



## 2020 July Sermon Series: Be Imitators of God

### Message #2: Imitators of God Walk in Light

#### Getting the Nod:

#### Pre-Sermon Video: **Your Light**

**Soccer Horn Blast. WAKE UP YE IMITATORS OF GOD!** Last week I began a sermon series in Ephesians 5:1-21 that I am calling, “Be Imitators of God.” The scriptural passage we are using is found in Ephesians 5. In his letter to the Ephesian Christians, the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:1a, “Therefore be imitators of God.” That is Paul’s overall command for this section of Scripture.

#### **He then gave three ways in which Christians are to be imitators of God.**

- First, Christians are to walk in love (which we examined last week).
- Second, Christians are to walk in light (which we will examine today).
- And third, Christians are to walk in wisdom (which we will examine next time).

**So, let’s read about walking in light in Ephesians 5:8-14:** NLT | Eph 5:8 For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So, live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. 10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. 11 Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. 12 It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. 13 But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, 14 for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, **“Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”**

**Illustration of Christ and the light in the Feast of Ingathering:** The men in Jesus’ day were required to go to Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate three great Feasts: (1) the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, (2) the **Feast of Harvest**, and (3) the **Feast of Ingathering**, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Exodus 23:14-17).

**The Feast of Ingathering took place around mid-October and lasted for 7 days.** It was associated with the end of the harvest season. The people of God also camped in shelters, or tents, in the open fields outside the city of Jerusalem. It was a reminder of the wilderness wandering of the people of God; hence, this Feast was also known as the Feast of Booths.

**During the second year of Jesus’ ministry, he was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Ingathering.** Commentator Kent Hughes says that according to Jewish history, **the final evening of the Feast** was a spectacular nighttime ceremony **known as the Illumination of the Temple**. That event **took place in the Temple treasury before four massive golden candelabra topped with huge torches**. It is said that **the candelabra were as tall as the highest walls of the Temple**, and that at the top of three candelabra were **mounted great bowls holding sixty-five liters of oil**.

**There was a ladder for each candelabrum**, and when that evening came, healthy young priests would carry oil up to the great bowls and light the protruding wicks. Huge flames leapt from **these torches illuminated not only the Temple but all of Jerusalem and its surrounding fields**. The Mishnah tells us that “Men of piety and good works used to dance before them [the candelabra] with burning torches in their hands singing songs and praise and countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and instruments of music.”

**This exotic rite celebrated the great pillar of fire (the glorious cloud of God's presence) which led the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness** and spread its fiery billows over the Tabernacle.

**The profound proclamation from Jesus:** The morning after the Illumination of the Temple, Jesus spoke to a great crowd of people and proclaimed, "I am the light of the world" (**John 8:12**)

NLT | Jn 8:12 **Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."**

**Christ was saying in effect, "The pillar of fire** that came between you and the Egyptians, **the cloud that guided you by day in the wilderness** and illumined the night and enveloped the **Tabernacle**, the glorious cloud that filled Solomon's Temple, **IT IS ME!!!** "I am the light of the world.

**Transition:** Jesus is the Light of the World! He is the Source of the light we have. We have the light that leads to life. **So, how can we be imitators of God by walking in light?**

### God's Take on Walking in Love:

#### Why Walking in Light Imitates God:

1. **We reflect the existence of Christ. (5:8-10) Use a powerful light to prove the point.**

- **We become messengers of HOPE!!** Paul says, "We used to be full of darkness. But now live as people of light!" And our lights are good, right, and true!!!
- **68 times the word light means "Fire".** That means we are to be people on fire for God! We are to be people of passion. We are to be people whose fire spreads to others.
- **We are to be people whose faith is a beacon of light comparable to a lighthouse on the shore. When people see us walking in light...** we are to see ourselves as a **SOURCE OF HOPE** for **those who suffer...** for **those who are broken...** for **those who need an answer** for the chaos and confusion in their lives... for those who are **forgotten and abandoned...** for those who are **burdened for their prodigal child...** and for **those who have found their sinfulness to now be empty and putrefying.**
- **Application:** Imitators of God carry a light of hope for all to see.
- **Stories of Hope:**
  - Ken Roberts
  - Michael Saettel
  - Rick Dailey
  - Ray and Renee Rowland
  - **We need some more stories of HOPE generated by the LIGHT THAT GOD HAS PUT IN US!!!**

**And our lights are meant to encourage other believers.** Look at verse 10, **10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.**

The phrase "try to discern" (*dokimazo*) means "to prove, to discern, to distinguish or clarify, and to approve. It has the notion of proving a thing whether it is worthy or not." In other words, as Christians exhibit what is good and right and true, they will be the evidence to prove that they are who they claim to be, children of God and of light." **Are we lights that show God's HOPE TO THE HOPELESS and LIVES THAT VALIDATE JESUS CHRIST?**

