

HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (2) (Week 23)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:5, 9; 5:1-14; 1 John 4:8, 16; 1:5

The Children of God Walking in Love and Light

- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 5:1 Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children;
- Eph 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.
- Eph 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or greediness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints,
- Eph 5:4 And obscenity and foolish talking or sly, filthy jesting, which are not becoming, but rather the giving of thanks.
- Eph 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolator) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- Eph 5:6 Let no one deceive you with vain words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.
- Eph 5:7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;
- Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
- Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
- Eph 5:10 Proving what is well pleasing to the Lord.
- Eph 5:11 And do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them.
- Eph 5:12 For the things which are done by them in secret it is shameful even to speak of.
- Eph 5:13 But all things which are reproved are made manifest by the light; for everything that makes manifest is light.
- Eph 5:14 Therefore He says, Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.
- 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
- 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
- 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all

Day 1

1 John 3:1 - Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Ephesians 5:1 - Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children;

- I. God's good pleasure is to be one with man and to make man the **same as He is in life and in nature** but not in the Godhead—Eph. 1:5, 9.
- II. As the **children of God**, we are **God-men**, born of God, possessing the life and nature of God, and belonging to the species of God—5:1; 1 John 3:1; John 1:12-13:
 - A. God is our **real, genuine, Father**, and we are His **real, genuine, children**—1 John 3:1; Eph. 5:1.
 - B. The greatest wonder in the universe is that **human beings** could be **begotten of God** and that **sinners** could be made **children of God**—1 John 3:1, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; John 1:12-13.
 - C. Through such an amazing **divine birth** we have received the divine life, the eternal life, as the divine seed sown into our being—1 John 1:2; 3:9.
 - D. Since we have been born of the divine life and possess the divine life, we, the children of God, are **divine persons**—5:11-13; 3:1, 10.
 - E. As those who have been born of God, we have not only the **divine life** but also the **divine nature**—2 Pet. 1:4.
 - F. Because we are the children of God with the life and nature of God, we can be **imitators of God**—Eph. 5:1.
 - G. As the Father's children, having the Father's life and nature, **we can be perfect as our Father is perfect**—Matt. 5:48.

As **believers** we have been **born of God to have eternal life**—the life of God with the divine nature. The life of God is the content of God and God Himself. All that is in God and all that God Himself is are in the life of God. All the fullness of the Godhead is hidden in the life of God. The nature of God is also contained in the life of God. All that He is—whether truth, holiness, light, or love—is derived from His life. Because the life of God is the content of God, in it is hidden the fullness of God, and in it is contained the nature of God Himself. Therefore, when we receive the **life of God**, we receive the **fullness of God**, and we have the **nature of God**.

John 3:15 and 16 speak of having eternal life by believing in the Lord Jesus. Eternal life is the divine life, the uncreated life of God, which is not only everlasting with respect to time but also divine and eternal in nature. For us today this life is actually the resurrected, indwelling Christ. Along with the divine life we also have the divine nature. Thus, through our receiving of the Son of God by believing in His name we were born to have eternal life, which is the life of God with the divine nature. Now, **as believers, we are children of God with the divine life and nature**.

First, the **believers** are **children of God**, and then they gradually grow up to become **sons of God**. In His salvation God makes sinners into sons. The central thought of the book of Romans is that in His salvation God is making sinners His sons with His life and nature so that they may become constituents of the Body of Christ for His expression. Romans 8, in particular, emphasizes sonship. Verse 14 says, "*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*" This indicates that we may know that we are sons of God by the fact that we are **led by the Spirit**. The leading of the Spirit marks us out as being the sons of God in the growth of life. Verse 19 continues, "*The anxious watching of the creation eagerly expects the revelation of the sons of God.*" This verse speaks of the manifestation or the appearing of the sons of God. (*Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 100*)

Galatians 3:26 says, “*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*” **Faith in Christ** brings us into Christ and makes us one with Christ in whom is the sonship. We must be identified with Christ through faith so that in Him we may become sons of God.

When we **believed in Christ**, the processed **Triune God entered into our being to be our life**. This life is divine, spiritual, heavenly, and holy. Entering into us, it caused a spiritual birth to take place, and this birth brought about an organic union between us and the Triune God. Because God has been born into our being, we have become sons of God.

According to the Bible, it is a divine fact that human beings can become sons of God. When we believed in Christ, the divine life with the divine nature—in fact, the divine being of the Triune God Himself—entered into us, and we were born of God to become sons of God. Just as a man’s son partakes of his life and nature, so we as God’s sons partake of the divine life and nature. God’s offspring are His sons possessing the divine life and divine nature. (*Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 100*)

Day 2

1 John 4:8 - He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

1 John 1:5 - And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

III. We need to know and experience **God as love and light**—1 John 4:8, 16; 1:5:

- A. **Love** and **light** are actually **God Himself**; they are God’s being, His essence—4:8; 1:5.
- B. First John says that **God is light** (v. 5) and then that **God is love** (4:8, 16).
- C. **Love**, as the nature of God’s essence, is the **source of grace**, and **light**, as the nature of God’s expression, is the **source of truth**.
- D. When the **divine love appears** to us, it **becomes grace**, and when the divine light shines upon us, it **becomes truth**.

