

SERMON FOR AUGUST 19, 2018
THEME: WALKING AS CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT
EPHESIANS 5:6-21

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not become partners with them; **8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. **13** But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, **14** for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says: “Awake, O sleeper and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

In the name of Jesus:

What is it that you live for, what is it that you think that will make your life easier? A great many people today think that if all they had were more money, life would be so much easier. And so you see many play the lottery, hoping to hit the jackpot, and in doing so, you can live life on easy street. If you had more money you can pay off the credit cards, have money in the bank for a rainy day; you would really be all set, wouldn't you? You could really make the most out of life if you had more money.

It is a temptation that Satan uses with all of us. Having more money is like waving a magic wand, or so we think. Our problems would be less, we would have all that we need, and we could die happy if only we had more money. With more money we

could do what we want, live in peace and security, with more money we can really make all of our dreams come true, we could really have a slice of heaven here on earth!

But this is really a lie of the devil. To place your trust in having more money, to think your life will be all it can be, to believe that you will make the most out of life with more cash, places money as your idol. You have another god rather than the one True God. God will not share His honor with any other god, not with Mohammed, not with Buddha, and not with the Almighty Dollar. God says in His Word that “I the Lord your God am a Jealous God.” “You shall have no other gods besides me.” What does this mean but that you are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things, including lifestyle, including self-interest, and including money! The love of money is the root of all evil, for the love of money replaces money on the throne of your heart and life in place of the One True God.

God the Father has made you, He is your Creator and He has created you to be in a loving relationship with Him. Our hearts are restless until they rest in God. You find no lasting blessing, no lasting peace, and no lasting satisfaction unless God is the Lord of your heart and life. You live as children of the Light, not by replacing God but by placing God as your first and only priority in life. The Apostle Paul warns: “**6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not become partners with them;” and “**15** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

The Apostle Paul invites you, under the inspiration of the Spirit, to make the most of the opportunities you have in life by fearing, loving and trusting in God above all things. But you are a sinner, who is continually tempted, and indeed there are times in your life when you trust in money, or other things, rather than God. You trust in money, until the stock market shows a loss. You trust in health, until you are sick. You trust in family and friends, but they do not live forever. Who can you trust in that will not disappoint? God invites you to trust in Him. He is trustworthy, so much so that God, in love, has sent His only begotten Son into the world, to be your Substitute in His life and death. Jesus lived His life by loving His Father above all things; His will was to do the will of the Father who sent Him into the world. God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son unto death for your sins, so that by trusting in Jesus your sins are forgiven and you have eternal life.

But how do you receive God's love, forgiveness and blessing? Certainly not by staying away from worship and from Bible study! If people could be assured that they could go to one place to meet God, to hear from Him, and to receive His blessings, they would move heaven and earth to get there. If you really knew and believed that God was present at a time and place, wouldn't you make every attempt to be where God is?

God is here, in this place, in His house, in His holy sanctuary. It is here, in worship, in God's Word where God blesses His people. He has remade you in the waters of Baptism, fashioning you in the image of His Son Jesus Christ. Here in Church, in God's House, is where you meet God. Here in God's House, in His Word and in His Supper is where Jesus comes to you to forgive you, to bless you, and to give you eternal

life. You live as a child of the Light, as a child of God, when God is in the picture, when God is first and foremost, where Christ is present in your life and when you, as God's child, are filled with the Spirit so that you will live a godly life to the praise and glory of the Father.

This is what Paul means when he writes: 'And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.'" Here, in worship, is where God fills you with His Spirit, here in worship is where God blesses you with His Word, here in worship is where God is king and where the King of all creation bless you with His love and power. God's Word is not just an empty word, but it is a word of power, a word that gives blessing. When the pastor speaks to you the blessing of God: "May the Lord bless and keep you" there, in that Word, God is actually blessing! His Word gives what He promises. This is what it means where God says: "'For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, **11** so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. **12** "For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

You are rich, beyond measure, because God blesses you with the riches of His Word and that word brings to you Christ, and when you have Christ, you are indeed rich and you have all you need.

Thomas Jefferson should have, he could have been rich. He was born into a prominent family in Virginia. He married a wealthy widow. Jefferson farmed a lot of land and engaged in several business ventures. He continually sought to improve his mansion called Monticello. Jefferson bought the best books, wine, and foods. He was famous; he served as President of the United States. But he died a poor man, deeply in debt, and all of his property was sold to pay for it. As a wise man once said: “How did that happen?”

Thomas Jefferson inherited a large debt from his father in law. Farming provided an uncertain source of income and the people who owed him money didn't always pay him back. Jefferson loved luxury and spent beyond his means. In 1819 a financial panic hit which further hurt his credit. When Jefferson died, he left a debt of \$107,000, worth millions of dollars in today's money.

Money is seductive. So are fame, power, and popularity. We think if we have any of these, or all of these, our lives would be so much easier. To have any or all would mean that we hit the jackpot. Life, as we know it, would be secure. But it is all an illusion, a lie of the Evil One. No matter how rich you are, how famous or how popular, you can still spend it all, lose your fame or popularity. If you rely on any or all of these things, sooner or later they will fail you. You can't take your possessions with you, and your fame and popularity won't help you when it is time to meet your Maker.

What a great example we have today in our Old Testament lesson of a man who made the most out of his life. Joshua was well aware that when the time of his death drew near that money, fame, and popularity would not help him or those he left behind. Instead, Joshua left to God's people a rich legacy. He left them with the certainty of God's love, telling them that all would be well if they were to only trust the Lord. The comforts of life, of a land flowing with milk and honey, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you could dig copper, all would be worthless and soon lost if Israel forgot about the Lord. So Joshua left the people of Israel a legacy, a word of the Lord where if they would only trust in the Lord, they would be blessed beyond belief! "Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God. **2** And Joshua said to all the people: **14** "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. **15** And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24: 1-2; 14-15).

Today that very same word of God comes to you. Leave behind the idols and temptations of the world. Jesus says: "**19** "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

So seek first God’s Kingdom and His righteousness. Christ has died; He has been raised from the dead to give you new life. Be free from the love of money, be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” **6** So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper;” God does bless you so that you can live as His child walking in the light of His grace.

Amen