins. One quickly is that our care groups are starting today. Our new care groups, they're up here on the screen. I'm not going to say much about them because we've talked about them already in previous weeks, but if you want to look up here, if you haven't seen this before, this is what the new care groups look like. There are three groups each one led by an elder Kevin Laser, Quentin Smith and myself are leading these groups. They're going to be meeting today, so this is the first meeting right after church. Our care group will meet at the Roseboom's farm, Kevin Laser's group will meet at Kevin's house. And then Quentin's group will meet at the park next to Central Elementary. Am I saying that right? Okay, good. So, if you're not in one of those groups, if you're a visitor to our church, please find one and be a part. And this is for everybody. This is for visitors as well, and it's a wonderful way to get to know people in the church. I've talked to some folks who haven't been able to be a part of our ministry right now due to the Coronavirus and they've said that one thing they've missed the most has been care groups. They've really missed this ministry because it allows you to see people one on one and spend time with them. So please make it a point to be there today if you weren't planning on it already.

I also want to mention one other announcement before we begin the sermon and that is next week, we have a treat for you. Kevin Laser, one of our elders, will be preaching for us; he'll be bringing the Word to us. And he'll be preaching from the Gospel of Luke. You may know this, but Kevin has been preaching at Prairie Chapel for the past couple of weeks. He's been filling in for Pastor Mike Chalmers there while Mike was away, and so he's been getting a lot of experience at this. And so next week, he's going to be bringing the Word to you. And he's going

to be talking about the parable of the unrighteous servant from Luke 16. If you remember that parable that was the story of the slave who sold all his master's debts because the time is short. He sold all his master's bills because the time passes quickly, and you want to make it count for eternity. As we saw in the video last week, a lot of people aren't doing that today. A lot of people are not making their time count. It's all for nothing. They spend it on frivolous things. And this is a parable from our Lord to remind you not to do that. Spend your time wisely. So Kevin, we'll be talking about that next week. It's good to study the Lord's parables every once in a while, isn't it? It's good to kind of put everything else on hold and sit at the feet of the Master. And that's what we're going to do with the words of Jesus next week in the Gospel of Luke. So please come back for that.

And while we're talking about that, you know, while we're talking about spending our time wisely this morning, I want to invite you to turn to a book that talks about that. It talks about making our time count for eternity. And that's the book of Ephesians. It's the book we're in this morning, so if you would, please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Ephesians. And we're going to read our passage for today. Before we dive into it, it's Ephesians 5:1-16. It says this,

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

And we'll stop the reading there.

Just to say a few words about this. If you've been with us for a little while, you'll know that we've been in the book of Ephesians for some time as a church. We've been in it for about a year now, which means it's carried us through a lot of things. This book has taken us through a lot of trials. For example, this is the book we were in when the Coronavirus started. You remember that this is the book we were in when we couldn't be in here. We all had to be at our homes watching the service online. It's also the book we were in when the riots broke out in the States. This is what we were going through when all the chaos erupted over the shooting of George Floyd. I don't know how that impacted everybody here, but that that really impacted my home. That broke our heart; and it's the book that carried us through that. This is also what we were studying when we came back from all of that. It's also what we were studying when half of us are in the gym and half of us are in here. And the reason it could do that, the reason the book of Ephesians could carry us through all of these things is because it's such a practical book. This is such a hands-on book; you can apply it to any situation. And you really see that in this passage, you see it in what we just read from because Ephesians 5 talks about a very practical subject, a very relevant one, and that is the subject of sin. If you notice, chapter 5:1 starts off with the word "therefore" to point you back to the preceding passage. It points you back to all that's been said before. And what it says there is that if you are a Christian, if you are a believer, this is what you should do: you should put your sin aside. You should repent of it.

In his own words, chapter five verse one says, "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children." And I've told you before this word "children" is the word *teknon* in Greek, and it means it means children, or descendants. But it also means someone who shares your nature. And what Paul is saying is that when God saves us, this is what He does. He gives us a new nature. He gives us the same one that He has because He gives us His Son, and so you need to live like it and put your sin away.

The reason a Christian repents of his sin is because it's unnatural for you now. Before, your sin was natural; it was just what you did. Now it's unnatural. It's an abomination for you. Which is important because like I said last week, people are so casual about their sin today, aren't they? People are so cavalier about it. They sin all they want to; they do whatever they want. And what Paul says here is you can't do that anymore. Things have changed for you.