In Ephesians 11 Paul commands us to expose the unfruitful works of darkness. In verse 13 he says, “*But all things which are exposed are **made manifest by the light**; for everything that makes manifest is **light**.*” The Greek word rendered exposed may also be rendered reprove or rebuke.

It is a very difficult matter to expose or rebuke someone. Most people reject a rebuke and feel enmity toward the one who rebukes them. There is an element in the fallen human nature that rejects rebuking, reproving, or exposing. Therefore, if possible, we should not expose or rebuke anyone. However, there are times when rebuking is necessary. At such times, the one who does the rebuking must be sure that he himself is very clean. He is like a surgeon who must cleanse himself of all germs before performing surgery. If you have not been purified, you are not qualified to operate on someone by rebuking or exposing him, for the germs in you will cause the other to be contaminated. The reason most rebukes are not successful is that those who give the rebuke are not pure. Therefore, immediately after the “surgery” infection sets in. Before we can reprove or expose someone, we must be purified, or even sterilized. We must be clean in our thought, motive, feeling, and intention. We must be pure in our heart and in our spirit. This is one aspect of the matter of reproof. (*Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 42*)

Day 3

Ephesians 5:2 - And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

Ephesians 5:8 - For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light

IV. As children of God, we should walk in love and light—Eph. 5:2, 8:

- A. As **grace** and **truth** are the basic elements in 4:17-32, so **love** and **light** are the basic elements of Paul's exhortation in 5:1-33:
1. **Grace** is the **expression of love**, and **love** is the **source of grace**; **truth** is the **revelation of light**, and **light** is the **origin of truth**—1 John 4:8; 1:5.
 2. Love is the **inner substance of God**, and light is the **expressed element of God**; the inner love of God is **sensible**, and the outer light of God is **visible**.
 3. Our **daily walk** as children of God should be constituted with both the **loving substance** of God and the **shining element** of God; this should be the inner source of our walk.
 4. **Walking in love and light** is deeper and more tender than living according to truth and by grace.

In verse 8 Paul says, “*You were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light.*” We were once not only dark but darkness itself. Now we are not only the children of light but light itself. As light is God, so darkness is Satan. We were darkness because we were one with Satan. Now **we are light because we are one with God in the Lord.**

In Ephesians 5:8 Paul exhorts us to “walk as children of light.” As God is light, so we, the children of God, are also the children of light. Because we are now light in the Lord and the children of God, **we should walk as children of light.**

It is rather difficult to point out the difference between truth and light. In our experience we may often realize God as truth to us, as our reality, but sometimes when we enter into God's presence, we sense that we are in the light. At such times, we are not only experiencing reality, but we are in the light itself. Thus, the experience of light is deeper than the experience of truth.

After commanding us to walk as children of light, Paul inserts in verse 9 a parenthetical statement regarding the fruit of the light: “*The fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.*” **Goodness** is the **nature** of the fruit of the light; **righteousness** is the **way or the procedure** by which the fruit of the light is produced; and **truth is the reality**, the real expression (God Himself), of the fruit of the light. The fruit of the light must be good in nature, righteous in procedure, and real in expression, that God may be expressed as the reality of our daily walk. (*Life Study of Ephesians, Message 50*)

Day 4

1 John 3:1 - Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

1 John 4:10 - Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

- B. “Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor”—Eph. 5:2:
1. To walk in love is to walk in intimacy with God—cf. 1 John 3:1:
 - a. In the Father’s presence, we not only enjoy grace, the expression of love, but we also enjoy love itself.
 - b. In our daily walk we should always care for our Father’s feeling, for we live intimately in His tender love.

According to Ephesians 4, we need grace and truth for the life that qualifies us to participate in the building up of the Body of Christ. Chapter five of Ephesians is higher and deeper than chapter four. It goes on to show us that we need to walk in love and light. Love is the source of grace, and light is the source of truth. When love is expressed, it becomes grace. When light shines out, it becomes truth. Christ came from God to express God, to manifest God. When God is expressed and revealed in the Lord Jesus, His love becomes grace and His light becomes truth. When we receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior and our life, we are brought into fellowship with the Father to enjoy Him as love and light. The Son is the expression of love, which to us is grace, and this grace brings us to the source of grace, which is the Father as love. In the Gospel of John there is grace, but in the first Epistle of John there is love. Christ also came to bring us the truth, the reality. When we have the truth, the truth brings us to the source of truth, the Father as light. Jesus Christ brings us to the Father, who is love as the source of grace and who is light as the source of truth. In Ephesians 5 we are children of light walking in love and light. (*The Body of Christ*, Chapter 5)

