

## “Living in the Light”

(Romans 13:8, 11-12)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Contemporary English Version Paul writes:

***<sup>8</sup>Let love be your only debt! If you love others, you have done all that the Law demands. . . . .***

***<sup>11</sup>You know what sort of times we live in, and so you should live properly. It is time to wake up. You know that the day when we will be saved is nearer now than when we first put our faith in the Lord.***

***<sup>12</sup>Night is almost over, and day will soon appear. We must stop behaving as people do in the dark and be ready to live in the light.***

Live properly -- be ready to live in the light.

Biblical promises have always said that if we - if we love God and obey his commands that we will prosper. Here are a couple:

**Moses** - speaking to the people just before his death said [Deuteronomy 28:1-2]:

***“If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. <sup>2</sup> All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:”***

**Jesus** - in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:33), speaking about anxiety and worry, about what to wear, what to eat, how to get by says, as it is put in the song [AT 34] based on that same passage:

***“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, Alleluia!***

Allelu, Alleluiah indeed!!...

Of course there is not a strict relationship between faith, between keeping the commandments of God and worldly success! THE CROSS plainly tells us that! - the Book of Job tells us that the Spirit in our hearts tells us that but all in all - being with God, being in the family of God, and living out -your faith in Christ’s church, in worship with one another, is one of the best things you can do -- in worldly terms - as well as spiritual.

This is still true even though people who gather for the worship of God in many places in the world, are persecuted, even killed, simply because of the gospel they believe in, because of the name that they bear.

Faith is not simply about attending church and prospering because of it.

It is about LOVE.

- Love even when it's hard to love enemies, or those who hate you.
- Love even when your brother or your sister hurts you.
- Love even when it takes you to a cross instead of worldly riches.

But we know for certain that God's promises are sure and that his people are gifted in this world by what Jesus calls, in tenth verse of the tenth chapter of the Gospel of John 10:10 - "**abundant life**" or "**life in its fullest**" – a life that leads to "**eternal life**"

The abundant life is not a life of worldly riches - but rather a wholeness of life, a life restored to fellowship with God, a life full of spiritual treasures - a long life which commences now - and continues forever.

The claims of our faith are true -- that loving God and obeying his commands, that worshipping regularly and living a God-pleasing life, that living in the light - has real blessings.

***<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***

So what does it mean to live properly - to live in the light???

Well, Paul suggests that it means several things -- some of them very simple, very common sense - very much like what good parents have told their children for centuries (Verse 13). Like:

- don't go to wild parties or get drunk or be vulgar or indecent;
- and don't quarrel or be jealous.

There are obvious benefits to these things aren't there?

- no bad reputation - no hangovers
- no people avoiding you because of your inappropriate acts
- no feuds brought about by insisting that your point is correct and everyone else is wrong

But there is **more** to this living properly - living in the light - than what is obvious.

Paul goes on in verse 14 to say:

***“clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”*** Which simply means:

"Let the Lord Jesus Christ be as near you as the clothes you wear. Then you won't try to satisfy your selfish desires."

To live properly, to live in the light, is to do more than simply follow a set of rules.

To live properly, to live in the light, is to be close to the one who is the Light it is to be in personal communion with, to be in touch with, the one who overcame darkness, it is to be indwelt by, the Spirit of the One who made the heavens and the earth and who knows from his own experience our every weakness.

To live in the light is to be led by the Spirit of God who is in us, as Paul explains [Romans 8:14-16]:

***<sup>14</sup> Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit( that we are God's children.***

The Christian life is not a matter of rules and regulations! It is a matter of wanting to be like the Lord Jesus and of believing in him – and of following him, of living by the love that he showed us when he went to that cross and died for us.

Love is the basic ingredient of living by faith. And love is not a matter of the law - nor even is it a matter of what we feel - it is a matter allowing the Spirit, through Word and Sacrament. to lead and direct us.

We are urged to live properly, to live in the light, and to let the Lord Jesus Christ be as near to us as the clothes we wear.

More than anything, put God's work first and do what God wants.

Living in the light is a marvellous thing. But it has its deep and serious side.

It means that we owe to one another the kind of love that God has for us!

That means - that we must be willing in our relationships with one another to go first.

- To be the first to reach out after a quarrel.
- To be the first to try to work things out after we have been sinned against.
- To be the first, when things can't be worked out, and even when they can, to trust God for results.
- To be first in seeking reconciliation - and the first to refuse to fret or grow anxious or bitter or hateful because of what has happened to us.

Living in the light is a wondrous thing to do, and the Lord has poured out his Spirit to empower us to do it!

- It is a thing that benefits us from now - to eternity.
- It is a thing that transforms us - and which can transform our world.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he spoke to his followers, saying:

***"All authority in heaven and on earth have been given me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."***

***"I am with you always. even to the close of the age!"***

This is the promise of God for us all! Remember and rejoice in it.

Praise be to God. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Sermon by Pastor John Simboras 6 September 2020