

Grace to you and peace from Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**Ephesians 5:6–21 (NKJV) — 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 be partakers with them. **8** For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), **10** finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. **11** And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. **13** But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. **14** Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.” **15** See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, **16** redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, **19** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, **20** giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another in the fear of God.

## **Awoken by the Light of Christ**

In Jesus name, who is the light of the world, dear fellow children of light,

Trouble getting up in the morning? Is each day a struggle to drag yourself out of bed? Do you hit snooze over and over again? Maybe you are not getting enough sleep. Maybe you are getting too much sleep. Maybe the world around seems too dark for you to face. What sort of tactics will help? My parents used to sound a trumpet call from the hall way, but that just made me want to pull the pillow over my head.

The epistle to the Ephesians speaks of our “wake up” call. The epistle describes the Holy Christian Church as the assembly of those who have been awoken by the light of Christ. 1:4 – “He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.” 1:18-20 “the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened; that we know what is the exceeding greatness of His power which works in us who believe, which He worked also in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.”

A light has dawned, shining through the cracks of this dark world – God has thrown open the drapes and caused to shine on you the glory of His face revealed in Jesus Christ. (**v.14**). Sin is exposed, the will of God is made visible, and our path is enlightened. You have been awoken by the light of Christ.

### **1. Sin EXPOSED**

You know that look – bed head, puffy eyes, a groggy attitude. We are not always so pleasant in the morning. Most of us don’t wake up like they do in the movies, with perfect hair, makeup on, and a bounce in our step. Perhaps you look in the mirror, and wonder who you are looking at.

**(v.8,11)** When it comes to sin, there is a natural desire to keep things hidden. There is an exceedingly unpleasant look to us when the light shines into the darkness of our secret sins. And we all have secrets. We all have hidden things that make us want to pull the covers over our head. Whether from the distant past, the near past, or even in everyday thoughts of our heart and mind, we have things that by nature we would never want exposed. Just as Adam and Eve, so we sometimes want to hide from the presence of God.

v.6 – **Let no one deceive you.** Just prior to our text, Paul has referenced some of the sins of the unbelieving world. In darkness, they go on sinning – by fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, idolatry. They go on as if these things are either hidden from God, or that He does not truly condemn them. Yet, **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

The deception the world will try to lure you into is that sin isn't real or won't be punished. A friend of mine used to tell me that sin was only as real as you make it. He claimed it was only a response of conscience based on what you had been programmed to believe by your parents or church. That is a thought of darkness – “empty words.”

As it is written in 1 Corinthians 4:5 – **[God] will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.**

God's word exposes. **(v.11)** To walk in God's light is to step out of the shadows and into the light of Christ.

**1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ... 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

To step into the light is akin to what our Scripture reading from Proverbs 9 called “wisdom.” It is to accept correction, to welcome the knowledge of our sin, and fear the LORD with a heart of faith. To witness to what is right. To confess before the throne of God that we have not lived up to His righteousness. To need Christ and to need His light. For the light of Christ exposes not just sin, but also the work of our Savior. **Arise from the dead**, the Spirit writes. Jesus “gets us up.” If left only to the condemning voice of the law we would never have the strength to rise. We would only pull the covers over our head in despair. Rather Jesus awakes us with the uplifting call of the gospel, a voice which brings the good news of salvation – **John 8:12 (NKJV) — 12 “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”**

We wake up to a whole new look each day as we are reminded that the enduring light of Christ does not change. “The steadfast love of God endures forever.” Every time we come to church, every time we receive Word and Sacrament, we step into that light of Christ – the light which reveals God's forgiveness of your sins.

You have been AWOKEN BY THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.

## **2. The will of God MADE VISIBLE**

Maybe you can recall getting up overnight. Groggily you feel through the darkness to find your way, only to step on a toy or to stumble over a shoe that was left out.

Many can read the Bible, but not really see what is there. Without the light of Christ, without the gift of faith in Him, we stumble over every obstacle.

As Jesus said to the religious leaders – **John 5:38–40 (NKJV) — 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**

Only in the light of Christ can we, v.10, **find out what is acceptable to the Lord** – only in this light is the WILL OF GOD MADE VISIBLE.

v.13 – **all things that are exposed by the light are made visible.** Nothing is hidden from Him, and nothing that we need to know is hidden from us. That's what "manifest" means, "to make visible" or "to make known."

We are to use this Word of God like a flashlight. **Psalms 119:105 (NKJV) — 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.** The Word makes visible what would otherwise be hidden from us – the traps which would lure us, the stumbling block of our own pride.

v.10 says "find out" what is acceptable. The word here means we "examine"; we "test." The word would be used to speak of oxen being tested for usefulness. God wants us to examine all things; to judge sin; to judge doctrine; to judge righteousness – to find out what is useful.