You know, you saw this in some of the situations I just described. You know, the Coronavirus happens and what does everybody do? They panic, right? They get anxious. Well, that's a sin. You can't do that as a Christian. The riots happened in the US and what do we do then? We start

yelling at that; we get angry, right? You can't do that because your nature has changed. Your person has changed, and you need to act like it now.

And Paul mentions several sins to repent of it in chapter 4. If you look at the end of the chapter, you see the sin of lying and you see the sin of anger. There's also the sin of stealing in there. Chapter 5 is going to talk about another sin that we'll mention in a minute, the sin of lust. And Paul also says this several different ways in the letter.

There's several different ways he talks about the change that has occurred in us. For instance, chapter 2 says you have changed from death to life. In other words, you've undergone a resurrection. Your soul was dead, now it's alive. And then in chapter 4, he says you've gone from the old self to the new self; which means that you've gone from the old soul to the new soul. Listen, you can't get any more different than old and new, and dead and alive, right? That's what you've experienced. Chapter 5 says you've gone from a child of Satan to a child of God. But the point is, it's just been change, change, change for you. You are totally different from what you once were, and you need to live like it.

You need to put your sin away and this morning we're going to see this one more way. Paul is going to give us one more way salvation changes us. And if you look in verse six, this is what he says. Actually, we'll just look in verse seven; verse seven says,

Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.

I'll explain this passage in a moment, but if you notice, this is one more change that happens to you. This is one more way that salvation affects you. And that is it changes you from darkness to light. You can't get any more different than dark and light, right? They're polar opposites. Paul says that's what you are now. You've become totally different. The word "light" here, it's the Greek word *fotos* from which we get the word "photograph", or "photography." That's this word here. It means something bright or radiant, something luminous, but the biggest idea is that of revelation because that's what light does. It reveals things. It shows you what's there. When you walk into a dark room, you don't know what's in there, right? That's why it's kind of scary. When you turn on the light, you see. That's what this word means. That's what God has done for you. He's allowed you to see the kingdom of heaven. The light makes you see God. That's what Christ has done. That's what salvation is done.

The world doesn't get that. We talked about this before the world doesn't see God. It's blind. It has no idea because it thinks it's okay. You ask the average person on the street and they'll tell you they're fine. They're doing alright, they're going to heaven because they're a good person. And what Paul says is the light shows them differently. The light shows them the truth

In fact, if you look at the way this is worded here, this is a little more serious than even that because Paul says that you are the light. For you were formerly darkness but now you are light in the world. In other words, it's your job to show the world this. It's your job to show the world the truth. That's why God put you here. That's why you put your sin away because you don't want anything obscuring the light.

You know, this year has been so crazy. There's times in the ministry I wonder, "What's my job?". My job is to show you the light. Week in, week out. That's your job.

And you just so you can see this in another passage of scripture. Jesus told His followers in Matthew 5:14-16, we just read this, but just to mention it again, he said,

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

And that's a beautiful passage because there's a progression there, there's a train of thought, and that is that you are the light of the world. God has given you the light, so let it shine. Don't hide it. Don't obscure it with sin. Light doesn't do you any good if you cover it up. It doesn't do you any good if you hide it, so don't hide it with your evil behavior. Let it shine for all to see. It's so easy to get caught up in the world and hide your Christianity right? And hide who you are now. You're not supposed to hide. There's no hiding.

In John 8:12 Jesus also said,

I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

And there you see the same idea again. Jesus is the light of the world. He is God's photograph, if you will, God's perfect picture and if you follow Him, you will have the light of life. People will see Him in you.

You know another way to say this, another way to look at this passage here, just to introduce it, is that when Jesus saved you, this is what He did. He brought you out of darkness. He brought you out of sin, and you can't go back to it now. You can't go back to what you once were. That door is closed; that road is over for you. Jesus said no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. You can't row this way and look that way. That way is done.

You know, it's interesting Paul mentions this, and you need to see this. He mentions this right after talking about lust in this passage. In verses three through five, he talks about lust; and now he talks about light because nothing is darker than that sin. Nothing blinds you and puts you in the darkness more than the sin of adultery. It takes over everything. Everything. Now, I've talked to men who have given into this sin, and that's what they've said. They said that it's cost them everything. They couldn't eat, couldn't sleep, it totally blinded them. I've talked to other ones who said they lost everything over this sin. They lost their family, they lost their jobs, all for some fling. One pastor said, "Living for lust, it's like waiting for four hours for a two minute ride at Disney World, it's not worth it." They were totally deceived. And Paul says we can't be that way anymore as a Christian. We can't act that way because we've changed now; we're different. We need to leave the darkness behind.

