

## LIGHT, SLEEP, TIME AND DRINK

WILLIS 9/25/11

Ep5:8-21

Our passage this morning is a continuation of what Paul began in v.1 where he exhorted us to “Be imitators of God.” **Imitation is the sincerest form of worship. To worship God in Spirit and Truth is to imitate Him in word and deed.**

- So in v.8 Paul continues in his exhortation defining for us what a life of imitating God really looks like.
- He says “You were formerly darkness but now you are light...” Please note Paul uses the words “were and are” not did and do. Paul is speaking in reference to our nature not our actions.
- It’s not that we just did darkness but we were darkness. It’s not that we just do light we are light. Actions are the fruit of one’s nature and should reproduce according to that nature.
- **Deception is that point in one’s life where their actions do not reproduce according to their true nature. Consequently we allow fallen actions to redefine who we are so our redemptive nature no longer determines our reproduction our actions do.**
- The action of the child cheating in 5th grade doesn’t change the fact that they are still light. The anger of the young man in marriage doesn’t mean he is no longer light. Though they may be doing cheating or anger Paul says they are still defined by light.

As vital as actions are in our imitation of Christ, it is never our actions that determine our identity. The result of Jesus Christ crucified is sinful actions do not have the authority to override the redeemed nature. Our identity is determined by our redeemed nature not a sinful action.

- **A sinful action of the past must never be allowed to define who you are in the present. If you are born again you are who God says you are not what your actions say.**
- Now if your actions aren’t demonstrating what God is saying...repent. It is only in repentance that former actions of darkness are overridden by the present identity of the light.

- Past defeats are never reason to give up and start acting contrary to our redeemed nature.

So the question is: **Who have you let define you? Have you allowed your actions to define you or the truth of God's Word define you? Have you let old actions define you or your new nature define you?**

- There is no question that our actions should line up true to our new nature, but if they don't God is still the one who defines us not our actions.

As Paul continues he goes after the permissions we all too often give ourselves to receive the new nature but still practice some of the old actions. Though born again we all too often give ourselves permissions like "I'm just being me" or "I'm Italian" or "I'm just being honest."

- No, **since we are light we are to walk as children of light not personality, nationality or any other redefinition of who we really are.**

So in light of our new nature, Paul says in vs.9-10 the focus of our new actions should be:

1. **Goodness: When we let light be the basis of our identity doing good will be the fruit of our walk.**
2. **Righteousness: When we let light be the basis of our identity doing what is right will be the fruit of our walk.**
3. **Truth: When we let light be the basis of our identity being truthful will be the fruit of our walk.**
4. **Pleasing God: When we let light be the basis of our identity then pleasing God will be the fruit of our walk.**

What we allow to shape our identity will be what we allow to determine our behavior. If we allow the actions of darkness to shape our identity we will fall asleep. Rather than being the reproof of darkness we will be asleep in darkness.

- So Paul says in v.14 "Awake sleeper and rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you." Remember, these are Christians Paul is writing to. Christians who apparently had forgotten who they really were and had allowed their actions to lull them to sleep.
- So into the darkness of their slumber the Apostle says "Wake up and rouse yourself from the dead."

- **Awake: become aware of the dangerous position you are in.** When living true to our identity we are being positioned for life, purpose and significance. When living true to the actions of darkness we are being positioned in death.
- **Dead: separated from the vivifying grave of God and the enlivening influences of divine light.**
- To vivify is to quicken, renovate, animate or recreate. When we define ourselves by our identity not our actions we tap into a life from God that is constantly quickening, renovating, animating and recreating.

Consequently we are enabled by God to “make the most of our time” or as other translations read, “making every minute count, using every chance we get for doing good or as written in the literal “redeeming the time.”

- **Those who live their lives in the imitation of God are given the opportunity to buy time back.** To each is given the same 24. Some of us use those 24 hours wisely and others...not so much.
- But to those who give themselves to the wise imitation of God...time is given back. We get it back in revelation, we get it back in the supernatural, we get it back in the grace to do something in 10 minutes what would normally have taken us 3 hours.

In v.17 Paul tells us one of the best ways we can redeem the time. He say’s “Do not be foolish but understand what the will of God is...” Foolishness is a waste of time or wasting time can make one foolish. **How are we to understand the will of God?** (Line up these 5 harbor lights)

1. **The Word of God: Ps119:105** the objective truth of God is always first and foremost.
2. **The Spirit of God: Jn 16:13** Holy Spirit is sent to come along side and guide.
3. **The Peace of God: Col 3:15** the subjective work of God revealed through peace
4. **The Authority of God: Rm13:1-5** parental, spiritual, jurisdictional authority
5. **The Circumstances of God: Rev 3:8** open and shut doors reveal God’s will

Paul closes this passage out by stating what should be an obvious but often becomes an area that some make gray and take advantage of. He say’s in v.18 “Do not get drunk with wine (doesn’t mean it is ok to get drunk with beer) for that is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit...”

- To dissipate is to waste or misuse oneself in unrestrained indulgence. “Can I be a Christian and get drunk? Yes, you can be a Christian and do a lot of stupid things. But you can’t get drunk and be an imitator of God.
- Dissipation is the opposite of making the most of your time. Remember being imitators of God is the context. Into that context Paul say’s **don’t get drunk because drunkenness wastes ones imitation of God in unrestrained indulgence.**
- Someone asked “If I can’t get drunk is it ok if I get buzzed?” My answer is yes and Paul tells us the only way we are to do it, he say’s “Be filled with the Spirit.”
- **If being drunk or buzzed is an altering or impairing of our natural state...being filled with the Spirit is best and most effective way to alter your natural man.** Our natural man is in need of being impaired...in fact he should be dismantled. Alcohol is not the way to do it, being filled with the Spirit is.

He then describes a manner in which we get filled with the Spirit...”Speaking to one another is psalms, Hymns and spiritual songs...” Psalms being the Word put to music, Hymns being the works of God put to music and spiritual songs being the prophetic heart of God put to music.

- **As we release on earth the sounds and sights of heaven we are filled with the Spirit and become who we really are.** Dissipation is gone, the actions of darkness are gone, we are no longer asleep we are awake and time is given back to us.

You are light so wake up, make every minute count and be filled with the Spirit.