



Sermon: LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT!

- Pastor Todd Goldschmidt

Sunday Service 9:30 am – August 19th, 2012 – At [Living Hope Lutheran Church](#)

Ephesians 5:6-20

New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said:

“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live —not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Sermon: LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT!
- Pastor Todd Goldschmidt

“Live as children of light!” Paul urges us. What, exactly, does that mean? The psalmist exclaimed to the LORD, “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path” (119:105). Especially in Jesus, the Word made flesh, the Light of the world, we receive the insight and power we need so that we can avoid stumbling around in the “fruitless deeds of darkness” so prevalent in the wicked world in which we live. Paul has much to say about the process by which we plug into that power. “Keep on letting yourselves be filled by the Spirit”—that’s one way the second part of Ephesians 5:18 can properly be translated. Many people in our society try to fill the “hole in their soul”—the emptiness inside them—by getting drugged or drunk. But that’s a dead-end street that only leads to shattered dreams, missed opportunities and sad regrets.

Instead, our Lord Jesus encourages us to let Him fill us to overflowing with the light of His glory and grace through the gift of His Holy Spirit. His love and peace are more than enough to ease the ache of emptiness and the pain of loneliness. As we read our Bibles, as we gather together at His Holy Table, as we hear God’s Word spoken, preached on and sung here in worship, God’s Spirit keeps on filling us. When that happens, we witness God’s love overflow from our hearts into the hearts and lives of others as we “speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs,” as we “sing and make music in [our] hearts to the Lord,” and as we give “thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But wait a second! Isn’t Paul going overboard when he says we should give thanks to God “*for everything*”? That’s a bit of a stretch! How can any human being *always* be thankful? You mean I’m supposed to say, “Thanks, Lord!” when I lose my job of many years, get diagnosed with a debilitating, terminal illness, or get into a car accident on my way to work? Well . . . yes. That’s what Paul is saying. Or more accurately, that’s what God is telling us through His chosen apostle. Give “thanks to God . . . *for everything*”—even for my chronic illness that hinders my effectiveness at work and makes me a burden to my family and friends. Yes, even for that. In fact, maybe *especially* for that. It might well be that God is using that particular challenge in your life to lead you to trust in Him more and more while it gives other Christians an opportunity to serve their Savior by helping you bear your burden with the kind acts of love they do for you.

When such a challenge, difficulty or impediment is put in our path, our initial reaction might well be, “But what did I ever do to deserve this?” Remember that Paul knows whereof he speaks. He himself had a mysterious “thorn in the flesh” which he described as “a messenger from Satan to torment me.” He wrote to the Corinthian Christians: “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’” Instead of removing that obstacle, God employed it to humble His apostle and remind him of his daily need for God’s strength, wisdom & grace. Paul concluded: “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s



power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

To that end, Paul reminds us in our sermon text that "God the Father"—whom James calls the source of "every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17)—deserves our thanks "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Every blessing we possess is a direct result of the amazing "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" who, "though he was rich, yet for [our] sakes he became poor, so that [we] through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9) in ways that far exceed our wildest expectations!

We sinners deserve nothing good from God—nothing! Because of our many sins a just God has a right to banish us from His holy presence for time and for eternity. He really does. But this same God is also a God of love; a God of full and free forgiveness; a patient, long-suffering, merciful Father who "does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities"; One who has "removed our transgressions from us" "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103:9-10). He is a Father who cared enough for every single one of us that He "gave His only Son" with the pledge that "whoever believes in him, shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus, the Christ, offered His sinless life up to the Father on the cross in place of the sinful lives we've managed to cobble together like ragtag, filthy garments and in exchange He's dressed us in the snow-white robe of His righteousness. Now, when the Father looks at us, He sees His holy Son!

Knowing this, we also know that our dear Father "works all things out for the good of those who love him" and that "nothing, in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). Not even those trials that seem overwhelming; those strained relationships we find ourselves in for years; those debilitating diseases that rob us or those we love of physical or mental abilities; or even life-long battles against addiction. No matter what test we face, God assures us that He's right there in the mix with us by His Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17a). Commenting on that verse, Martin Luther wrote: "The name *helper* shows us how we should think of the Holy Spirit . . . A helper fills a troubled heart with joy towards God. A helper encourages us to be happy that our sins have been forgiven, death has been conquered, heaven has been opened, and God is smiling on us . . . So [we] should remind [ourselves] of this name and title for the Holy Spirit. He is the helper, and we are the troubled and timid ones he helps" (*By Faith Alone*, Martin Luther; 1998 World Bible Publishers, Iowa Falls, IA).

Friends, "you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light"! Walk with a purpose! Serve as a blessing to others as God's Spirit produces in you "the fruit of the light" which "consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth." To that end, Paul writes: "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." God reveals His wise will in the words of sacred Scripture. Both Testaments point to His saving purpose. The Old Testament promises the coming Savior with ever-increasing detail; the New Testament delivers the fulfillment of those prophecies in the coming

Summer Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 A.M. (June thru September 2nd)

7305 208th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 868-9404 - www.lhlc.org, pastortodd@lhlc.org

Page 3 of 4



of God's Son: Jesus of Nazareth. In word and deed Jesus demonstrated the truth that He was the One who was to come: Israel's long-awaited Messiah. But He's also the One Jehovah predicted through His prophet Isaiah when He said: "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth" (49:6).

The salvation of our God comes to the ends of the earth—spreads like wildfire, if you will—as it moves through us to others. As you and I demonstrate by our words and actions, our attitudes and our motives what it means to "live as children of light," those who are still stumbling around with no purpose or direction, who are still caught up in "the fruitless deeds of darkness," may see that we have something they don't have; something they desperately want deep down inside. We have "the fruit of the Spirit" Paul speaks about in his letter to the Galatians; we have His "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (5:22). There's a certain calmness in our approach to life; a deeper wisdom that they sense; an intangible grace.

That's what it means to "live as children of light." "You are the light of the world," the "true light that gives light to every man" has told us. Ours is a walk of repentance and faith. We live in the forgiveness of all those deeds done in darkness—those unwholesome, purposeless self-serving thoughts, words and actions that characterize our sinful nature. And we invite the world to the glorious light of salvation in Jesus Christ. What a noble purpose! What a high calling! What an awesome privilege we have to "live as children of light"! "Let your light"—the light of God's forgiving love in Christ—"shine" so brightly "before [others], that they may see your good deeds and" be led by God's Spirit "to praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16) too! Amen.

Summer Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 A.M. (June thru September 2nd)

7305 208th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 868-9404 - www.lhlc.org, pastortodd@lhlc.org

Page 4 of 4