When I was in Los Angeles, this is a this was a particular sin. I mentioned this last week, but this is sin that has ravaged the city of Los Angeles. It has ravaged a lot of cities as well, but that's a bad one. And I met a young man who told me that he was like this before he became a Christian. He was enslaved to lust. He was addicted to it to the point that it's all he did. I mean, he would watch pornography all day on his computer, watch it on his phone, and then go out at night and chase girls around. And that's all he ever thought about until someone told him the gospel. Someone told him about Christ. And when they did that, he said, all of a sudden, it was like a light turned on in his head. All of a sudden, there was this whole world he had never seen before because God took the darkness away. And my friend said, "There's no way I can go back to that now. I can't go back to my former way of life." That's what Paul is talking about here. That's what this text is saying. You have to leave the darkness behind.

So, with that said, if you're taking notes this morning in Ephesians 5:6-10, we're going to look at three ways to walk in the light. We're going to make this very practical. Paul is talking about a pretty theoretical doctrinal subject here, but he means it in a practical way. So, we're going to be practical with this. We're going to look at three ways to walk in the light. We're going to do this because let's be honest, this is an area we need to work on, right? This is an area we all need to grow on. We don't let our light shine enough. We sin too much, don't we?

That's one reason the church is so ineffective today. That's one reason the church is so failing because the lost world looks at the church and says, "I don't see any difference. I don't see any change. They lust like I do. They live like I do. They watch pornography, they commit adultery, they're unfaithful." Paul says no more. No more for us. We have to leave that behind, and he talks about that with three ways to walk in the light. And this is all hopeful. These are all hopeful things. If you're a believer, you can do this.

The first way is with discernment. The first way to walk in the light is with discernment, which means you need to walk with caution. You need to walk with care, because every road is not a good road. Amen? I mean everything the world offers you is not good in this area; so you need some discernment. And if you read in verse three, this is what Paul says, By the way, he's writing to the Ephesians, who lived in a world that was saturated with this sin, totally covered in it. So this was very practical for them. Verse three says,

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Just to explain this to you, in verses three through five, if you notice, Paul mentions several things that you need to put off. He mentions several sins you need to avoid and they all revolve around one sin, which is the sin of lust. Immorality, impurity, greed is just another way of saying lust or adultery. This was such a prevalent sin in that society. This was such a problem that they had a lot of words for it in the Greek language. In fact, when I grew up, some of our reading curriculum was some of the Greek gods and Roman gods. And they had to cut a lot of it out because a lot of it is very vulgar. So Paul's addressing that here and he goes on to say in verse six, "let no one deceive you with empty words." In other words, Paul is talking about lust. He's talked about the sin of adultery. And now he talks about deception because that's what this sin does. That's the problem with it. It deceives us. The dark is very deceptive, right? That's the image here. It tricks you, so Paul says you need to watch out. The word "deceive", it's the Greek word *apatatō* which means to cheat or seduce someone. And Paul says don't let the world do that to you. Don't let it seduce you with empty or hollow words, meaningless words. We'll talk about that in a moment. But just to take it one step further. Paul puts this into continuous tense as well to say you need to do this continually. You need to do this over and over again because lust is going to be thrown at you over and over again. You have to constantly be on your guard for this sin because it's always in your face.

Some sins are hard to find. I mean, some sins, you got to kind of look for them. You've got to go out and search for them. They're sort of hidden. This is not one of those sins. Maybe 100 years ago on British Columbia this was a hidden sin, not anymore. We're becoming more and more like Ephesus every day. This stuff is everywhere. And we said this last week, but go to the grocery store, and what do you see? You see lust, right? You see sexual sin; you're just buying your groceries, you're not doing anything vulgar, but they put it right next to the cash register in

those vulgar magazines. Or go to the mall to buy clothes and you see it there. It's plastered all over the windows. There are clothing stores you probably can't even go in because of the pictures in them. Then you go to a larger city, Vancouver, Seattle, you'll see them on the billboards. You can't even drive down the road. And if you're not careful, what Paul is saying here, is there can be a tendency to give into that. There can be a tendency to see all of that stuff and you say, "It must be okay if everybody's doing it. It must be okay if they put it on a billboard and it's 20 feet tall." And what Paul says is it's not okay. It's not okay for a Christian. Not even for a second.

