

Sermon
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West Kirk of Calder & Polbeth Harwood

By: Rev Dr Jonanda Groenewald

Text: Ephesians 5:6-20

Most people dislike darkness. Kids especially are very often scared in the dark. Before Nehan could reach the light switches in our house, he wouldn't go anywhere by himself at night!

Why? What is it that we don't like about darkness? I think it's got lots to do with the fact that you can't see what's going on around you when it is dark. For all you know there could be a huge big spider crawling towards you, a burglar hiding under the veil of night, or even a monster creeping up on you, concealed by the darkness!!

Somebody obviously realised that other people's comfort and peace of mind could be profitable to them, hence the invention of electric lights, bedside lamps, torches... We like to be able to see what is going on around us!

Talking about seeing... If somebody has poor eyesight, glasses are to them like a light in a dark room to a child. We were clever enough to invent something to help us see better when our eyes fail to do so by themselves.

And we had a wee reminder of how very important glasses are when we were at one of the waterparks in Florida on our holiday just a couple of weeks ago.

We were in the artificial sea, where the “pretend waves”, like my boys called it, are so big you can actually surf in them!

So while the sensible half of our family – that is me and Nehan, of course!, played in the shallow water, the 2 big brave boys – respectively 8 and 46 years old – went deeper and deeper into the waves. Until one of the big waves knocked André’s glasses off his face and he couldn’t see a thing!

Needless to say, he started panicking. Because there were hundreds of people in that pool, the water was deep and the waves just kept coming. And of course, without his glasses on, André couldn’t see a thing, so how was he going to find them?!

What a consternation... I realised that something was wrong and went in to go help. Everybody around us helped looking too, but to no avail. Those glasses were lost.

I quietly started panicking too, because how were we going to get home? I wasn’t a named driver on the car insurance, so I wasn’t allowed to drive the rental car! And André couldn’t drive if he couldn’t see where he was going!!

So I spoke to a life saver who pulled up his shoulders and sent me to a different life saver... Who actually had André’s glasses! Somebody

handed them in to her! Crises averted! André could see again and we would be okay! What a relief...

André wouldn't dare get behind that car's wheel without his glasses on, because he knew that it was not only his own life that would be at risk, but that of his wife and kids too, as well as the lives of all the strangers on the road.

And neither would any of you, I am sure. We are responsible people, after all.

Yet, I think that very often, when it comes to the spiritual things in our lives, to our faith and our responsibility as Christians, we very easily live more reckless. We don't always care that much if we can't see where we are going on our journey of faith – and to be truthful, I think that is way scarier than driving without your glasses or walking around in a pitch dark room.

And that's what the author of the letter to the Ephesians is trying to tell his readers, and us.

He says that if we believe in God, his Spirit lives within us, which means that no matter what our circumstances are, we need to walk the walk! Always. We can't only live like Christians when it suits us...

The very first people who read this letter had a difficult task ahead of them, because Christianity was new to them and they lived among people who frowned upon their choice to follow Jesus. And that's why Paul and others like him wrote letters to encourage these Christians, to

remind them what a huge privilege it was to be part of God's plan for the world!

The author of Ephesians describes it so nicely: He says that previously they were filled with darkness – they didn't know where they were going or what life was really about – but now, in Christ, they are filled with light. Now they can see what life really is about, and this makes it so much easier to see where they are heading and why.

We might live many many years after this letter was written, and our circumstances might be completely different to those of the 1st readers, but not much has changed. Because we still live among people who frown upon our choice to believe in God, and who make it difficult for us to always do and say what we know are right.

If we were to describe all the sin and the sorrow and the evil and the wrongs in life as "dark", I'm sure that you will all agree with me that we live in a dark dark world.

But that is where we come in! Because we have the light of Christ inside us!! We need to show the way.

Imagine going into a dark room with a flashlight in your hand – all the people without flashlights will naturally come to you, and walk close beside you, so they can also see where they are going!

If we really let our lights shine, others *will* follow, because nobody who realises how much easier it is to find your way in the light, will want to

keep living in darkness... And this is true in regards to actual darkness as well as spiritual darkness.

And it's not hard to let your light shine if you believe in God. Actually, if you have the light of Christ in you, you won't be able to hide it, even if you tried!

In her biography of Marie Antoinette, Carolly Erickson tells about the queen's attempts to disguise herself and attend parties, dances, and balls incognito, but how her *walk* gave her away. She says: "When she walked, she strode like a man. Her swift, purposeful gait was her trademark. It was said that she could never successfully disguise her identity at masked balls, for no matter how she dressed, she still walked like an Empress."

In the literal translation, Ephesians 5:6 reads:

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: *walk* as children of light."

Let's walk out this church this morning as children of the light, and keep walking as children of the light, everywhere we go.

Let's not try to blend in with the rest of the world, but to stand out, to shine, so we can make our houses, our villages, our country, the *world* a place of love, peace, happiness and hope. Things that can only be found in the light, in God.

Amen