



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Fourth Sunday in Lent (A) – Ephesians 5:8-14

Focus: *Live as Children of Light*

word of life

“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light...”
(Ephesians 5:8 NRSV)

Read Ephesians 5:8-14

Most biblical scholars assert that the letter to the Ephesians was written between 80-100 AD by an anonymous Christian (perhaps a disciple or companion of Paul). The central theme of the letter is the encouragement of the newly-baptized Gentile Christians in Ephesus. The author structures much of the letter by stating an indicative phrase (“you are light”) followed by an imperative phrase (“live as children of light”).

1. *Can you think of other indicative/imperative phrases in the Bible?*
2. *What difference does this structure make for our understanding of faithful living?*

The verses assigned for today are a reminder to the Ephesians (and to all Christians) of their identity. They are children of light—called by God to be light in a dark world. The author encourages and exhorts the church in Ephesus to be true to their identity in their daily lives. One can hear echoes of the children’s song, “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” We are light; that’s who we are. Therefore, if we are true to who we are, we do not engage in works of darkness. Rather, we are encouraged by the words from Ephesians, “Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:10 NRSV)

3. *How do you find out what is pleasing to the Lord?*
4. *What are some ways you have been a light in your daily living?*

Note the contrast of darkness and light in the text. We hear this theme in the gospel and the letters of John: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (John 1:5 NRSV) The author of Ephesians does not say that the new converts were **in** darkness until they entered into the light. No, they **were** darkness—the embodiment of sin; and through God’s grace, they are made light—the embodiment of Christ’s light. Note also the contrast of past present, and future: “For **once** you were darkness, but **now** in the Lord you are light. **Live** [the future] as children of light.” (Ephesians 5:8 NRSV) God calls us to become who we, by God’s great love, already are.

5. *What does it mean to you to **be** darkness and light?*

The word for “live” in this verse might be literally translated as “walk around.” The implications are clear—we are called to live out our identity, to not just “talk the talk,” but to “walk the walk.” This walking leads the faithful away from the unfruitful works of darkness which are exposed by the light. It leads the faithful to the fruit of the light “...found in all that is good and right and true.” (Ephesians 5:9 NRSV)

6. *Try using the phrase “walk around” in place of the word “live” as you read the key verse for today (Ephesians 5:8). How does that sound and feel to you?*
7. *Does the change in the wording weaken or enhance the meaning of the verse? How so?*

Our lesson ends with a verse of an early Christian hymn: “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5:14 NRSV) Christ shines on us and transforms us from darkness to light. God has made us to be light and calls us to live out who we are as we “walk the walk” of faith.

Word among us

“Man, you really do walk the walk!”

The words seemed out of place when they were spoken. They were said on a used car lot. A father and teenage son were car shopping. They had endured the relentless sales pitch of the car dealership and the high pressure arm-twisting of the salesperson. It was hard to get away. Finally, the father said, “We want to look at some other dealerships. But we’ll come back to let you know what we decide.” “Yeah, right!” said the dealer said incredulously as the car shoppers walked away.

The father and son went to another dealership and found the car they wanted. They signed all the forms and arranged for the car to be picked up. As they drove away, the father turned onto the highway and drove back to their first stop. The father explained that they had purchased a different car from another dealer, but they came back, the father said, even though they didn’t need to, because “I gave you my word.” It was then that the unlikely words were spoken by the used car salesperson, “Man, you really do walk the walk!”

1. Give some other examples of when you have heard the phrase, “Walk the walk.”
2. What does it say about a person’s character if this phrase is used to describe him/her?

“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light.” (Ephesians 5:8 NRSV) In Christ, we have been made light. We are adopted as God’s children. Our identity is crystal clear. And our identity as children of light informs and shapes how we are to live. We are called to be true to our identity, to be light in a dark world. We are called to “walk the walk” so that how we live reflects who we are.

3. If someone asked you, “Who are you?” how would you answer?
4. If someone asked you, “Who has God made you to be?” how would you answer?
5. If someone would observe you in your daily living, would they see who God has called you to be?

faith practice in daily life

Live among God’s faithful people

In our baptismal liturgy, the forces of darkness are renounced, and the power of God’s light is bestowed on the newly baptized. After prayers are offered for the new member of the body of Christ, a candle is presented and these words are spoken, “Let your light so shine before others that they might see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

In baptism, we are given our identity as children of light. As we live among God’s faithful people, we are called to “walk the walk”—to live in ways that reflect who we are. May God give us the strength and courage to live out our calling as children of light.

6. What does it mean for you to “walk the walk” as a child of the light?

Prayer

O God of light, I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus. Help me live true to my identity given me in baptism to be your child of light. Amen

last word

Each day choose to walk as a child of light.

Daily Faith Practices

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2014 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.

www.elca.org/dailyfaithpractices