

Sermon by Pastor Steve Murray, March 23, 2014

Sermon Series: God is For You!

Sermon Title: Live wisely Ephesians 5:8-20

**Have you ever needed to be rescued?**

Every rescue is compelling for the one being rescued. *Snatched from death's jaws!*  
Some on big mountains, some in the ocean, others in war zones. All memorable!

**In his letter to the Colossians 1:13-14 Paul writes:**

*God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**Rescue. What emotions does that word elicit in you? Fear, relief, gratitude?**

We can escape bad situations but *rescue* implies something we can't do ourselves.  
It's not *helped*, or *assisted* but *rescued*. *Saved* is another way of saying *rescued*.

**Our rescuer, our Savior Jesus, also reigns as our Lord.**

**Dominion of darkness** describes the usurping rule of Satan based on deception, ignorance, evil, alienation, falsehood, destruction and sin. It leads to *death*.

**Kingdom of the Son** is the righteous rule of God by revelation, love, wisdom, truth, goodness, reconciliation, redemption and peace. It leads to *life*.

**Which kingdom would you rather live in? This is not a silly question!**

It's *for* everyone but not everyone *wants* it. I like the way Joshua expressed it:  
*If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.* Joshua 24:215

**Perhaps you are sorting that out. We would like to help you do that!**

If you *have* accepted God's grace in Christ here's how Paul describes you:

<sup>8</sup> *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.* Ephesians 5:8

**Let that sink in. Do you really believe it? If so, Paul says:**

*Live as children of light*

<sup>9</sup> *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)*

<sup>10</sup> *and find out what pleases the Lord.* Ephesians 5:8-10

**This isn't based on how you *feel*, but to whom you belong and owe your life.**

**Living to please oneself is *self-referential* and *self-reverential*.**

*It's spiritual recidivism*: returning to what you've been released and rescued from.

Living to please yourself stunts your spiritual growth.

The Lord spoke about this through the prophet Jeremiah saying:

"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. Jeremiah 2:13

**Ask yourself: *Is my life committed to pleasing the Lord or pleasing me?***

Living to please the Lord is the most deeply satisfying way to live. It *pleases* us!

**Living to please ourselves is a fog that engulfs us in darkness.**

Why drink from a polluted cistern when you can have God's living water?

Paul spoke of *having a form of godliness but denying its power.* 2 Timothy 3:5

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**In Ephesians 5:11 Paul counsels us saying:**

<sup>11</sup> Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup> It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.

***Living in God's light is the antidote to darkness not an accommodation to it!***

BTW, don't make other people's sin your focus until you have dealt with yours!

Remember, Jesus said: *first take the plank out of your own eye...*

**What does Paul mean by *everything that is illuminated becomes a light*?**

*Confession* is a light, *repentance* is a light, *forgiveness* and *reconciliation* is a light.

In that *redemptive* posture we become a light reflecting God's grace in Christ!

<sup>14</sup> This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

**Christ the light of the world lights us up and shines a light for us to walk by.**

<sup>15</sup> Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:14-16

**So what does it look like to live wisely with God? Paul tells us:**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Ephesians 5:17

**Rise up and wise up! Understanding God's will is a *guide* and a *goal*.**

*Embrace* his covenant and *respect* his Commandments. *Live in grace, walk in love!* Use time, talents and treasure wisely. Practice generosity and compassion.

Be his people, build his kingdom, care for creation, study his word, and be fruitful.

**Paul then speaks directly to a problem in the churches in Asia (Turkey):**

<sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Ephesians 5:18

**It appears he is rebuking the *culture* for alcohol-fueled immorality!**

So he instructs them to be filled with *God* and make the *Lord* their standard:

Instead, be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:18-20

**BTW, what is debauchery?**

Debauchery *perverts* good things through abuse and misuse.

Notably money, sex and power. Debauchery is a *symptom* of a sick and dying soul.

**Should we accept it? No! We *answer* it *unrestrained* in Jesus' name!**

Let's call out in *gratitude* to God for rescuing us from the domain of darkness!

Let's make the most of every opportunity to *proclaim* the kingdom of the Son!

God is for you!

Live wisely

Ephesians 5:8-20

Have you ever needed to be rescued? Colossians 1:13-14

We can *escape* bad situations but *rescue* implies something we can't do ourselves.