2. We expose what's in the darkness. (5:11-14a) **Still using the light to make the point.**

- **Look at verse 11:** 11 Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. 12 It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. 13 But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, 14 for the light makes everything visible.
- **How do we take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness and yet still expose them?**
- **Illustration of Amy Carmichael:** Amy Carmichael was born in Ireland in 1867 and became a missionary with the Church of England. She went to India and opened an orphanage and founded a mission there. She served in India for 55 years without taking a break or vacation. She wrote many books about her missionary work there. **However, what is less known about her was the burden she carried.** She wanted to go to India to **expose the temple prostitution of children in India.** But, because of the Victorian sensibilities of the time, she was told that it was impolite for her to mention the horror that thousands of children faced. Thankfully, Amy was committed to exposing the unfruitful works of darkness. She eventually did raise the money and did expose the unfruitful works of darkness. **She made a difference! Our LIGHTS ARE GIVEN TO US TO CHANGE DARKNESS INTO LIGHT.**
- **Sometimes we expose darkness by simply our presence in darkness.** Our light can shine by simply living a righteous good life in front of those who live in darkness.
- **Sometimes we must speak up.** Our resource for exposing the unfruitful works of darkness is the word of God. It's okay to speak what we believe from scripture. , **Without making it a debate or using the Bible as a club...** you can show confidence in what you believe... which in turn exposes the darkness.
- **Sometimes our lights are meant to protect our Church Family:** We are a family and we MUST BE UNIFIED IF WE ARE TO BE VICTORIOUS IN THE ATTACKS THAT COME!!
- **(Select 6-8 volunteers to build a wall to illustrate the linking shields.)**
- **Application:** Being IMITATORS OF GOD we live our lives as a penetrating light for God to use to expose sin and evil.

3. We light the path for unbelievers. (5:14b)

- 14 for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, **“Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”**
- **“O sleeper”** describes every unbeliever who walks in darkness, and is **unaware of his lost condition and tragic destiny.** That is why we who walk in light must exhort unbelievers to “awake”!
- **“Arise from the dead”** is the exhortation to repent. It is an appeal to the unbeliever to turn from the dead ways of sin.
- **“Christ will shine on you”** is the good news of the gospel that God has provided a remedy for every sinful who person who repents of sin and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners. **So, the message is a message of HOPE!!!**
- **Illustration of Billy Graham and the Pro-Golfer:** “A well-known professional golfer was playing in a tournament with President Gerald Ford, fellow pro Jack Nicklaus, and Billy Graham. After the round was over one of the other pros on the tour asked, ‘Hey, what was it like playing with the President and Billy Graham?’ The pro said with disgust, ‘I don’t need Billy Graham stuffing religion down my throat!’ With that he headed for the practice tee. His friend followed, and after the golfer had pounded out

his fury on a bucket of golf balls, he asked, 'Was Billy a little rough on you out there?' The pro sighed and said with embarrassment, '**No, he didn't even mention religion.**'

- '**Astonishingly, Billy Graham had said nothing about God, Jesus, or religion**, yet the pro stomped away after the game accusing Billy of trying to ram religion down his throat.' What had happened? Simply this: The evangelist had so reflected Christlikeness that his presence put him under conviction! He knew he was 'lost. In the life of Billy Graham, the lost pro had sensed the presence of our Holy God.' (Sproul, R.C. The Holiness of God. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1985.)

**Transition: Friends, we imitate God by walking in light.** And we walk in light by exhibiting light, exposing darkness, and exhorting unbelievers. Let us make a commitment to do that every day so as to reflect the light of God that is in us.

### **Drawing the Net:**

**Illustration: My sister loves lighthouses. She collects them and vacations near them.** A man was visiting a lighthouse and he asked the keeper, "Are you not afraid to live here? It is a dreadful place to be in constantly." "No," replied the man, "I am not afraid; we never think of ourselves when we're here." "Never think of yourselves! How is that?"

**The reply was a good one:** "We know that we are perfectly safe, and only think of having our lamps brightly burning, and keeping the reflectors clear, so that those in darkness and danger may be saved."

**Application: Isn't this what Christians ought to do.** We are safe in a house built on a Rock which cannot be moved by the wildest storm; and in a spirit of holy unselfishness they let their light shine across the dark waters of sin and suffering, that they may be guided into the harbors of safety. (The Quiver)

**This morning every one of us will do something to shine their light:** There are people in this building hurting today... possibly broken and in need of prayer. There are those suffering here in their relationships, in their parenting, some who are still waiting for your prodigal to come home.

Someone here has a secret that no one knows... except God. You've been carrying it too long. You need prayer. Someone needs some joy to replace your depression. Someone is ill and afraid of what the prognosis will be. Or somebody here just needs a hug from heaven.

**If you are in need of prayer... would you let us pray for you? Without sharing the details... would you like for people to lift you up this morning? If so, just stand... and we will pray for you... cause we have seen the light... and we know of His power. Let us pray...**