

Familiar With The Darkness

Ephesians 5:1-11

Isn't it wonderful today to know Jesus as Saviour? If you do not know Him today as your Saviour, I pray that before this program is over that you will receive Him as your Lord and Saviour. Stay tuned and you'll hear how that you, too, can know Jesus as your Saviour.

Today, we're going to be looking in the book of Ephesians chapter 5. But before we look there, let me once again invite you to look at our website, www.LRWM.org. You can go to the website and download a free transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." You can also go to the website and hear rebroadcasts of "It's a Good Life."

While you're there, why not leave us a prayer request. If you've recently received Jesus as your Saviour, we want to pray with you and thank you and thank God that you have decided to follow the Lord. If you have never trusted Jesus as your Saviour but God's been dealing with your heart and you're just a little confused as to what to do, go to the website today and leave us a prayer request, and I'll pray with you. I'll pray for you that God would lead you into all truth. And if you're a Christian and you're serving God today, I want to rejoice with you that God is blessing your life. Why not share with me a testimony of how God is using you in His ministry today. Now, go to the website, www.LRWM.org and leave us a request today. We want to pray with you.

Now, in Ephesians chapter 5, we're going to read a few verses here. In verse 1, it says: *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*² *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*³ *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among*

*you, as becometh saints;*⁴ *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*⁵ *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*⁶ *Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*⁷ *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*⁸ *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*⁹ *(For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)*¹⁰ *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Now notice verse 11 ...And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them].*

You know, I've had occasion to go into a restaurant, and maybe you have experienced this same thing, but I've had an experience...an occasion to go into a restaurant before where they must have loved darkness rather than light. Now, I've stumbled through the darkness of those dimly lit caverns, fumbled for a chair, and mumbled that a flashlight would be very helpful. And as the food arrived, I ate more by faith than by sight. Has that happened to you? Gradually, I began to make out objects a little more clearly, and I would have you to know today that we are living in the dark. The closing chapter of the age is dominated by the prince and powers of darkness. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Night is far spent. The blackness is more extensive and more excessive as it deepens just before the dawn. Mammoth Cave is not limited to Kentucky. It's universal.

Now, I want to share with you a few things today from the Word of God and share with you some of the things going on in the world today.

Man has never had more artificial illumination and less true light than we have today. Bodily, man walks in unprecedented brilliance while his soul dwells in unmitigated night. Man can release a nuclear glory that out dazzles the sun, and with it, he plans his own destruction. Man can put satellites in the sky, and left to himself, he's a wandering star to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. The depths of present-day human depravity are too vile for any word in our language to describe. We're not seeing ordinary moral corruption today, but evil, double distilled and compounded in weird, uncanny, and demonic combinations and concoctions of inequity never heard of a generation ago.

And I would have you know today that this putrefaction of the carcass of civilization is not limited to Skid Row, those people who are down and out, those people who are living on the streets. No, it's not limited to them. It shows up in the top brackets of society. There's plenty of prodigals, those people who have trusted Jesus. There's plenty of these people who live morally, quote/unquote, among swine while garbed in purple and fine linen. Man would rather live in the glories of this world, even as a Christian, than to live as a Christian.

We not only live in the dark; we get used to it just as I was saying earlier about being in that restaurant. Our eyes become accustomed. Today, there is a slow, sinister brainwashing process going on, and by it, we are being gradually desensitized to evil. Little by little, sin is made to appear less sinful until the light within us becomes darkness. Our magazines and newspapers and periodicals are loaded with accounts of sordid crime. All sorts of things are going on never imagined. Ten years ago we couldn't imagine all of the sordid things that are happening in our world today. Our nation is engulfed in a tidal wave of pornographic filth coming over the Internet, coming through our

television sets, right into our own living rooms. Now, I'm not telling you to get rid of your Internet. I'm not telling you to get rid of the television in your living room. What I'm saying is this. You need to watch the things that are good. You need to understand that those things coming into our homes are...the things that are bad are desensitizing us to the dark. These things that are of the dark should not be mandating what we do with our lives.

And we see that children today are getting used to the dark because we have let down...we as adults, we as the parents of these children have let Sodom and Gomorrah come right into our living rooms and into our homes through the Internet. We get used to it. "Oh, well, it's not so bad." That's how the devil wants you to think today. He wants you to think that Sodom is not so bad. Well, Lot didn't think it was that bad either, but we know that he accepted the things of the world, just as people today as a matter of course take in the world's art. They respect it and the world's literature, its music and its language. We learn to live with it without an inner protest. Lot did the same thing and lost his family. He lost what he had in Sodom. He was a very important man there, but he lost what he had because of his familiarity with the world. He would rather have fame and fortune, the good things, quote/unquote, of this world instead of having the blessedness of God.

Now there are many Lots today. Modern Lots tell us we should hobnob with Sodom and get chummy with Gomorrah in order to convert them. Such people do not turn the light on in Sodom. They merely get used to the dark. We think we're going to change somebody, but I've got news for you today. We change no one. It's God. It's the Holy Spirit of God that convicts hearts and brings people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We can do nothing in ourselves. We cannot turn this world into light. We cannot turn someone to the Lord. It has to be the Spirit

of God, and we are not going to lead that person to the Lord by becoming more and more like the world.

Now, if you sit in the dark long enough today, you'll get used to it. You start thinking it's growing brighter and brighter. Men who live too long in darkness fancy the day is dawning. We call it broadminded tolerance, and what it is really is peaceful coexistence with evil. Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He wasn't chummy with the devil. He told the devil exactly the way it was, and we need to speak out today and take a stand against the evil that's in the world.

Now, people get used to the things of the world, and it becomes easier and easier to fraternize with unbelievers until false doctrine becomes less and less objectionable. The same danger exists in regard to worldliness. The person used to the dark renounces what he calls the Phariseeism or the Puritanism of earlier days with a good word for dancing, smoking, and even a cocktail every now and then. You say, "Well, Preacher, now you're meddling." No, I'm letting you see and hear. I hope you're understanding that we become desensitized to the things of this world as being bad. Of course, we don't get used to the dark all of a sudden. Listen to this:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen,
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.¹

Do not get too close to the world. Separate yourself from the world. Now, we are in the world, but we are not of the world. We need to tell people how to be saved as Christians. We need to tell people that they need to come out of the darkness and into the light. How can we do

that if we as Christians are walking in the dark ourselves? We need to rededicate ourselves to the love of God. Let the Holy Spirit work in us and through us that the Holy Spirit can convict that unsaved person and help them understand that they need to come out of the dark and into the light. Jesus said that He was the Saviour. In John 8:12, he said, *I am the light of the world.* We see in Psalm 119:105, *Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.* Get into the Word. Matthew 5:14 says, *Ye are the light of the world.* And then in John 3:20, we see that *everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.*

Our business as Christians is to let our light shine. Ephesians 5:11, once again, says, *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them].*

If you're unsaved today, if you've never trusted Jesus as your Saviour, let me invite you to do so right now. "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I know I can't save myself. I receive you as my Saviour right now." If you'll pray a prayer like that and believe it in your heart and take Jesus by faith, He'll save you today.

If you're a Christian and you're not serving Him, may I invite you to get things right with Him right now. "Lord Jesus, forgive me for not doing what you would have me to do."

Until this same time next week, this is Lewis Woodard. Let me invite you to tune in when you'll hear me once again say, "It's a good life." May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.

¹ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, 4 vols. (London, 1733-34), Epistle II, part V.