

# EPHESIANS

## LIVING (THE) GOSPEL

### Sermon 8 - Ephesians 5:3-20 - Living light

1. What did Mark say about the word translated 'sexual immorality'? What does it mean?
2. Why is the behaviour described in v3, said to be "improper" for "God's holy people"?
3. Why not even a *hint* of sexual immorality (v3) or 'obscenity, foolish talk or course joking' (v4)? Why is there not even to be a mention of what the disobedient do in secret (v 12)?
4. Sometimes Christians are accused of being 'hung up' on sex. Why do you think this issue gets so much mention in the New Testament?
5. A young person you know well and are able to talk to easily, asks you why they should wait until marriage before having sex. How do you encourage them to see God's best will for us?
6. Read again v5. Remember, this is not talking about believers who have fallen into sin, but about people who have never left their past behind. Another person who you know well, has crossed the line in sexual matters and is weighed down with guilt. They are worried that this verse counts them out of God's Kingdom. How you do encourage them?
7. In what ways do you think we are easily deceived with empty words in the whole area of sexual ethics (v6)?
8. Who is it in v7, are we not to be partners with?
9. Vv8ff, is one of the many examples where the Lord reminds us of his work in us and who we are and therefore, what our response is to be. What are the implications spelled out here of once being 'darkness', but now 'light in the Lord'?
10. How are we to 'find out what pleases the Lord' (v10) and 'understand what the Lord's will is' (v17)?
11. v18 - how significant do you consider the use of alcohol is in relation to sexual sin?
12. What does Paul urge as an alternative and to what will it lead? (See vv19-21)
13. *How* are we to 'be filled with the Spirit'?
14. Someone asks you 'what difference will it make to my life if I become a Christian?' How would you begin to answer?

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018  
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**Series:** Ephesians: Living (the) Gospel  
**Passage:** Ephesians 5:3-20  
**Title:** Living light

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- a minister friend of mine had been visiting a couple for a few **weeks** explaining the gospel to them – probably something like our **Jesus Explained** course.
- In one of the **last sessions** my friend was to spend with this couple, the **husband** – his name was **Andrew**, asked ☒ “what difference will it make to my life if I become a Christian?”
- **Such a great question...** “how will it affect my **priorities**, how will it affect my **lifestyle**...? what **difference** will it make to me if I **become** a **Christian**?”
- And it made my minister friend **stop** and **think** – what difference **WILL** it make?
- What **difference** does it make in the lives of **many** Christians I **know**, he asked himself?
- For the **reality** is that for **some** people it *doesn't* make all that much **difference**...
- And he felt like saying... “Andrew you’re a **really nice guy** – I don’t think you **beat** your wife – and if you do it doesn’t **show**, and you’re a good **father** to your **children** and you pay your **taxes** and you’re a good **neighbour**...!
- “the truth is **Andrew** – if you are become like **many** who say they are **Christians**, it won’t make **much** of a **difference** to your life at **all**...
- “I’d love you to start reading the **Bible** and start **praying** and it would be great if you **gave up** some of your **golf** especially on **Sunday** morning and started coming to **church** more regularly... that would be **fantastic**... But other than that Andrew it really won’t **alter** your life at **all**... you’ll carry on **pretty much as you are**...!
- But – he **didn’t** say that...
- Rather he said – Andrew if you become a Christian it will **completely** and **utterly** **alter** your life – your life will **never** be the same **again**...
- For example – take your **children** – for most of your friends and colleagues, their aim for their children is that they have the best **education** so that they can have the best **jobs** and meet the best **people** that they’ll have a relationship with
- But as a **follower** of Jesus Christ your aim for your children will be that they grow up **followers** of **Jesus Christ**, so you will **skew** the **whole** of your **life** so that you **model** to them what it means to be a **follower** of **Jesus Christ**, so they see in you something so **remarkable**, so **life changing**, so **transforming**, so **different** that they **know** there is something **different** about my **dad**... and they’ll look at **you** and know what it means to have had an **encounter** with the **living God** and be **changed**...
- Andrew if you become a **follower** of **Jesus Christ** – it will **radically** **change** your life. // ☒ blk
- And my minister friend walked out of that house that night and said to himself.... “What on earth have we done with this **movement** that Jesus started 2000 years ago – this **radical life transforming** **movement**... that he **initiated**?”
- “it was to be the **hope** of the **world** – and was to turn people’s lives **upside down** and put them **right way up**, and was to have an **impact** that was to spread across the **whole** of the **world**... **WHAT HAVE WE DONE?**”
- You can meet **followers** of **Jesus Christ** – and they can tick the boxes – and say what they **believe** about God and about **Jesus Christ**.... And some of them can take the **Bible** and explain it to **people** and say this is what it **means**...