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It's not *helped*, or *assisted* but *rescued*. *Saved* is another way of saying *rescued*.

Our *rescuer*, our *Savior* Jesus, also reigns as our *Lord*.

*Dominion of darkness* describes the usurping rule of Satan. It leads to *death*.

*Kingdom of the Son* is the righteous rule of God. It leads to *life*. Joshua 24:15

Ephesians 5:8-10

This isn't based on how you *feel*, but to whom you belong and owe your life.

Living to please oneself is *self-referential* and *self-reverential*.

Living to please yourself stunts your spiritual growth.

Jeremiah 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:5; Ephesians 5:11-13

Do not make other people's sin your focus until you have dealt with yours!

*Confession* is a light, *repentance* is a light, *forgiveness* and *reconciliation* is a light.

Ephesians 5:14

Christ the light of the world lights us up and shines a light for us to walk by.

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Our *rescuer*, our *Savior* Jesus, also reigns as our \_\_\_\_\_.

*Dominion of darkness* describes the \_\_\_\_\_ rule of Satan. It leads to \_\_\_\_\_.

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Joshua 24:15; Ephesians 5:8-10

This isn't based on how you \_\_\_\_\_, but to whom you belong and owe your life.

Living to please oneself is *self*-\_\_\_\_\_ and *self*-\_\_\_\_\_.

Living to please yourself \_\_\_\_\_ your spiritual growth.

Jeremiah 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:5; Ephesians 5:11-13

Do not make other people's sin your focus until you have dealt with \_\_\_\_\_!

\_\_\_\_\_ is a light, \_\_\_\_\_ is a light, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is a light.

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So what does it look like to live \_\_\_\_\_ with God? Ephesians 5:17

Rise up and wise up! Understanding God's will is a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ his covenant and \_\_\_\_\_ his Commandments. Ephesians 5:18-20

Debauchery \_\_\_\_\_ good things through abuse and misuse.

Notably \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Debauchery is a \_\_\_\_\_ of a sick and dying soul.

We must \_\_\_\_\_ it *unrestrained* in Jesus' name!

Let's call out in \_\_\_\_\_ to God for rescuing us from the domain of darkness!

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## Read Think Pray

**Read** Ephesians 5:8-20

<sup>8</sup> *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*

*Live as children of light* <sup>9</sup> *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)*  
<sup>10</sup> *and find out what pleases the Lord.*

<sup>11</sup> *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

<sup>12</sup> *It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.* <sup>13</sup> *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.*

<sup>14</sup> *This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

<sup>15</sup> *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,*

<sup>16</sup> *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.*

<sup>18</sup> *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,*

<sup>19</sup> *speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.*

*Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,* <sup>20</sup> *always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Think

We live in a culture confused and divided over what constitutes *fruitless deeds of darkness*. Based on what you have read thus far in Ephesians what do you think Paul is referring to?

All beliefs and behaviors have personal and social implications and everyone suffers when spiritual and moral darkness descends on the land. Historically the Church has taught that *fruitless deeds of darkness* are actions that distort God’s truth, deface his creation, diminish the Lordship of Christ and disturb the unity of his church. These are spiritual strongholds that have spiritual, economic, political, social and environmental impact. They create cultural decline and decay. They require repentance and prayer.

In Christ they are reversible when people *wake up, understand what the Lord’s will is, live as children of light and find out what pleases the Lord*. When this happens on a large scale it is called a spiritual revival or awakening. One of my professors at Fuller was Dr. J. Edwin Orr, a Fellow of Oxford University. His specialty as an historian was documenting the profound spiritual transformation unleashed when God’s people agree with God, repent of sin, seek God in prayer and bear witness to Christ. Our culture could use spiritual revival, awakening and renewal. Let it begin with you!

## Pray

Pray for spiritual awakening and renewal in your life, in your family and friends, in our congregation and in our city and country. Do an audit of your life and identify any fruitless deeds of darkness and confess them to the Lord. By faith repent of them as you commit your ways to God. Seek counsel and support in addressing the beliefs and behaviors that darken your soul and discourage your spirit. Agree with God about what he says in his word. Accept his forgiveness and grace in Christ. Bless others in his name.