

“Pass it On”

Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-21

Series: Made for More Week 6

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March 29, 2020

1” Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) **10** and find out what pleases the Lord.

11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. **12** It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. **13** But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light”.

14 This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

15 “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. **18** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,

19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, **20** always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

When I was 8 years old, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I graduated from Millersville University in 2012 with a dual Special Ed and Elementary Ed degree. During my time as a teacher I experienced the many highs and lows that came with teaching. And now many parents are sharing my pain. Online we are seeing some funny memes of the struggles parents are going through.

For instance, here is one parent’s struggle:

It is not just parent’s struggling. the kids are as well:

As funny as this aspect of the Coronavirus is, we are definitely in a dark time. I understand how you are feeling. You are not alone in this. I’m feeling antsy, stir-crazy, isolated, worried, sad, even bored at times. The Coronavirus has brought much darkness into the world, most of us have been in a quarantine for 2 weeks now. But I’m not here today to focus on the darkness.

I have good news for you brothers and sisters we can live in the Light! We are called to be children of the light. Paul writes,

“For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth).” (vv.8-9)

As children of the light, we need to **Wake Up to the Light**. Paul writes in verse 14, **“Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”**

Church, have we fallen asleep? Have we rolled over and given into the fear this disease has caused? Have we isolated ourselves? Are we allowing our emotions to be dictated by what we see on the news? Is our security anchored in money? Is our well-being based on how we sanitize? This is absolutely a troubling, scary, and serious time for all of us, but remember, God is still in charge. He is sovereign over all! That means there is nothing too big He cannot fix. Our dear Father is in control. He is with us through this storm. Here are two things we can do to wake up to the light. _

As children of the light we were created to worship! Worship helps us wake up to the light. Worship is the best way to connect with God. It can be done by everyone, everywhere, in a group or by yourself. Verses 18 & 19 from our passage describes worship as:

“...be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,”

Worship is from the Holy Spirit. Worship is so much more than just singing. Other ways we can worship is to pray, read/meditate on Scripture (SWORD method), be in nature, do listening prayers, sit in silence, journal, or paint/draw. Worship is an intimate, relational experience between you and God. You can even worship the Lord by inviting Him into everything you do at home. Worship Him while you work from home, while you do chores, and even while you help your children with school work.

I challenge you, in this time, to explore different ways of worshiping God. Pick a new way from this list. Now is the time to be filled up so we can pour out!

The second way to wake up is to thank God for what He is doing in our lives. Verse 20 of our passage states **“always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Think of everything our Heavenly Father does for us. He gives us the Holy Spirit to dwell inside of us and guide our path. He gives us Jesus - the Light to guide our lives. We are able to live forgiven and free because Christ died for us. We are eternally grateful for that sacrifice. We need not live in the fear of the Coronavirus, Jesus has set us free! Start a gratitude journal or list. I challenge you each day to post something you are thankful to God for on Facebook or text your Growth Group. Let us wake up to God’s blessings and tell the world He has not stopped providing for us in the middle of this pandemic!

Once we wake up to the light, Paul tells us to **walk in the Light**.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth) (vv. 8-9)

In this passage the word translated “to live” is literally “to walk,” so we are to walk as children of the light, even in the darkest of times. Now that we are awake as children of the Light, we need to walk everyday in that Light.

Light has a way of revealing stains and smudges that stick to us. The closer we get to the Light, the more it shows us how we are still living the old way, even falling back into darkness. It exposes the places where we are “faking” it or covering stuff up. We can deny it or we can let God’s Light remove the remaining stains of sin, just as mold is killed when it is exposed to light.

Paul says the way to do this is to stop faking it and be genuine. In verse 9 he mentions the fruit of light - goodness, righteousness, truth. What do these three have in common? They are not fake, but genuine. They are the real thing.

Goodness - genuinely caring for others

Righteousness - genuinely wanting to please God

Truth - genuinely telling the truth and refusing to live by any lies.

How do you know if you are faking it? Relationships are the place where truth is tested most. Am I truly caring for others? Am I truly doing what God wants? Am I truly living by the truth in this situation?

Waking up to the Light and walking in the Light leads us to want to witness to the Light. People see us as being genuine, caring, faithful, and truthful when we are walking in the Light. People are attracted to this Light. But we do not point to ourselves - we point to Jesus, the True Light.

Now is the time for us to be light-bearers, to show the world that there is still goodness, righteousness, and truth. How do we do this? **We pass on the light.** We do this by helping others walk in their light. Last time you heard me preach, I shared with you how difficult it was for me to come home from being a missionary abroad. But God showed me I was called to be a missionary here to each of you. This is what God is assigning us to do now. Our mission field right now, is inside our own homes. Imagine the impact that we can have here in America, where everyone knows who the person of Jesus is, but does not KNOW Him personally. Jesus calls us into a relationship with Him, not to keep just between us, but to share with everyone we come into contact with.

Right now, God is calling us as a church to be missionaries! One way we can do this is to continue to be in community with our Growth Groups. Pastor Doug and I are encouraging every Growth Group to go ONLINE or participate in conference calls. In a time where this disease is making us want to retreat and isolate, we are to combat it by remaining in community. By continuing to pursue and fight for those relationships that are precious to us. If your Growth Group is larger, we encourage you to use the MicroGroup format, where you form groups of 4 so that the conversations can continue to be deep and everyone feels comfortable participating. If you want to lead a MicroGroup, take your Growth Group to a new communication platform, or join a group please reach out to me, I am more than happy to help get you connected!

Another way that we are called to be missionaries right now is by contributing to our current Easter Tree ministry for Urban Promise. Our deadline to drop off your crosses has been extended to Friday, April 3rd by 12pm. The office will be open Monday through Friday from 9am-12pm so that you can drop off your items! Thank you to everyone who has already

participated in our Easter Tree outreach! Stay tuned for an opportunity to provide packaged to-go meals as a family or Growth Group for our homeless friends. Your generosity to help our neighbors is our best example of being missionaries!

One of my favorite hymns is "Pass it On." I sang it growing up in church and then it became a summer camp favorite for the camp I direct for adults with disabilities. They sing this song because they know it brings light and life to everyone who hears it. I want to leave you with the lyrics of the first verse, let it be our mission right now to the world, sing along with me if you know it:

It only takes a spark to get a fire going, And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing

That's how it is with God's love, Once you've experienced it

You spread His love to everyone, You want to pass it on.

There are a lot of people out there who are down to their last embers, their light is almost extinguished. They are feeling lonely, isolated, anxious, worried about feeding their families, the list goes on. God is calling us to shine the light we have inside of us onto others. Even the tiniest spark brings forth light. Who are you going to pass along your light to this week?

Will you please pray with me.