It was said that the one thing that Christianity changed in the ancient world, probably more than anything else, was its view of sex. I mean, for one man to be faithful to one woman was just foreign in the first century. They didn't do that, and Paul is telling these people in that culture, this is how you have to live. You have to show some discernment. You can't be fooled by that anymore. And to show you the seriousness of this just so you feel the gravity of this, the verse goes on to say,

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

That means that the wrath of God will come upon you for a sin like this. God's anger will come upon you for a behavior like this if you don't repent. That's how offensive it is to God. You know, I don't know if you've thought about this before, but let's say it this way, Hell is not just for murderers, it's for adulterers too. Hell is not just for those who kill people. It's for those who lust after them. I think we all understand that murderers go to hell. We all understand that the really, really bad people go there. Paul says but those who sin in this way do as well, if they don't repent. He says here you don't want to join them in that. You don't want to go to hell so stay away from this sin. Don't go anywhere near it.

There are so many people who don't get this today, right? There are so many people who don't take this sin seriously. Christians and lost people. They would never murder anybody. They would never kill anybody, but they would lust all day long because they don't see the danger in it. That's the problem. They don't see the problem. The trouble, Paul says, this is the trouble. This is the danger. This is a sin that will lead you to hell. This is a sin that will make you a son of disobedience. The word "son" there means you have a nature of a disobedient person. You're supposed to be a son of God, supposed to be a child of God; but this sin will make you a child of disobedience.

Several years ago, a famous pastor in Chicago stepped down from the ministry over this. He stepped down over several affairs he had had with women in the church. And when he was asked, "Why, why did you do that?" He said, "It was because I let my guard down. I forgot how

serious this is. It all started with just a little look, it all started with one little compromise and led to another compromise and another one and another one and before long I was lost in the sin.”

And what you read here is that Paul is saying you need to learn a lesson from this. You need to take this seriously and stop it before you start going down that road. You know the way to avoid Hell is you just don't go on the road to hell. Paul says go the other way.

The Puritan, Matthew Henry, said that “Sin appears fair, but it is filthy. Sin appears pleasant, but it's perilous. Sin offers much, but it delivers nothing.” And that's what this sin is. That's what lust is. It gives you nothing, no benefit, no eternal reward. Nothing. Stay away from it. It's not worth it.

In my in my study this week, I found an article by Ligonier ministry on this. It was written on the subject of discernment and why it's so important for us today. Why we need to practice this kind of thing. And it gave us a couple of reasons why discernment is important. One is because it gives us freedom because it keeps you from giving in to the same thing over and over again. You're free if you're discerning; the chains are taken off because you don't keep getting taken in by the same stuff. And it also helps you to grow. That's another reason why discernment is so important. Some of you aren't growing right now in the Christian life; you're not making any progress because you don't have any discernment. Everything looks good to you. Every magazine looks good to you. Every billboard is fine. You need to work on this, you need to change. And they gave us one more reason why it's so important. One more reason why discernment is good for us. And that is protection. Discernment protects us because it keeps you from getting fooled.

It keeps you from getting deceived by the world. I'm guessing there are probably marriages in this room that are still together today for one reason and one reason only. You have some discernment. You're walking in the light, and you're turning away from this sin. There are homes and families that are still together for the same reason. You made a vow, you made a promise to be faithful, and you're going to keep that. You're not going to go chasing after the next guy or the next girl. You're not going to get into a new relationship just because the old one got old. You're going to please the Lord in this. That's God's protection in your life. That's His mercy in your life. The world doesn't have that. It's amazing that marriages in the world stay together. We're grateful that they do, but you have the light in this. Salvation gives you what you need to hold on to it.

Several years ago, the Seattle News published a story of a thief who tried to steal gas from a mobile home with his mouth. He tried to siphon it until he was caught by the owner who heard him throwing up outside. He heard him getting sick because apparently, he siphoned the wrong thing. He put his mouth on the septic tank. I mentioned that story, funny story, but I mention it

because friends, let's be honest, a lot of Christians are doing that today, aren't they? A lot of believers are doing this. A lot of churches are doing this. They're putting their mouth on the wrong thing. They're drinking from a septic tank, putting their mind full of garbage and then they're wondering why their life turns out so bad. Paul says you need to drink from the water of life. You need to walk in the light and show some discernment and stay away from this.