**Isaiah 8:20 (NKJV) — 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.** Not that we replace the freedom and love of the gospel with a list of rules, but that we – OUT OF LOVE FOR CHRIST – find out what it means to walk in the light. We critically examine all things in our life to find out what is acceptable. (v.17)

Only the WORD can MAKE THIS VISIBLE. As Jesus said in our Scripture reading – **John 6:63 (NKJV) — 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.**

As we face decisions in our life about such things as gambling, abortion, marriage, sex, our role as parents, as children, decisions about church, practicing fellowship, and so on – we can only rely on the WORD for the answers. We cannot rely on feelings, or on our goals. We cannot rely solely on our church or pastor alone. We must examine all things in the light of the Word.

AWOKEN IN CHRIST, THE WILL OF GOD IS MADE VISIBLE.

### 3. Our walk ENLIGHTENED

Robin Williams starred in a movie some time ago called "Awakenings." The story is that of a lab doctor who finds a job in a mental ward. In these uncomfortable surroundings

he comes across patients that are virtually immobile. They are in a catatonic state where they cannot talk or walk. Not to spoil the outcome, but he eventually discovers that they are suffering from a severe nerve disorder similar to Parkinson's disease. With the right medicine they begin to move, to talk, to live. They had to have the right treatment.

Our "awakenings" have taken place. Through the power of the Word, we have received the right medicine to release us from the bondage of darkness. **OUR WALK IS NOW ENLIGHTENED.**

God has indeed AWAKENED US. He has redeemed us from the power of darkness to be sons of light. The light of God's forgiveness is yours. You are forgiven for every wrong path and dark step. So we should not think that His will and promise rests on how we live our life.

One of the greatest challenges those patients faced was not getting out of bed or talking, but how to resume a meaningful life. So we too struggle. As we battle the devil, the darkness of this world, and the desires of our flesh, we struggle to live a meaningful life in the light of Christ (**v.8**).

Our walk is to let the light shine out – **Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV) — 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Chapter 1 of Ephesians refers to the "eyes of our understanding having been enlightened." We have a path revealed before us by the light of Christ.

It takes a sober Spirit to walk this path. (**v.15-16**) A careful walk is described. "Walk circumspectly" – meaning: "with careful attention". This is a sober walk. (**v.18**). In more ways than one we are to be both physically and spiritually sober. The recklessness that comes with too much alcohol also comes with too much of any sinful behavior.

Now is the acceptable time. There is such urgency in Scripture. Today, is the call to be wise. "Redeeming the time" – that is, making the most of every day. With your family, with your fellow Christians, make the most of these days of grace. Treasure the beauty of God's light shining on you. Do not hide it.

The days are evil, and time is running short. **Romans 13:11–14 (NKJV) — 11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

It is more pressing than ever, to hold fast to this fellowship of the Word we have been given. (v.7,11) Scripture repeatedly emphasizes the importance of separating ourselves from the forces of darkness, by walking in the light. Those unseen forces of

darkness increase around us. **2 Corinthians 6:14 (NKJV) — 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?... 2 Corinthians 6:17 (NKJV) — 17 Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”**

Both in our individual lives and in our church practice, there is an ever pressing call to separate from the influences of those who walk contrary to God’s word – so gather in the light of the Word with likeminded Christians to lean on.

**(v.19-21).** Fellowship is about gathering around word and Sacrament. But notice, this is not in an outward show; this is not measured by our musical abilities, or by how big our church is, or whether or not we have a choir. You are “making melody in your hearts.” The melody we sing is the harmony of Christian love and fellowship as we build this congregation up together. We gather around His body and blood to share a faith in this ONE True God. Let us be in harmony by submitting to one another in every way – counting our brother or sister as more important than ourselves. Let us be in harmony – speaking to one another the beautiful song of redemption – giving thanks in all things in the name of our Lord. As John writes **1 John 2:10 (NKJV) — 10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.**

We have woken up. Without the “wake up call” of Christ we would never get out of bed. We would never see this new creation that we know by faith. Hear the trumpet call – both in the Word that wakes us up day by day to walk in light. And also the final trumpet, where the dead will be raised incorruptible. We do not walk aimlessly or without end, we walk toward a heavenly light, toward that trumpet call. We see at the end of the tunnel a light which shines on to eternity. **Revelation 21:23 (NKJV) — 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.**

AWOKEN BY CHRIST. Amen.