

*Introduction: Pg. 978*

Echo Reddy . . . On Mothers. I am the father of three, which means I understand how hard mothers work. You deserve honor and appreciate today. Thank you for the daily sacrifice, love and ceaseless investments you make in your children. At the same time, if today is a difficult day for any reason (unfulfilled longings for a child. Difficulty with fertility. Expectations deferred through miscarriage), we are here for you as pastors and a church.

Paris \*\*\***PICTURE**\*\*\* is one of the most prestigious cities and most visited cities in the world. Word has it they have a couple of nice cathedrals, a museum known as the Louvre where there is a picture of a lady named Mona, or something like that. I actually had the rare privilege of visiting Paris for three days with my family when I was in college. The Eiffel Tower is simply breathtaking, but my favorite spot was the Arc de Triomphe. I remember having my picture taken inside of the Arc with all of the laurel wreaths symbolizing victory in my best Rocky Balboa pose.

You may not know that Paris is known as the City of Light . . . Check out that picture. Paris is a beautiful city, the city of Light, but on top of that.

Paris is also the City of Love. It is one of the most romantic cities in the world. Just ask Codi G. Back there. He met his Parisian lady, now his wife, Julie. Parlex vouz?

*FCF*: Boston is a cool city, but we do not enjoy the double distinction of being the city of love and light. Wouldn't that be sweet? What would be even sweeter is that our lives, day by day, reflected . . .

### **“Light & Love” Ephesians 5:1-14**

Ephesians 5:1-14 is going to show us that God has called us to . . .

**The Point: The highest privilege & responsibility of man is to reflect God.**

The way that we reflect him is to live a life of light and to live a life of love. Let's first consider what it means to . . .

#### **I. Live a life of love (5:1-6)**

- *Verse 1*
  - We are called to copy what we see in God. We want his character to increasingly become our character. We want his desires to increasingly become our desires. We want his affections, thoughts, and actions to increasingly become our affections, thoughts, and actions.
  - Whatever we see in God, we want to copy and reproduce what we see.
  - This is our privilege and responsibility. After all, we are his beloved children. Like a dependent child learns from their parents, so we are to learn from our perfect Father.
  - Similarly in verse 2, Paul goes on to say . . .
- *Verse 2*
  - Since the beginning of chapter 4, we have seen the commands to “walk worthy of our calling” (4:1), “walk in holiness” (4:17), and now, “Walk in love.”

- To imitate God *IS* to live a life of love. We should habitually imitate the love of Christ as displayed on the cross. He voluntarily handed over his life and offered a pleasing aroma to God.
- Jesus' death satisfied God's justice, displayed God's love, and accomplished God's salvation.
- We are to walk in love because this is why we have been created and now recreated in Christ.
- When you are unsure what to do in any given situation just apply a twofold litmus test: **Will this imitate God? Will this reflect the cross?**

The scope of history in God's world can be explained through LOVE: **Our World through the lens of Love.**

1. **In love, God created us to enjoy his Love**
2. **We rejected his Love for lesser loves.**
3. **But God, out of his great love, sent Jesus to rescue us.**
4. **We are now forever restored to his perfect love.**

- Verses 3-6 show us "conduct antithetical to love." Verse 2 and the following verses diametrically opposed. We will see how each of these actions undercut true love and fail to imitate God.

### **#1 Sexual immorality fails to imitate the faithfulness of God.**

- We are sexual beings. We have sexual desires. Those sexual desires are to be fulfilled within the context of heterosexual marriage.
- The word translated sexual immorality refers to adultery, prostitution, fornication, and homosexual acts in the NT.
- God reserves sexual union for the union of covenant marriage. He lists it first for a reason. Paul's culture, like our own, was rampant with sexual gratification outside of the context of marriage.
- Through technology, we have 24/7 access to gratify our sinful desires. We need to "keep your head down." WE need accountability. We need to remember that Paul calls us to not let this be named among us.
- One translation says, "do not let there be a hint" of sexual immorality.