It leads to another point to consider this morning. Another way to walk in the light. The first one is with discernment. First way to walk in the light is with some caution or some care; so you can see where the darkness is. There are certain places you need to go to and have your antennas up, so you're not going to be fooled and tricked over and over and over again. It leads to another way to walk in the light. Another point to consider and that is, you need to walk with determination.

Paul goes on to say a second way to walk in the light is to do it with determination, which means you need to have some conviction in this, some courage to make up your mind not to give into this sin. And if you look on in verses six through eight, this is what Paul says. He says,

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.

As you read on in this passage, you can tell Paul felt really strongly about this issue. He felt really strongly about this sin because he says so much about it. There's really no other sin in this list that he kind of elaborates on so much as this one. And now he goes on to say in verse seven, "Therefore, do not be partakers with them." Just to explain that, the word "partakers" here means sharers or partners with someone, buddies, friends. He says you can't do that with this sin and you can't do that with people who indulge in it. Even though everybody's doing this. Even though you see it everywhere. You have to have some kind of conviction on this; you have to stay away. He says, verse eight tells you why, "For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." In other words, your nature has changed, your person has changed, and so your friends need to change. Your acquaintances need to change.

This is the first time you see the word "light" here. It's the first time you see it in the passage. And Paul says you can't join people in their lust because you're part of the light now. You're part of a different world. You guys know what this was like. When you got saved, over time your relationships changed, right? Your friendships changed. Well, why is that? Because like invites like, right? You walk in the light. You're going this way, your friends are going to go that way. Walk in the darkness you go that way. That's what this says.

I mentioned this before, but I want to point it out to you again. Paul doesn't just say you're part of the light. He says you *are* the light. He doesn't just say you came into the light, but he says, the light has come into you. It's not an external thing for you. This is an internal thing. The light comes from the inside out, which means your nature has changed. I mention this because sometimes Christians say things like "Well, I need to get into the light. I need to make my life right with the Lord." Paul says if you're a Christian, you are already right with the Lord. You are in the light you just need to act like it now. Just need to stay away from the darkness.

You also hear Christians say, "Well, the world is so tempting for me. The world is so hard to resist." Well Paul says not if you look at yourself like this. If you look at yourself like this, the world has nothing for you anymore. What blind man wants to go back? If you get your sight, who wants to go back to the blindness? Let it go. Paul says let the world go. You don't need that. Look at what it's given you in verses three through five; you want that? You want to be filthy and immoral and all of that silly talk, course jesting? No, you don't want that. Let it go.

Now this doesn't mean that you can't witness to the world and reach out to the world because you can. You should do that. Jesus did that. And it doesn't mean that you can't work with them and live with them and hang out with them and things like that. You can do all of those things. What this means is you can't join with them in their sin. You can't join with them in their lust anymore. It's an interesting thing being a pastor because I've got some friends that are pretty rough people who live in my neighborhood and whatnot. And sometimes when I show up, they stop cussing all of a sudden. Well, there is one way in which that's appropriate. They do need to understand that I'm not going to do that with them. It needs to be the same for all of us. You love them, you care about them, but you're not going to join with them in their sin.

It leads to several applications here, a couple of ways we can apply this to our lives. For one, this means the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian should be obvious. It should be obvious because our break with sin is obvious. Our break with the darkness is obvious, and we can't go back to that anymore.

I mention this because throughout the years I've seen so many people forget this. So many people try to go back to the world, try to go back to their sin, believers, true Christians, and I'll tell you every time it made them miserable. It made them miserable because they're not supposed to do that. That door has been closed. In some cases, it's so bad. I've seen people try to kill themselves. I remember talking to a young man years ago who was wrestling with lust, he was wrestling with adultery, and it got so bad that he tried to kill himself. He called his wife from a hotel room saying, "This is it. I'm going to end it." She called the police. They broke into the hotel room with a SWAT team and put him in a psych ward. That's what this sin does it. It's what lust does. If you're a Christian, it will drive you crazy. It will drive you insane because it's unnatural now.

By the way, it's a good thing when this bothers you as a Christian, that's a good thing. It means you're in the light.

