Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light,

I am wonderfully pleased to have this text show up right now. I can understand why it was chosen as a part of our Lent readings. The idea of Lent is to highlight for ourselves the perfect sacrifice for our sins that Jesus took on. In other words, we want to give a great deal of thought and attention to just what it means that Jesus is our Savior. Our Savior!

That term in and of itself implies that we had to be rescued, that we needed to be saved. It is only logical that we then ask the question: “Saved, rescued from what?” The answer is really pretty simple. We are being saved and rescued from sin. Our Catechism (Kuske Revised 1998) gives the twofold and pointed definition of sin: *Sin of Omission: When we don’t do something that God wants us to do. Sin of Commission: When we do something that God forbids.*

You are right. By just looking at those definitions each one of us is going to have to conclude that we are involved in sin on a regular basis. There are so many ways that we fail to do what God wants not just in deeds, but yes, in words and thoughts too! The same with the issue of doing what God forbids. We on a regular basis break this commandment in thought, word and deed. Just to drive home this point, let me share a few passages with you.

**James 4:17 So, for the one who knows the right thing to do and doesn’t do it, this is a sin.**

**Leviticus 5:17 If, however, a person sins by doing anything against the Lord’s commands by doing something that should not be done, even though he is not aware of it, he is liable and shall bear the punishment for his guilt.** I include this passage because it helps us to grasp that the excuse of “I didn’t know,” has no standing before the Lord. You are still guilty!

**Romans 3:11-12 There is no one who is righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands. There is not one who searches for God. They have all turned away; together they become useless. There is no one who does what is good; there is not even one.**

**1 John 1:8-10 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.**

Please note I bring up this last passage because it introduces the idea and importance of “repentance.” Repentance is just what it says in 1 John, **“we confess our sins.”** I like to define repentance for the Confirmation classes by saying it has four parts to it. 1. It is understanding you have violated the commands of the Lord your God. Your offense is against Him! 2. You are to be sorry, to be filled with remorse that you have so offended your God! 3. You are to have a desire to stop the sin! Sometimes this takes work, hard work but the desire and the work is without a doubt a part of repentance. 4. You are to grasp the forgiveness that is found in Jesus! His grace is sure and certain. But remember, it is not repentance without the other 3 points.

I hammer at this because so many of us seem rather confused. We get involved in sin and we want to keep doing the sin or we defend the sin or worse yet, help promote the sin. We act as though the sin, any sin is nothing and what’s the big deal? We sometimes seem to think, “Hey, Jesus forgives, so what does it matter?” Listen to what the Scriptures tell us.

**Romans 6:1-2 and 15-16: What shall we say then? Shall we keep on sinning so that grace may increase? Absolutely not! We died to sin. How can we go on living in it any longer?...What then? Should we continue to sin, because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not! Do you not know that when you offer yourselves to obey someone as slaves, you are slaves of the one you are obeying—whether slaves of sin, resulting in death, or slaves of obedience, resulting in righteousness?”**

**Colossians 3:5-6 So put to death whatever is worldly in you: sexual immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. It is because of these things that the wrath of God is coming on the son of disobedience.**

**1 John 1:6-7 If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness, we are lying and do not put the truth into practice. But if we walk in the light, just 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.”**

Whew! That was a rather long introduction. Yep, that was just the introduction to our words today. A necessary introduction so that we get things right. Our theme: **WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.**

Please note that the last passage I shared with you, that 1 John 1 passage, gives us the very same lesson that is found in our words today. Let’s make sure we grasp that lesson. Our text said to us, **“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.”**

Notice a few very important words. The passage says, “**You were once”…**and then…**”now you are.”** Those words are referring to our calling to be God’s children, to our being given the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit of God. In our Catechism this is the lesson of “sanctification” that we are called out of unbelief to a life of faith. What we were, we are no longer. And then recognize how what we were and what we are is described.

