

Texts, ESV: Ephesians 5.8-21

i. Last week and this, we're looking at themes within Ephesians 5

a Let's just review 1 of the themes from last week, and build upon it

Ephesians 5.8: the term "light" is used twice

Ephesians 5.14: "light" is used twice again, "shine:" another term for light

b Verse 14 is the light that we hope for someday . . . or is it?

* John Wesley says, NOW that the change has taken place, "*Walk as children of light* - Suitably to your present knowledge."¹ Walk today, with someday in mind.

Verses 8 and 14 show us that we can live today in light of someday

c That's the quick review of "light" from last week, but something else is going on

1 There is a way that Paul defines light, specifically in all of his Epistles

2 Every time Paul uses the term light, it is spiritual, or a metaphor

3 i.e. It's the light of the Gospel, or God bringing some hidden plan to light

4 We also mature in light, like we do in the *Spirit's Virtues*, **Ephesians 5.9**

ii. Other themes similar to "light:" *discernment, exposure, understanding*

Ephesians 5.10: discernment, the Spirit's wisdom that seems to be beyond us

1 We might call it a bright idea out of nowhere, something like a ray of light

2 However, it would be best to recognize discernment as a gift or virtue

Ephesians 5.11-14: We who once were in darkness are exposed to light

1 For photographers, sometimes the right exposure changes everything

2 Once we're in the light - visible - we awaken - we become light

Ephesians 5.15-17: processes of gaining wisdom and understanding

All these terms shed light on the "light:" *discernment, exposure, understanding*

iii. We just added verses 15-17 to the mix, so let's strive for a greater focus

Ephesians 5.15-16: We've covered the Christian walk in the last 2 weeks

1 There is a lot here in the Greek - a lot - but let's stick with focus terms

2 I'm still building a case for light as a form of divine perspective

3 Paul emphasizes our walk strongly with a couple statements

a) "Look carefully" or "Be careful" (NRSV) how you walk, verse 15

b) Paul also says "making the best use of the time," verse 16

* How do I explain the two major terms for time in the Greek? This is a birthday season for two of us in the *Ingle5*. So we were all at the mall looking around for gifts. One of us wanted a watch, but it was getting near to 9 pm, and the mall was getting ready to

¹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book-Room), Ephesians v.8.

close. As we searched through watches frantically trying to beat the time, we started to narrow the choices down. We wanted to pick a good watch, but we were fighting time, ironically. On the other hand, the store offered no customer service at all. The only worker who said anything did not even stop to talk. She asked how we were doing as she passed by. She was more concerned about closing the store down because of the time, than she was with taking the opportunity to help us make a good selection. And that is the difference between the two Greek terms for time. One term is more concerned with chronological time. What's next on the timeline? The other term is more concerned with seizing the opportunity within time. If that lady would have stopped and talked to us about the timepieces we were looking at, she could have easily convinced us to buy a more expensive watch. She missed her opportunity.

How many opportunities do we miss?

There's a difference between the chronological time and the opportune time

iv. Ephesians 5.17: I'm convinced that we're infatuated with verses like this one

a We all want God's will at any cost, don't we? *I hear it from the VIPs*

1 Paul is telling us how to discern the will of God in Ephesians 5

2 God's will is a process of *development* . . . a process of *graduation*

3 We feel like the ultimate light in our lives is God's will in the now, but . . .

4 Paul slows us down - slow down - God's light guides us in the journey

b I've done a bit of college teaching, so here's a brief crash course on *God's will*

1 The will of God is one of the biggest ideas in Protestant Church History

2 We Protestants talk about the will of God more than the Bible does

3 In the Hebrew Bible and in the NT, God's will seems more simple

a) The words for God's will are attached to His desire, His motives

* Has anyone ever ate at a Chik-fil-A? I don't mind talking about them. They have Christian roots, they're not a cult, they're closed on Sundays so their workers can go to Church, and they make the best Chicken sandwiches in the fast food business. Plus, they have really good manners. Just try saying "Thank you!" for anything. Do you know how they will reply? "My pleasure!" . . . *They are not just trying to help you, just so they can get paid. They're being trained to see the honor, or even the joy, in serving you.*

b) The will of God can literally be translated as the pleasure of God

4 Paul also says "understand what the will of the Lord is" Ephesians 5.17

a) To "understand" is NOT only knowing with our brain

b) "Understand" means knowledge in action, also translated PIETY

* I'm sure you can ask someone around here to define for you how PIETY is lived out

5 In our terms, Paul says: *Pursue God's good pleasure, and live in piety*

v. So in closing, I would like to take seize the opportunity to add some thoughts

1st: I've heard amazing stories about what God has done at Long Lake Church

1 Paul says live today in light of what God will do someday (verses 8, 14)

2 Many of you have shared your future hopes with us, and we have too

3 Paul says the light is developed like a virtue (verse 9)

4 Some of you are planners, with the ability to see the processes we need

I would add: Remember who you are. Let that be a light and hope to guide you as you are becoming. *We can maintain the personality of this congregation and still develop.*

2nd: We all are concerned about the will of God in times like this . . . all of us

1 However, the will of God was never meant to be the main concern

2 Paul says to grow in our understanding of the will of God (verse 17)

3 The Quakers might say: *Pursue God's good pleasure, and live in piety*

I would add: If the will of God is just a decision we're making with the left side of our brain, then it's probably not the will of God. God can use our intellect, but our intellect is never the basis for the will of God in Scripture. The will of God is tied to His motives, and even to His emotions at times. *If we pursue the heart of the Father, we won't have to worry about discovering His will.*

Song

Benediction:

1 There is a Doxology at the end of Ephesians 3, a prayer to the Godhead or Trinity

2 I would like to close today with another Doxology that I haven't really seen before

3 Let's prayerfully consider the words of Paul in **Ephesians 3.17-21**