Leads to another application. Here's another way to apply this to our lives. This as simple as well, but you can't mix the light with the darkness anymore. You can't mix the light with the darkness. You can't mix sin with who you are now as a Christian, because the two don't go together. They're mortal enemies. If you ever read Romans 7, you can see what it's like for a Christian to have a mortal enemy living inside of him. You can't mix the two together. It's amazing how lost the world is on this issue. It's amazing how much they get it backwards because the world loves lust. You even hear them talk about it. They want to be free to lust. They want to be free to commit adultery and have sex with whoever they want to. The sexual revolution, right? It started in the 1960s, and today we're seeing it continue. You even have a gay pride parade in Vancouver every year. It's held every August. There are rainbow crosswalks all over Chilliwack that celebrate this. Chilliwack used to be the Bible belt of Canada, it was called that; now it's considered the rainbow capital of the world. It's totally gone the other way. And it's a constant reminder of how the world looks at this sin. They love it. And the scary thing is that in some cases the church has gotten on board with that. In some cases, Christians have approved and applaud it. When some of those battles over the crosswalks were going on, you could read in the newspapers, the editorial columns and things and Christians would write in and say they approve. You can go to churches in the Lower Mainland that are led by a gay priest or a gay bishop. You can visit other ones that openly promote this sort of lifestyle. And what Paul says here, and this is why it's so important for us today, what he says here is that you can't do that. You couldn't do it in the first century in Ephesus when it was worse than Chilliwack. You couldn't do it in the town of Corinth, which was worse than Ephesus, and you can't do it here. Do not be partakers with them. It means don't share with them in this. Don't partner with them in this because it's like partnering with the devil. It doesn't mean that those people are the devil or they're as evil as the devil. It means they're on his side; and you can't do that.

The English pastor, G. Campbell Morgan once said that, "There are times when the church has to say no to those who want to join." There are times when we have to refuse them, not because we want to be mean or rude, but because they're not joined to God. They're not partners with Him and therefore they can't be partners with us. This is unpopular stuff, right? This is uncomfortable stuff, but it's what the Bible says very clearly here. So we want to follow that at least one more point to consider. Leads to one more way to walk in the light

Just to review the other ones here, the first way to walk in the light is to do it with discernment. This whole passage as you as you study it, it's all about discernment. You have to be careful, cautious; so you know where the darkness is. The darkness doesn't come out and say, "Hi, I'm the darkness. Hi, I'm a wrong idea." It doesn't do that, so you have to have discernment. You also need determination. The second way to walk in the light. Do it with determination or courage.

After you see what the sin is, after you see how bad it is, you have to say, “I’m not going there anymore. I’m not going to do that. Not even going to compromise.”

Leads to another point to consider, one more way to walk in the light. And we won't say much about this one because we're going to get into it next time; but that is you need to bear fruit. A third way to walk in the light, and this is how Paul is going to wrap up our passage here, is that you need to bear fruit, which means you need to show people that you are in the light. It needs to be obvious. You don't have to tell people the light is on; they know it's on. And you shouldn't really have to tell people you're a Christian. It should be something about you that's different in this area, in the area of lust. And if you read on in verse six, Paul says,

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

You can see as you read that, that verse nine is in parentheses here. In your English Bibles it's put in as a side note to say, this is how you should walk in the light. This is what it looks like. And he says, “For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, and righteousness and truth.” Those three words are in contrast to the three words that were used to describe lust earlier. If you look up in your Bibles in verse three, it says, “But immorality or impurity, or greed must not be named among you.” Stay away from those things. And now Paul says, instead, the fruit of the light consists in goodness and righteousness and truth. The darkness looks like this. This is what the light looks like.

And to walk you through those words. The word “good” here it means kindness. It means you should be kind toward others because when you lust this is what you're not doing. You're not being kind and considerate. You're being totally selfish. Lust is an entirely selfish thing. And righteousness here means just what it says. You need to do right with God by God. You need to learn what is pleasing to Him, verse 10 says. Truth is a reference to the Bible. It's a reference to the Word of God. But Paul's point here is that this is what you need to do now that you're a Christian. This is what you need to do now that you're a believer. You need to bear fruit. You need to show people that you've changed.

When I was growing up in youth group, we used to have a saying that went like this. “You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?” You say you're a Christian, but can you prove it? Would anybody believe it? Paul says you need to prove this. You need to show it in the area of lust for all to see

You know, it does you no good to grow in other areas of your life if you don't grow in this. It's one of the deceitful things about lust. That's one of the tragic things about this sin is that some people are so enslaved to it. They're so caught up in it that they think if "I'm doing okay in other areas, it's okay if I get into this." It's not okay. It doesn't do you any good to change in your work life or your home life or your married life if you don't change in your sex life. The change has to be complete.