We **“were darkness.”** Darkness is of Satan and evil. Darkness is that which is away from, absent of the Light of God. We are told this darkness is in our past. In other sections of God’s Word we are encouraged by phrase like: “Imitate Jesus…walk with the Spirit…the fruit of the Spirit, and so forth. Galatians 5:19-21 really puts this into perspective. It says: **“Now the works of the sinful flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, complete lack of restraint, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, discord, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things similar to these. I warn you, just as I also warned you before, that those who continue to do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”** Darkness likes sin. Darkness revels in sin. Darkness demands its sin be allowed! Darkness is contrary to God’s Word and will. Please notice that this passage clearly tells us that **“those who continue to do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”** Honestly, I don’t know how God’s Word could be clearer! If you are claiming to be a child of God you do not, cannot, indulge in darkness. Darkness needs to be your enemy, your foe to battle, and something you no longer want!

Because our text tells us **“But now you are Light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.”** Make no mistake, what is said here is hard for us. Our very sinful nature opposes the light of God and his truth. But again, God, by His Holy Spirit, working in us through the Gospel in Word and sacraments *“calls, gathers, enlightens, and keeps us in the one true faith.”* This is our battle. We are called to walk in the light, to walk as children of the light. And again God’s Word leaves no doubts as to what is being spoken of.

We are to pursue **“goodness.”** In other words our concerns are what is right and proper, what is morally correct, what is deemed by the Lord our God as acceptable and upright. We are to be involved in **“righteousness.”** Without any doubt, this word is referring to the perfection and holiness that is found in Jesus, given by Jesus, and imitated by us. Our faith is Jesus’ robe of righteousness. We strive to delight the Lord our God, to walk as pleases Him and His holy Word. Remember last week when I summed up our faith by saying “we act and do because of the grace and mercy of God!” That’s what this “righteousness” is about. And then we pursue **“truth.”**

I think there is one passage here that will end any debate on what this word means. In John 17, we hear the High Priestly prayer of Jesus for all of us. In that prayer Jesus says, **“Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth.”** To pursue truth is to follow the Word of God. Outside of God’s Word finding truth is very difficult. Just think of how in the past couple of years we were told “truths” only to now be told that those truths are no longer true? (I don’t feel I need to mention any specifics here, because if you are paying attention to things, you know dozens of instances where this is true!) But God’s Word is truth. It is reliable and clear. It is trustworthy and sure. You want truth, then be in God’s Word and please, be in God’s Word properly!

Now at this point, just turn your attention to the rest of our verses and you will see that all along we have been teaching what it means. **“Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, and do not participate in the fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention the things that are done by people in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes things visible. Therefore it is said, ‘Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”**

As children of God, as those who proclaim ourselves “Christians” we are to walk in the light. We are not to be involved in adultery, sexual immorality, theft, back stabbing, discords, rages and so forth. You cannot be involved in those things, stay involved in those things, pursue those things and still claim to be a child who walks in the light.

Our calling as God’s children is to see our sins, repent of those sins and strive to walk with the Lord. That’s the whole point of the last verse here. Notice it says, **“Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead.”** Pursuing sin is not trivial. When, as 1 John told us, we claim fellowship with Jesus and walk in darkness we are declaring ourselves liars and outside of the truth. We are “spiritually dead to God.” That’s why the Lord’s call is to wake up. And He is the only one who has the power and grace to wake you up. To rise from the dead is to put aside the deeds of darkness and cling to the Lord.

Then what is said here will be true: **“Christ will shine on you.”** Jesus will forgive. Jesus will shower his grace and mercy upon us. Jesus is always compassionate and loving, kind and forgiving to his children. His children walk in the light.

I hope this brings a bit of clarity to your life and heart as a child of God. We are involved in a battle between our sinful nature and our new man. The new man is the child who walks in the light. Dear Savior, help us to grasp the importance of your Word. Help us to hate sin. Help us to repent and seek what is pleasing to the Lord. Dear Lord, shine on us with your love and light that we bring glory and honor to your name. Amen.