

Ephesians 5.3-20

Enlightened

Amington Parish Church

Sunday 22 March 2020

That was then, this is now [10]

Light vs dark

After God created 24 hours of alternating darkness and light, one of the angels asked him, ‘what are you going to do now?’

God said, ‘I think I’m going to call it a day.’

I’ll pause for a few moments while you all pick yourselves up from the floor and catch your breath from laughing hysterically. *Pause*

We are into week 10 of our series going through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians – called... does anyone know? I know you can hear me, though I can’t hear you all say together... 1.. 2.. 3.. ‘That was then, this is now.’

Paul loves to talk about the change when we become followers of Jesus – and here, he says, **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord** (8). That phrase again: *in him*, in *Jesus*.

Pause – transition to video of study in darkness.

We've sung already this morning, 'Light of the world' – *he* is the light, the **true light**, which has **come into the world** (John 1.9).

Light the first candle. Start lighting other candles, one at a time.

But Jesus also said to his followers, '**You are the light of the world**' (Matthew 5.14). In other words, when we become part of God's family, we start to shine with the light of Jesus.

Great cost

Often in church we major on God's forgiveness, which in Jesus is total – there is no sin too big for God to forgive, no person too far for him to bring you home.

Often in church we major on God's grace, how the life he offers us in Jesus is completely free, undeserved, and won for us by Jesus, not through our own efforts.

It is all free – but it is not cheap. All Jesus offers was won for us at great cost. We are worth a great deal to God – what is *he* worth to us?

What's the most expensive gift you've ever been given? For Jess it's her engagement ring. She isn't allowed to wear it in hospital, so she has to take it off regularly. What do you think she does with it? She certainly doesn't take it off and chuck it on the floor!

How do *you* treat the gift of life Jesus has given you? How do *you* treat the light of Jesus? Paul says in Ephesians 4.1, **live a life worthy of the calling you have received.**

The life God gives us may be free – but it is not cheap.

Last week we started to look at the difference between life in the dark (that was then) and life in the light (this is now). If you still have your questionnaire, you may find it helpful to fetch it later and look at it again.

Or maybe something from today's passage spoke to you a bit more. Paul mentions **obscenity**, **foolish talk**, and **coarse joking** – when it should be **thanksgiving** on our lips (4).

Paul mentions **immoral**, **impure**, and **greedy** people – he calls them **idolaters** (5) – why? Because rather than worshipping God, these people are selfish, worshipping themselves and their desires, instead of God.

Children of light

Christians should not look like this – we should look different, we should look like Jesus, not the world.

It isn't easy, it takes effort, but God gives us the Holy Spirit to be our help and guide.

Paul encourages us to be **holy** (3), **wise** (15), full of **goodness and truth** (9). He warns us not to **get drunk on wine**, but instead to **be filled with the Spirit** (18).

Many of you will recognise my water bottle. Here it is *show water bottle to the camera*, full of water. Do you think I fill it once, and have done with it? No! I *go on filling* it, throughout the day.

That's what Paul means here about the Holy Spirit. He doesn't mean, be filled *once*, but **go on being filled with the Spirit**.

This is important, because otherwise our light will go out. Our light comes from Jesus, through the Spirit. We can only **live as children of light** (8), we can only **live a life worth of the calling we have received** (4.1) if we **go on being filled with the Spirit** (18).

The Holy Spirit gives us the power and strength we need to turn away from the deceptive and disobedient deeds of darkness – and turn towards the light and love that are ours in Jesus.

Cut to the dark scene Paul says (8): **For you once were darkness, Cut to light scene with all candles burning but now you are light in the Lord**. See how much light there is when we all shine together.

As God's family, let us turn towards the light of Jesus, let us shine with *his* light, and let us share that light with others. Let's spread his light in place of darkness, his peace in place of panic, his love in place of greed.

Let us live as children of light (8). Amen.