

Called out 8-26-01

1Pt 2:9, Gen 1:1-25, 1Thess 5:5, Eph 5:1-11, John 17:14-19, 2Cor 6:17

Last week brother Will shared how the word "church" meant to be called out. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. We are called out of darkness and into the Light. 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)⁹ *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Jesus is that Light. All around us is the darkness of rebellion against God, independent self-seeking individuals and groups that make up this world. We were once a part of that. Ultimately, every individual is either in the Light, or in darkness. As we read Genesis 1:1-25 pay close attention to, or mark, the word 'separate' (divide in the KJV) and the words "after its own kind". (read the text) Did you see the repeated theme of separation? God has His place for all of His creation. He planned for the Light to be separate from the darkness, the day from the night, and the waters from the waters. I believe in the literal interpretation of this passage, but I also believe it is powerfully symbolic. Listen to what Paul wrote the Thessalonians and see if there is a connection to this passage. 1 Thess 5:5 (NIV)⁵ *"You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness."* God has a wonderful place for you in His Creation. He is calling you to be separate from the darkness. This call is a call to let your heart be changed and your will, desires, and actions will follow.

Eph 5:3-11 (NIV)³ *But 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.⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord.¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

The world of darkness and rebellion is against God and all that He represents and it is from that world we are called out. It is a world of fruitless deeds – actions that produce no lasting results of the Kingdom of God. 2 Cor 6:17-18 (NIV)¹⁷ *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."¹⁸ "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

But this call to separation is not a call to isolation. Listen to Jesus prayer in John 17:15-18 (NIV)¹⁵ *My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.* -We are sent into the world as Lights in the midst of

darkness. Since we are one with Christ – as Will shared last week, we are his body, and where we go we bring Him, we bring Light. *"now you are light in the Lord." "-let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* Matt 5:16

But the Apostle had to warn the believers again and again that they were separated from the darkness and not to be partakers of the darkness. Read again the Eph 5:3-7. It is not as if we come into Christ and He into us and suddenly we can no longer choose. So he exhorts us to live as children of the Light. Everyday we walk in the Light or in darkness. Because I walked in the Light today does not mean I will tomorrow. And so God calls us out and asks us to quit mingling with those desires and thoughts, quit walking into the filth of the darkness but instead dispel it by your very presence. Eph 5:8b,9 Live as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

It would seem like it would be easier and safer just to isolate ourselves and keep our distance from the world of darkness, yet this was not and is not the example the Lord set for us. He ate and drank with those in darkness to show them the Light. Instead of being defiled by the darkness he brought the Light of life to it and transformed one life at a time. Now He calls us to do the same by the power of His life in us and presence upon us. But if we think we can walk amongst the darkness on our own, we will quickly find we are the ones being changed. The deceitfulness of the darkness and the lying promise of satisfaction dim the Light until it is hidden under a basket.

I had a friend who struggled with alcohol. He thought his ministry was to bring the light of Christ into bars. If his heart was transformed to the point he no longer desired to participate in the darkness it may have been his calling. But his heart still desired the lie that intoxication was necessary for his happiness and as he participated in the darkness his light was hidden under a bushel. The darkness does not produce fruit. No productive thing comes of it. It is destructive.

This concept of separation is also found in the word 'holy'. Pure and unmixed, set apart for God's use alone, other than what is common, all these descriptions help us to understand what the Hebrew mind meant by holy. Each describes what God has called us to. We share in God's work of transforming us into His Son's likeness by cooperating with the Spirit. That is our call and that is a work of separation from all that is impure, of all that is self centered, and anything that would defile or pollute. As we surrender the things in us that are not of God which, the Spirit of God reveals to us, we are separated more and more unto the fullness of Christ. And there, abiding in the vine we begin to bear fruit. While in Colorado I learned that the new vines have to sink their roots for five years before the grapes are sweet enough for quality wine. It is the same with the fruit from our branches. His roots are more than deep enough but it takes time for the forsaking of all that is impure in our lives to produce fruit that remains, fruit of quality. Not that we do it ourselves for it is all of Him, but He seeks to use purer vessels so the message is pure and is all Jesus, not consisting of anything of man. That is the wonderful work of refining that most often comes through suffering.

