

In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, who called us out of darkness into the light of salvation. Amen.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. ¹⁰ Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, ¹¹ and do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention the things that are done by people in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes things visible. ¹⁴ Therefore it is said, “Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

This is God’s Word.

Dear Fellow Children of Light,

That is what Jesus calls us in this portion of scripture, “Children of light.” He tells us to “**Live as Children of Light,**” by “**Leaving the Darkness,**” and by “**Reflecting the Son,**” where Son is spelled S-O-N for the Son of God.

I. We are light but we were once darkness. What do you think about when you hear that word, “Darkness?” Usually we associate darkness with the night and sometimes fear. Little kids like to have a night light in their rooms because they might be afraid of the monsters under the bed or afraid they won’t be able to find Mom or Dad if they wake up in the middle of the night.

Even adults are sometimes afraid of the dark. Some of the larger cities I have lived in had certain sections of town you didn’t walk around in after it got dark because that is when you might be attacked or mugged. That is when bad things seem to happen.

Even when we are someplace familiar, like our own homes, if the lights go out at night during a thunderstorm, we may stumble around, bumping into things trying to find a flashlight or candle or some source of light.

We even use the term, “he’s in the dark,” to indicate someone who doesn’t have a clue about what is going on around them. Being in the dark physically is not always fun, we are more comfortable in the light, but being in the dark spiritually is even worse.

To be in the dark spiritually is to be spiritually blind, guided by the world – to be guided by something with no absolutes, especially absolute truth. To be guided by something that is constantly changing. To be in the dark is not only to be guided by the world but to be part of that spiritual blindness, stumbling around without light.

To be in the dark spiritually is to be spiritually dead, unable to do anything to save ourselves. Anyone who is dead can’t see anything and so to be spiritually dead is to be unable to see the light of salvation found in Jesus our Savior. And that is what Paul tells us we once were – spiritually dead, spiritually blind – complete darkness, but now that has changed. We are “Light in the Lord.”

We are just the opposite. We are alive. The light in us is the Light of the World – faith in Jesus our Savior. That light cures our blindness and is a lamp that lights the path for our feet. It guides us through life. Light comes to us through faith. The Holy Spirit placed that light in our hearts when he created faith there so we could believe in Jesus as our Savior.

That's what happened to Kuper this morning. He was born without faith in Jesus – you might say he was born into darkness but this morning the Holy Spirit gave him the gift of faith through Baptism and brought him into the light of salvation. Even as a baby, he now believes in Jesus and is a child of God. Like us, he is a child of the light.

Paul tells us that since we are Children of the Light, we are to live as Children of the Light and he gives us some standards. Goodness – to be upright and have good moral standards. Righteousness – to do what is right in the eyes of God. To let God's Word guide our lives and not the standards of the world. Truth – To follow the Truth found in God's Word which is an absolute truth that never changes. We do these things with the help of the Holy Spirit and by being active in our faith.

For we are either Children of Light or Children of Darkness – spiritually alive or spiritually dead – believers or unbelievers. There is nothing in between. Things that are alive, have signs of life and that is what Paul is addressing here. How we show we are spiritually alive, because it is so easy to fall into APATHY. Apathy is a form of laziness – knowing you should be doing something but putting it off because you just can't get to fired up about it. Paul tells us, **“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”** Reflect the light of salvation that is in your hearts. The salvation Christ won for each of us on the cross. Reflect that salvation in all we do. Reflect that salvation won for you by the Son – that's the Son of God.

II. How do we know what to reflect? Paul tells us to, **“Find out what pleases the Lord.”** In other words, to look to God's Word and reflect the joy and peace we have through the forgiveness of sins. Tell how Jesus paid for those sins on the cross and how the Holy Spirit works through the Word and the Sacraments to bring that forgiveness to us.

Reflect the Son (S-O-N) by the way you live your life. Doing everything to the Glory of God. Taking a little bit of time each day for prayer. Not praying in public, like the Pharisee who wanted everyone to see, but taking some quiet time with God to share your joys, your fears, and your requests – taking a little time each day reading God's Word, so that when someone asks you how you are able to handle the pressures of life, you are ready to give an answer – you are ready to point to God's word and explain how God helps you because he promises, **“Never will I leave you, Never will I forsake you.”** In other words he is always with us helping us through those difficult times.

Paul also writes that we reflect the Son by the way we deal with the sinful world around us. He writes, **“Do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them.”** That's not always easy to do. Sometimes our friends want us to do something that isn't right – we may even think it's not really a big sin and so we may be tempted to follow along just to remain part of the group, but Paul says, “have nothing to do with sin, and not only that, we are to expose sin.” In other words, to acknowledge that what is being proposed is wrong.

Even when we don't follow the crowd, a lot of times we don't speak up either and that really is condoning the sin by remaining silent. What you might call "silent approval." But Paul tells us, "Live as Children of the Light." Something that is alive is active – it has signs of life and so don't stand idly by, but take action. Not an easy thing to do, but that is how we reflect the Son – that is how we reflect God's Word that guides our lives. That is how we use the light to expose sin so it's emptiness is clearly seen.

God gave us life so that we might live our lives for him – Let people see the Light of Jesus that lives in you.

Live as Children of the Light so that people have no doubt that you are alive with the Gospel. Reflect the Son in your life. **"Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Amen.**