Day 5

Ephesians 1:4 - Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

Ephesians 6:24 - Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

2. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love as the inner substance of God that we may enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did—5:25:
 - a. In the condition and atmosphere of love, we are saturated with God to be holy and without blemish before Him—1:4.
 - b. The love in which we are rooted for growth and grounded for building is the divine love realized and experienced by us in a practical way—3:17.
 - c. The love of Christ, which is Christ Himself, is immeasurable and knowledge-

- surpassing, yet we can know it by experiencing it—v. 19.
- d. In the love of God in Christ, we hold to truth, that is, to **Christ with His Body**—4:15.
 - e. The Body of Christ builds itself up **in love**; love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—v. 16; 1 Cor. 12:31.
 - f. To **love the Lord in incorruptibility** means to love Him in the new creation and according to all the incorruptible things revealed in the book of Ephesians—6:24.
3. As those who have been regenerated to become God's species, we, the children of God, should be love **because God is love**; since we become God in life and in nature, we also should become love—1 John 4:8, 16.

Ephesians 5:1 says, "*Become therefore imitators of God, as beloved children.*" To live a life of love and light we have One whom we may imitate. We have a Father who is love and who is light. As children of the Father, **we have His life and nature**. The children are spontaneously the imitators of the Father. Every child as an imitator of God is a "xerox copy" of the Father. We are not strangers to God trying to imitate Him. We are children of God, **possessing God's life and enjoying God's nature**. By our Father's divine life we can be imitators of Him.

We also have Christ as our pattern. Ephesians 5:2 says, "*And walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.*" An offering is a gift for fellowship with God, whereas a sacrifice is for redemption from sin. Christ loved us and Christ shines upon us. He is our pattern for us to live a life in love and in light. **By ourselves we could not** love others as Christ loved us. **We can love as He loved because He is our life**. We have Him as our life and as our person. We have a person in us who loved us, and now by this person, in this person, and with this person we can love as He loved. This is organic, something of life.

The life of the children of light qualifies us to participate in the preparation of the bride of Christ. Revelation 19:7 says, "*Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.*" When the wedding of the Lamb comes, we, the children of light, will be a bride to satisfy the One who loves us. To be ready requires preparation. The way to prepare ourselves to be the bride of Christ is **to be the children of light always walking and working in love and light as our Savior did**. We can imitate our Father God and take Christ as our pattern to walk and work in love and light.

(The Body of Christ, Chapter 5)

Day 6

1 John 1:7 - *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.*

Ephesians 5:9 - *(For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),*

- C. “You were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as **children of light**”—Eph. 5:8:
1. As **God is light**, so we, the children of God, are **children of light**—1 John 1:5; Eph. 5:8; John 12:36.
 2. We are not only children of light—**we are light itself**; we are light because **we are one with God in the Lord**—Matt. 5:14; 1 John 1:5.
 3. When we are in the light, we are **outside the realm of right and wrong**—v. 7.
 4. If we walk as children of light, we will bear the fruit described in Ephesians 5:9:
 - a. The fruit of the light must be **good in nature, righteous in procedure, and real in expression**, that God may be expressed as the reality of our daily walk.
 - b. The fruit of the light in **goodness, righteousness, and truth** is related to the **Triune God**:
 - (1) **God the Father** as **goodness** is the nature of the fruit of the light; therefore, goodness in verse 9 refers to God the Father—Matt. 19:17.
 - (2) **Righteousness** refers to **God the Son**, for Christ came to accomplish God’s purpose according to God’s righteous procedure—Rom. 5:17-18, 21.
 - (3) **Truth**, the expression of the fruit of the light, refers to **God the Spirit**, for He is the Spirit of reality—John 14:17; 16:13.
 - c. The **proof** that we are walking as children of light is seen in the **bearing of such fruit**.

As light in the Lord, we should walk as children of light. God is light, and **when we are in Him, we are in light**. As those in the light, we become children of light. **Verse 15** tells us to walk not as unwise but as wise. Foolishness is a kind of darkness. When we walk foolishly, we are walking in darkness. When we walk wisely, we are walking in light. The children of light should walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **To redeem the time is to live in the church by Christ, to live Christ in the church life**. If we do not live the church life, we will waste our time. Before we came to the church life, we wasted many years. To live outside the church life is to waste our time by living in vanity. You may consider that you do not have the time to pray for half an hour, but if a telephone call comes, you may talk for forty minutes in the vanity of your mind. Why would you not spend this time to pray for a certain brother who has been backsliding for years and never comes to the meetings? To pray for such a brother is to redeem your time. To talk on the telephone in the vanity of the mind is to waste your time. Time flies; it never waits for you. You have to redeem it by behaving wisely. To avoid unnecessary talk on the telephone is to redeem the time. Shopping may also be a waste of time. To live Christ for the church life is the unique way to redeem the time. (*The Body of Christ*, Chapter 5)