Separated – that is a call to purity in Christ so that all we present is Jesus. If you are on that journey you will readily say it is work barely begun, but one which you desire with all your heart. If you are on that journey things come to mind that are polluting your life, things the Holy Spirit is desiring to separate you from that you might be entirely His. Come out and be separate so you can walk back in among them but as a transforming Agent in their midst.

Hear the cry of the Spirit immediately preceding that call to be separate in 2 Cor 6:14-16 (NIV) ¹⁴ *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*¹⁵ *What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?*¹⁶ *What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

It is not a passage about physically being present with them, or marriage, or working with those in darkness but about being one with them in desire and motivation. It is about your hearts harmonizing in darkness. As children of light we are to walk in goodness, righteousness and truth. To yoke ourselves with the darkness is then the opposite, to walk in evil, unrighteousness, and a lie. The Corinthian passage goes on to say the reason you cannot continue in that. You have become the temple of God. He is present with you as Light wherever you go. He lives and walks in you. You are separated to God, you are His and He is your God. Then the verse that follow is: *Therefore, come out from among them and be separate...*

We had a few days of camp with the teenagers at Cornerstone Christian Academy with the focus on "who we are in Christ". The first night a guest speaker shared around the campfire about the identity crisis amongst the youth, trying to fit in and be accepted, yet knowing they are unique. He challenged them to consider what it was that kept them from a willingness to be all they are in Christ. Then they had a time of writing that thing down and nailing it to a big wooden cross. The teachers did also. It struck me that no matter how young or old we are in the Lord there are always those issues that either stand in the way of our being fully committed to Him, or tempt us to conform to the world and lose that separation. It's that separation that makes the presence of Christ upon our lives such a transforming Agent. Why don't I see more fruit on this branch? Those issues are keeping me from being separated fully unto Christ. Because of my desire to cling to those things I hide the light of Christ in a world that desperately needs to see what is real and have exposed what is a lie.

Imagine a life totally surrendered to the life of Christ within them. Everything that person says and does is a perfect picture of Jesus in them, for it is the life of Christ they yield to in all he says and does. That person's mind is transformed in such a way, by the Word of God, that he thinks Jesus' thoughts and has His desires. Is that idealistic or the plan that Jesus has for each of us if we would cooperate with His Spirit? Maybe you know someone like that. They are not special in themselves any more than you are as a beloved child of God. They are just clay pots that have a treasure that is readily visible because they do not present the container but what is in the container.

"You and I are to be such that as we walk up and down the streets of life, people will be struck and attracted. You have seen them turn and look at a well-dressed person. ... They should be struck by us, and look at us, and think, "What is this person? I have never seen anybody quite like this before!" ...

That is the kind of people we can be and the kind of people that we must be. And when we become such people, believe me, the revival we are longing for will start, and the people outside, in their misery and wretchedness, will come in and will want to know about it."

"Are we attractive Christians? Do we give people the impression that the most marvelous thing in the world is to be a Christian and to have the Spirit of God within us? This is the thing to which we are called and the way to do that is positively to avoid grieving the Spirit, and to walk in him, to dwell in him as he dwells in us, and to be led by him in all things." -- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"There are people in the world around us who never open, who never read this Book. But they are reading us. Are they able to see God in our lives? Are they able to say of us to others, "That man--or that woman--reminds me of Christ"? Do we let our light so shine that men may see, not us, but our Father in heaven? This is the real test." -- W. H. Griffith-Thomas

So if you were with those young people around that fireside what would you have scrawled on that paper. What is it that keeps others from seeing Jesus in you? We don't have a cross and hammer and nails, but you can still place it on the cross. That is where it belongs, crucified with Christ. Everyday you can cling to that worry, that fear, that self indulgence or you can leave it where it belongs, not just for yourself, but because the world needs Light. Do it because the Savior loves you and His love deserves more than any competing thing you could desire.

When I was lying on a hospital bed in Japan, confused and at a crossroads of faith, I walked a short British man beaming with the Light of Christ. It was not so much what he said, as who he was. He probably had no idea of how much he helped me to get back on track with faith. He was just a surrendered vessel full of the Light of Jesus. People are looking, searching, standing or lying just where I was, and the Lord will use you if you have allowed yourself to be separated unto Him. What a wonder that others could see Jesus in you and me. Let us not waste the opportunity. Shine – Live in the Light – walk in goodness, righteousness and truth. Put on the Lord Jesus and forget about satisfying the desires of your old nature, and you will find He bears fruit that remains through your life.