- But you look at their **lives** and you think – “well what **difference does it make?**” – they were **nice** people **before** they became Christians, and now they are **still nice** people who go to **church** a bit **more often**...
- Is that what Jesus Christ came to **do?** – to make us **nice**...? is that what the **gospel** is all **about??** Did Jesus die to make us **nice?** ///
- And our passage this morning continues in the same vein we saw last week: that if we are really **serious** about **following Christ**... then it **will** **seriously change you**... //
- Because – when it comes to **sexual immorality** or **impurity** or **greed**... these must not even be **spoken of!**
- The word used for **sexual immorality** is the word **✘ porneia** from which we derive the word **pornography**... and means **✘** any kind of **sexual intercourse** outside **marriage**...
- When combined with the word **impurity** as it is here, then we have a **comprehensive expression** for every possible **sexual deviation** you could **imagine**.
- And **greed** – well that is where **sexual** sin starts – in the **heart** – with wanting something that belongs to **someone else**... that insatiable desire for **more**, be that someone else’s **body** for **sexual gratification** or more stuff to **own** or **money** to **bank!**
- Now friends – this is **way out there** in terms of the **world’s thinking!** **✘ blk**
- So **counter-cultural** in the **1<sup>st</sup> century** – where in ancient Ephesus, at the **pagan temple**, **prostitution** was part of **worship**; when many **men** had **wives** for **children** and **boys** for **pleasure!**
- And so counter-cultural in the **21<sup>st</sup> century** where **adultery** is **laughed** at as office fun, where **celibacy** outside of marriage is laughed at, where **pornography** has never been **easier** to look at, where in **Asia** and **Africa** and right here in **Australia**, children are traded as **sex slaves!**
- You can hardly watch **any** TV program or any **movie** without **someone** being in bed with someone who is not their **spouse**, and **that** is simply **reflecting** what is happening **around** us. //
- We **Christians** are to be **radically different**...
- We ought **never** – **ever** to have sex with someone who is not our **spouse**.
- We ought **never** – **ever** allow ourselves to be **led astray** by what we see on TV or **movies**, or **read** or **pull up** on our **computer screens**.
- We ought **never** do anything which causes others to **wonder whether** we *might* be **indulging** our sexual **appetites** outside **marriage**.
- Paul says – this is **improper** for God’s holy people... there is a basic **incompatibility** between **this** and the **holiness** – the complete ‘**otherness**’ to which we have been **called**.
- And we certainly ought not to be **joking** about these matters – v4 – *nor should there be **obscenity, foolish talk** or **course joking**...*
- It’s bad enough when you’re at **work** and find yourself in the **middle** of such **joking** - **unavoidable** sometimes – but such jokes ought **never** be heard among **Christians**... and again we’re told – they’re out of **place**. **Inappropriate**. **Incompatible**.
- Why? – because **immoral**, **impure** and **greedy** people we read, will not share our magnificent **inheritance** promised by **God**.
- have a look with me at v5... *no **immoral, impure** or **greedy** person – such a person is an **idolater** – has any **inheritance** in the **kingdom** of **God** and of **Christ**.*
- Let’s be **clear** – this is not talking about **believers** who have gone **astray** – this is talking about people who have **never** left the past behind – **never** turned to Christ...
- But can you see what he’s **saying**...? if people for whom such **immorality**, such **impurity** and

such **greed** is just their **normal** way of **life** will not be part of the **future kingdom**, then this is no **laughing matter**.

- if they will **not** be with us in **eternity** – **BECAUSE** of their **immorality** – how can it be therefore be **right** – that *we* indulge in any such behaviour? ///
- Now friends not only have we lost our ✘ **innocence** we've lost all sense of ✘ **shame**.
- So we watch an episode of **Modern Family**, or **Bachelorette** or **one of the soaps**, or **old episodes of Friends** – I've even heard of Christians happily watching **Sex in the City**... or 50 shades of grey, and we don't even **notice** that what is **portrayed** there as **appalling**.
- And what has happened is what **v6** warns **against** – have a look – *let no one deceive you with empty words*... and the thing is – we have been deceived... we've been utterly **taken in** – we saw that in last week's passage... remember? – our desires corrupt our minds... so that we think - it's **not too bad**... don't take these things too **seriously**... it's '**art**' it's '**life**' it's **2018!**... /// ✘ **blk**
- "What **difference** will it make if I become a **Christian**?", asked **Andrew**... "well... **Andrew**... **Paul says** – the sex you'll **enjoy** and **revel** in as God's **precious** and **profound gift** – will **only** be that with your **wife**...
- "...and it won't be long **Andrew** before you won't even think it's **appropriate** to **talk** about sexual perversion – nor **joke** about it... and eventually you will see this as so **special** – that you'll wake up to the **deception** we've been sold that it's not **TOO** bad – and you'll feel **embarrassed** watching a lot of what you **used** to watch on TV... because you'll know its **grieving God himself**, and that he is rightfully **indignant** at those who have **denigrated** his most **excellent gift!** ///
- "But **Andrew**, there is a **bigger picture** – it's not just about **differentiating** yourself from the **values** and **sexual ethics** of those around... but it's about having a **positive influence** on those around you...
- It's about being:

#### CHILDREN OF LIGHT

- Ever been to ✘ **Jenolan Caves** or some other caves, when to demonstrate what it would be like in the event of a **power failure**, they turn **off** the **lights**?
- I've never seen anything so **dark**. Wave your own hand in front of you – **nothing**. Absolutely **nothing**.
- Now – **light** and **dark** are used throughout the Bible **metaphorically** to demonstrate the difference between all that is **good** and **right** and **pure**, and all that is **evil** and **wrong**.
- And Paul is saying – you **were** once **darkness** – in that you lived in darkness and your understanding was darkened (4:18). **Jenolan Caves** with the lights turned **off**.
- **NOW** – entirely by the grace of God - Christians are **light**.
- He has brought us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.
- How **absurd** then to return to **darkness** and have **anything whatsoever**, to **do** with what we **WERE**.
- Even **talking** about what unbelievers get up to is **inappropriate** (v12).
- And as a result – the outcome – here called – the "**fruit**" – that is increasingly to be seen in our lives is **goodness, righteousness and truth** – v9.
- And the more we **shine** our **light** by our **goodness** – our **good deeds** – and our **truth** – guess **what?** – the more that **deeds** of **darkness** are exposed (v11) //
- Want to see how **black** a piece of **black** is? Put some **white** next to it.
- Want to see how **dark** Jenolan Caves is when they turn out the **light**? Put some **flood lights** on –

and you'll soon see how **dark** the **dark** WAS.

- want the **DARKNESS** of this world – the **EVIL** of this world to be seen for what it is??
- **Shine! Flood** the place with **goodness** and **righteousness** and **truth**...!
- ... and the **deeds** of **darkness** become **more** and **more** **apparent**. ✖ blk
- And that is why we must be **wise** in the way we **live** v15, making the most of every **opportunity**... opportunity for **what?** Doing **good**.
- we find out what pleases the lord (v10) and what the Lord's will is (v17) and we get **on** with **that**...
- we certainly don't get **drunk** which can be like a **slippery slide** **BACK** to **darkness**...
- and what a **contrast**...we're not to get drunk on **wine** – but ✖ **filled** with **Spirit** – that is – the **Holy Spirit**!!
- You want to be **under** the **influence**?
- You want to deal with your **anxieties** and **fears** and **inhibitions**? – **great**... don't get tanked up with wine... but filled with the **Spirit**...
- ... be under **His** influence... deal with your **anxieties** and **fears** by allowing **him** to fill you and **minister** to you and **change** you...!
- And **then** Paul uses five **verbs** used in a such a way here as they show the **outcome** of being filled with the **Spirit**...
- So the **original language** reads – be filled with the spirit, ✖ **speaking** to one another... **singing** and **making music**, **giving thanks** and **submitting** (v21)... all **outcomes** being filled with the **Spirit**...
- So when filled with the Spirit, we have a heart for **GOD** – **singing** and making music **to him**....
- And we'll have a **heart** of **thankfulness**... grateful for all he has done for...
- And a **heart** to **submit** to **one another**... - but more about that next week! /// ✖ blk

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- ✖ “What **difference** will it **make** to my life”, asked Andrew, “if I became a Christian?”
  - My minister friend was tempted to say ‘**not very much at all**’ as he thought about the lives of many **Christians** he **knew**.
  - Can I ask you – ✖ what **difference** is it making in **YOUR** **life**?
  - Can I ask in this specific area Paul mentions here about **sexual immorality and impurity and greed** – areas that are so powerful in our lives... is **your** thinking radically **different** from the world **around us**?
  - Have you determined that the only **sexual intercourse** you'll ever revel **in**, is that with your **spouse in marriage**?
  - Are you appropriately **embarrassed** or **ashamed** when people are not **married to one another** are jumping **in** and **out** of bed with each other – whether in **real life**, or on **TV** or in the **movies** or in the **books** you **read**?
  - Have you taken any steps to **prevent** your **computer** from **accessing pornography**?
  - Have you **stopped** your **Christian brother** or **sister** when they've gone to **joke around** about matters which are **costing** people an **eternity** with **Christ**?
  - And the **flip side**? – are you **flooding** the **darkness** of the **world** we live in with your **goodness**, with your **righteousness**, with your **truthfulness**?

- Are you being **wise** and taking **every opportunity** for doing **good**?
- And while **never** filling yourself with **wine**, are you **instead**, being **filled** with the **Spirit** – your **whole life, filled** with **God**... so that you have a **heart** to speak to others – even in song - about **spiritual matters**, a heart that **sings** for **God himself**... a heart **full** of **thankfulness**... a heart to **submit** to **others**... //
- ✖ blk
- friends... *among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people...*
- *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. ///*
- Can I just ad...
- ✖ If you have crossed the **line** in any of **these matters**... let's say there has been **sexual immorality, impurity and greed**... I want to **remind** you there is ✖ **forgiveness** waiting for you in the person of **Jesus**... Be **utterly assured** – there is nothing you have done which cannot be **forgiven**... or **atoned** for at the **cross**!
- Turn around, say sorry, and by his Holy Spirit, come **back** to him today... and put things **right**.  
✖ blk