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Text: Ephesians 5:8-14  
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Setting: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

### Deeds of Darkness and Living in the Light

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Darkness and light contrast very much. Darkness brings silence, separation, and isolation from all around you. Light brings warmth and the ability to see. This not only happens around us but also in the water as well. The aphotic zone is a portion of a lake or ocean that receives very little, or no light at all. The word itself comes from the Greek word φῶς (*phos*) and the prefix ἀ- (*a*) which makes it negative, literally meaning “without light”. The deeper you go, the more dark and cold you will find the water. You will also find less and less light. With less and less light, you will find less living creatures. Very few organisms can live at those depths. You know how they get there food? Dead materials from above sink down to them and that is how they are fed. Doesn't sound like a great place to live, does it. Darkness everywhere. Whatever is dead is lying at the bottom, in darkness. Separated from the light above.

Our Epistle reading today talks about the darkness of our sins. The darkness of our sins that work chaos in our lives, in our relationship with our loved ones, the relationship with those around us, and most importantly, the relationship with our God.

As one lives in the darkness of their sin, their actions reflect who their allegiance is to. These sins that a person commits are deeds of darkness. People try to hide these deeds of darkness from the world. The verses leading up to today's Epistle reveal a few deeds of darkness.

Ephesians 5:3-7 states: <sup>3</sup>But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. <sup>4</sup>Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup>For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup>Therefore do not become partners with them.”

What are these sins, these deeds of darkness that are a delight to fall into? Viewing someone other than your spouse the way you should view your spouse only. When we fail to put to use the lyrics and title of the song: “Cause I only have eyes, for you.” There are other deeds of darkness that we delight to fall into. The silent envy of a coworker’s success, whether it is in their career or family life. Yet another deed of darkness are those crude jokes that you may happen to hear, or say yourself. Are they jokes that you think Jesus would appreciate?

We find excuses for these deeds of darkness that we delight in doing. We are experts at creating excuses. When thinking impure thoughts we say: “Well I am only admiring the beauty that God gave to that person’s spouse, nothing more.” When falling into the sin of envy we may say, “I see how successful that person is, and I want to work to achieve that as well.” When defending a crude joke we may say, “Well, it’s only a joke, lighten up.”

These deeds of darkness that we delight in doing, they creep up in our lives. They distract us from who should be the focus of our life, Jesus Christ. These deeds are constantly working to

drag us down into the depths of darkness, into our sin, into our wretchedness, into a crevasse so deep that the light of our God can't reach them.

Truth be told, that is where those deeds of darkness belong. They need to be separated from God. As Romans 6:23 tells us: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." As we speak about water, we are reminded about our own baptism. As the water is poured and the words are spoken, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Old Adam is drowned in our baptism. The deeds of darkness that the Old Adam in us delights in doing are drown into the depths. As we were baptized into Christ, we were buried with him into his death. The Old Adam that delights in doing deeds of darkness. The Old Adam is drowned.

What happens as a result of our baptism? Those deeds of darkness are drowned. Instead, we live in the light of God. This was nothing that you did. You were the washed, you did nothing to desire it or seek it out. It was done upon you. As a result, we are called to walk as children of light. Walking in the sense of conducting our lives. This includes the entire life of faith, confess and obedience to God's Word. As we walk as children of light, we love living in the light. As the Old Adam, that delights in doing deeds of darkness, has been drown, it is the New Adam that emerges and loves living in the light. Who is the light? Jesus.

Jesus, who came to this earth and experienced the darkness we live in, yet never sinned. Jesus who said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) The darkness of this world enveloped Christ as he hung upon the cross. The world was at its darkest. The light of the world died, for you and for me. He

died for our deeds of darkness that we delight in doing. But Christ didn't stay dead. The Light of the world rose on Easter for you and for me.

We are washed in our baptism. We are forgiven of our sins. We are given new life in Christ. Instead of a delight in the deeds of darkness, we love living in the light of Christ. Walking in His ways. Not because of anything that we have done, but because of what Christ did for us. Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

Ephesians 3:20-21