T: Closely related to that, we are also to put off impurity and filth because

### **#2 Impurity and filth fail to imitate the holiness of God.**

- "Who can say, 'I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin?'" (Proverbs 20:9)
- We all understand: there is constant temptation, constant pressure, to compromise our purity.
- Like a scratch on a new phone screen or a dent on your car, our sinful desires constantly tempt us to stain the purity God desires in us.
- Filth, trash and impurity are all around us. You guys know we are not legalists around here. Marsha got sick on Tuesday. Really sick. So sick that she could not keep fluids down, so we had to take her to the ER for two bags of IV fluid. In the ER waiting room, they were kind enough to give us the comforting, non-annoying, wonderful viewing pleasure of, you guessed it: TMZ. Ok, please turn off the TMZ. #1) Who cares what Beiber did last weekend? #2) 70-80% of what they talked about and joked about was a glorification of the filth we find in verse 3. I was amazed. This is what my kids are going to be exposed to on a daily basis if we allow them to watch a major network at dinner time. What a shame.
- God is pure. He is holy. He is completely set apart in his moral perfection. To entertain impurity and filth is to undercut our love for him.

### **#3 Covetousness fails to imitate the generosity of God.**

- Once again, Paul moves from actions to what drives those actions: our inward desires.

- We want. Some translations say, “Greedy” We desire that which does not belong to us, even someone else’s body for our own selfish gratification.
- Sexual sin, by the way, is not simply objectifying a person. We are essentially desouling them. What we care about is their physical appearance. We don’t care about their dignity, that they are someone made in the image of God, a brother or sister in Christ or a potential brother or sister in Christ.
- When we covet that which God has not gifted us with, we fail to imitate his generosity.
- God has given us everything we will ever need. To selfishly want more is to fail to love God and be content with him as the giver of all good gifts.
- This is idolatry. It is elevating something we desire over our desire for God.
- The flip side of that is worship. The flip side of that says: “God is enough.” But here’s the real beauty of it all. We can never get all of God because he is infinite and inexhaustible. We can never want too much of God.
- So my invitation to you today is to be greedy, be very, very greedy, but be greedy for God.

#### **#4 Sinful speech (foolish talk, crude joking) fails to imitate the wisdom of God.**

- A dirty mind and a dirty heart lead to dirty talk. Obscene language. Jokes that are off color. Senseless talk that tears others down. We must get rid of it.
- This is not to say that Christians should not enjoy some good, clean humor. Absolutely. God made us to laugh. Haven’t you seen God work in your life and you have to smirk knowing that God has a sense of humor.
- I’m sure Jesus laughed with his friends a lot.
- But to use our tongues for evil is to fail to reflect the wisdom of God.
- In place of all these, we should be grateful. Gratitude should be mark our speech and mark our lives.
- Gratitude is the opposite of self-gratification. When we are grateful we are recognizing what we have comes from God.
- He has given us everything we need. We don’t need another sexual experience not according to his design. We don’t need more material possessions. God gives us what we need.
- Do you see this connection between gratitude and godliness? You show me a grateful person, and I will show you a godly person.

T: If this is what characterizes your life, then you should live with great trepidation because you will have to answer to judgment of God.

- Look at verses 5-6.
- If your life is marked by sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness, look at the results:
  - 1) You have no intermixture in the kingdom of Christ and God.
  - 2) the wrath of God will fall on the “sons of disobedience.”
    - So many people want to take a detour around the wrath of God.
    - Many people, many pastors, deceive with empty words. “Don’t worry about that. God is LOVE. That’s the God of the OT. Jesus is kind of like this hippie who looks at everyone and says, “no worries bro.”
    - “God’s wrath means that he intensely hates all sin.” - Grudem
    - It is okay for us to get upset about what we perceive to be wrong, but not God.
    - If we could even begin to understand how pure God is (“he who dwells in unapproachable light.” He who too glorious for our eye to behold. He has never had a twisted thought. He who is perfect in all his ways. ), If we could see his purity, we would be outraged that it were ever tainted by our grubby little hands and hearts.

No one is walking into the Louvre and throwing a can of acid on the Mona Lisa.  
MARRIED the Masterpiece of God's glory much more scandalous than that.

- If you balk at God exercising his just wrath, what about him inviting you into his kingdom?
- That is what is outrageous!
- We do not harp on the doctrine of hell at Redemption Hill, but we also do not capitulate to a culture that wants a God of sentimental love but not a God consistent, holy, substantial love.

This should be a great incentive to imitating God? If sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness bring the wrath of God, how could we dabble in it?

*T:* After contrasting a life of love with a life of self-indulgence, Paul moves in verse 7 to another contrast: that of darkness and light. Not only should we live a life of light, we must also . . .

## II. Live a life of light (5:7-14)

Why does he use the imagery of light?