In fact, if you're struggling with this sin this morning, if you're wrestling with the sin of lust, and you're wondering what to do about it, let me be real practical here for a moment with you and tell you what you need to do. You need to replace it. You need to replace it with something better.

They have a principle, we've talked about this before, in biblical counseling. It's known as the "put off put on principle." And what it means is that when you're in sin, the way you repent of it is that you put off the sin, you turn away from it, but you don't stop there. You replace it with something else. You put something good in its place, you take off the old self, you put on the new self. So, if you're giving into lust, you don't need to stay in the same place. You need to put something else in its place. So for example, here's a very practical example, one reason people get into lust is because you have too much time on their hands. And one reason men and women get into this sin is because they have too much free time and they need to replace it and fill it up with something better. So for example, if you're struggling with lust, get a second job or a new hobby. It's one thing you can do. Or go visit someone in the church. Get involved in one of the Bible studies. We have going on around here, but whatever you do, do something. Fill the time up with something better. If you keep doing the same thing, you're going to stay in the same place. You also need to remove certain things from your life. That's another reason why people struggle with lust. There are things in their life that cause them to stumble, so you need to get rid of those. I've sat down with people, "Make a list. Tell me, where do you lust? Alright your phone? Get rid of that. Computer? get rid of that. Movie collection? Get rid of that." And I've had people argue with me and say, "Well, that movie is not that bad." Does it cause you to lust? Get rid of it? Bad relationships. If you're in a relationship that's causing you to lust, you need to walk away from that. It may be painful, it may be hard, but remember what it's doing to you. If you're sinning in this area, it's killing you; and you have to replace it. It's a serious thing.

Paul says you have to make an effort to grow in this. The effort doesn't save you, but it shows that you're saved. The fruit doesn't give you a place in heaven, it just shows that you belong there. So many people struggle with assurance of salvation when they get into this sin. They wrestle with whether they're really saved. That's because there's a direct correlation there. There's a connection. Victory in this area doesn't save you, but it shows that salvation has occurred. So you have to take that seriously.

Which leads me to ask, are you taking this seriously this morning? Are you taking the sin of lust seriously? Do you believe you need to grow in this? Not to be saved but to show that you're saved? Let me say this another way. If somebody saw you in this area, could they tell that you're a Christian? If they saw how you handled this sin, not other sins, we're talking about this sin, could they tell that you are saved? Could they tell that if they looked at your phone or your computer? Could they tell if they looked at your relationships and followed you around with your boyfriend or girlfriend or husband or wife? I ask you this because if not, if that's a struggle, I want to tell you, there's hope for you this morning. If you're struggling with this sin, there is victory.

There is salvation, and it's only found in Jesus Christ. He can change you in this area. He can give you freedom. If you believe in Him, will you do that today? He is the light. He can bring you into the light. He's your hope.

In my study this week, I came across a study of a little girl who heard a famous preacher speak on John 8, where Jesus said, "I'm the light of the world." And she thought about that and pondered it. And afterwards, she went up to the preacher and she said, "Mr. Do you think? Do you think Jesus could come to the street where I live and bring His light there because it sure is dark." She said, "We can't see nothing."

And friends, I tell you that because if that's where you're at this morning, if you feel like you're in a place where "you can't see nothing," Jesus can shed His light on you. He can come and help you. If you call out to Him, He will save you. Will you do that this morning? If you struggle with this sin, will you ask him for help? He would love to come help you. Let me pray that you would.

Let's pray.

Father, we come to you this morning with, on one hand we have heavy hearts because this is a sin that has plagued our world. As we look at all the things You've talked about in this list, this is the darkest one. It's a sin that so many are caught up in. So many Christians and so many churches. We see churches around us falling all the time, in this area. And yet, Lord, there's not just darkness, there's light, there's hope. And that is found in Jesus Christ. He came into a world full of lust. Jesus came into a world full of sin, and He turned it around. And He can do that today.

Lord, I pray for any who are here this morning who are wrestling with this, I pray that they would not go out with a feeling of defeat, but with hope. As we talk about areas where they're failing, they wouldn't feel like a total failure because they have a Saviour who saves us from all sins including this one. Lord, we thank you for that.

As we continue on in our service as we go from here to our care groups, Lord, may we go there with a spring in our step as we remember, this wonderful, wonderful Lord Jesus who comes into our dark streets and meets us there. We pray this all in His name, amen.