- Light illuminates. You can't see where you're going without light.
- Light attracts. It is beautiful. It is eye-catching. It draws people in.
- In the Bible, light represents truth and righteousness (moral purity). Darkness represents ignorance, error, and evil.
- I John 1:5 says, "**God is light and in him is no darkness at all.**" (1 John 1:5)
- Man I love this! You can't escape this imagery. Don't you see God's kindness in that. He chooses to illustrate the most important truths in the most simple *and* comprehensive ways. Think about it: last week we saw that living Christian life is like a wardrobe. Put off and Put on. You wear clothes every day, right? Yep. God wants us to remember that every day.
- You wake up and the sun greets. Every day reminder. Light! Let me give you four reasons we should we live a life of light.

### Light describes believers (7-8).

- Before the incentive was a warning against judgment. Now the incentive is remembering the transformation they have experienced through Christ.
- People not in Christ are described as darkness, their life consistently embodied darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live like it.
- Paul says to "not be partners with them." In other words, do not participate in their lifestyle. We should befriend those who do not yet believe in Christ just like Jesus did. [[We live as a city within a city.]]
- We live as Christians not against the culture, nor of the culture, but Christians in the culture.
- So when Jesus says, "**You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.**" (Matthew 5:14) he means that we are a city within a city.
  - Boston. We live in the city of Boston. That is our physical address. But from a biblical standpoint. Boston is not our ultimate home. Boston is not our fundamental citizenship. Now that we belong to Christ, we are citizens of the city he is building.
  - RHC. So we know live out our values and purpose as those who belong to a greater city, the city Jesus is building.
- We live as the city of God while we live in the city of man.

*T:* Light describes who are as believers. #2.

### Light produces fruit (9-10)

- Look at the end of *verse 8 through 10:*

- Discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Evaluate the paths set before you and choose the course of action that will bring God pleasure.
- Every thought, desire, and action can be described as good or bad, right or wrong, in step with truth or out of step with truth.

T: #3

### Light exposes darkness (11-13).

- Look at vv. 11-12.
- As we live as children of light in the midst of darkness, those who love the darkness will either be drawn in or pushed away by our light. Because either way, our right living exposes, however subtly, the error of their ways.
- Sometimes this happens tacitly. It is obvious without us saying a word. BUT there are times that we should lovingly and firmly denounce shameful ways.
- We should confront injustice and blatant immorality. There is a time to take a stand and point people, with humility and grace, to the better way.

T: Finally . . .

### Light reflects the life of God (14).

- In the gospel of John, light equals life. In fact, John starts his gospel by describing Jesus as the Word of God and the light from God. **John 1:4-5** says, **“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”**
- So what happens when someone hears the gospel is that God begins shining the light of his truth into a person’s heart, the Spirit causes the light to bring them life, and then they are totally made new from the inside-out.
- This is what **2 Corinthians 4:6** talks about: **“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”** Do you see that? . . . .
- Just this week, someone who has been attending Redemption Hill for a few months, experienced God’s salvation in Christ. *Absolutely nothing better!!*
- Light equals life.
- Now, we have the privilege of displaying this light to others and God uses us to communicate the life he gives!
- Amazing!
- We are lesser lights, pointing to the greater light.
- Think about a flood light on a home. Is the \$100 flood light that you can barely see impressive, or is it the \$1M home that it illuminates? The latter!
- We are the flood light pointing to the greater attraction, the one who is truly glorious, truly perfect, truly loving, the true light of true lights: God himself.
- This is what gets me so excited about *verse 14!* Whether this is simply a reminder of our conversion or also a wake up from spiritual lethargy, it reminds us that we are alive!
- We have been raised with Christ. Christ has shone into our hearts and he will shine on us, which probably refers to his blessing and approval on our lives as we live consistent with the new life he has produced in us.
- When someone looks at you do they see LIFE? If someone were to spend a week with you, would they be uplifted? Enlightened? Motivated? inspired toward Christ?
- Mothers: consider the influence you have on your kids. You are with them. Your life holds immense power to influence and shape them for good. But it’s not just mothers. It’s fathers. It’s

brothers and sisters. It's friends and coworkers. It is those in your neighborhood and community group.

- You will influence others. That is inescapable. The question is: **"How will you influence them?"**

*Conclusion:*

As we reflect and pray this morning, let me ask you: How are you reflecting the glory of Christ? How are you pointing others to his greatness?

Let's wield great influence by living a life of love and living a life of light. Let's pray.