

Shining As A Light **Acts 24; Ephesians 5:8-14**

Introduction:

1. Philippians 2:15 states, “*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God...*”
2. From this verse, we are taught two very important principles:
 - We live in a crooked and perverse world.
 - We, as Christians, are to shine as lights in the world.
3. These two truths are very vividly demonstrated in Acts 24. The apostle Paul had been unjustly imprisoned and had to stand trial before a Roman governor, Felix. History tells us that Felix was a vile, cruel, greedy, and immoral man.
4. The Jewish leaders who were accusing Paul hired an unscrupulous attorney by the name of Tertullus. All throughout this chapter, we see lying, corruption, hypocrisy, and a lack of justice – darkness! Maybe this sounds like where you work!
5. Yet, in our text, Paul shines as a beacon – a bright light – in the midst of the crookedness and perversion. This is God’s plan for **every** believer. Ephesians 5:8
6. If you know Christ, according to the Bible you **have** the light of Jesus dwelling in your spirit now. You **are** light in the Lord! You can walk as a child of light.
7. Isn’t this exciting to know that we are light in the Lord? You don’t have to pray, “Lord, give me light.” You **are** light in Christ. But, you can obscure that light.
 - Christ’s Spirit dwells in you, and desires to flow through you so that others can see that light.
8. Sometimes we complain about how wicked the world is, and certainly it is. But remember, the darker the world is, the better the opportunity to shine our light! The darker a room is, the more noticeable a ray of light is.
9. How can you shine as a light in your everyday life? Let’s look in our text.

First, refuse to participate in works of darkness.

1. Ephesians 5:7, 11-12 is very clear to the believer. Do you want to be a light? This passage clearly gives you a big part of the game plan. The believer’s actions, ethics, morals, and tactics should be vastly different than those who are lost without Christ.
 - “*Fellowship*” – “to share in company with; co-participate in”
2 Corinthians 6:14
 - “*Unfruitful*” – “barren; without fruit” – No godly gain will come from it.
 - “*Darkness*” – “shadiness; obscurity” – It’s not in line with God’s Word.
 - “*Reprove*” – “confute; admonish;” also translated “convict; convince; tell a fault” – The idea here is that you take a stand for the Lord, for what is right.

2. What does the Bible have in mind when it says “*works of darkness?*” All you have to do is to look in our text at this attorney, Tertullus:
 - He used flattery. vs. 1-3
 - Gossip is saying behind a person’s back what you would never say to his or her face, but flattery is saying to a person’s face what you would never say behind his or her back. “I love that dress. I love that new hair style.”
 - The world uses flattery to get what they want. The Bible warns about this. Psalm 12:2-3
 - The Christian should not participate in insincere flattery. 1 Thessalonians 2:5
 - He used deception. vs. 5-8
 - He lied about Felix, lied about Paul, and lied about Lysias. This is typical of the world, but God is a God of truth and hates lying. Proverbs 6:16-17
 - People think nothing of lying today in order to obtain what they want, but God expects the believer to put away lying and speak the truth. Tertullus exhibited total hypocrisy in verse 6. Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9
3. Felix, the judge, isn’t any better.
 - He compromised what was right for personal gain. vs. 22, 27
 - This was an open and shut case. Felix knew Paul was an innocent man. The letter from Lysias would bear out everything that Paul said and prove Tertullus a liar.
 - He kept Paul jailed for two selfish reasons: political gain (vs. 27), and possible financial gain (hoping for a bribe from Paul). vs. 26
 - Do you think this kind of unethical behavior happens today in business, in government, etc?
 - This is typical of the world, but God’s Word warns us of this. 1 Timothy 6:10-11
 - He hardened his heart against God’s conviction. vs. 24-25
 - Conviction from the Holy Spirit pleaded with his heart, but he delayed taking action. He said, “When it’s convenient, I will call for you.”
 - What a tragic mistake! Can you imagine, he’s spending eternity in the lake of fire with Satan because he delayed instead of humbling himself? 2 Corinthians 6:2
4. Christian, we should stand for what is right and refuse to participate in the works of darkness. We are the source of light for God in this world. We have not been called to blend in with the darkness, but rather to contrast with it as light. 2 Corinthians 4:6

Second, display the attitudes and actions of Christ in your daily life.

1. Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world..."* But Christ isn't on the earth anymore. Christ went away and sent back His Holy Spirit to indwell believers. The Christian life is not just about what we **don't** do. Ephesians 5:8-10
2. The Christian life is also about allowing God's Spirit to fill us and bear His fruit in our lives, proving what **is** acceptable to the Lord. This is what Paul did.
3. Paul was respectful toward authority. vs. 10
 - Paul addressed Felix respectfully because it was the right thing to do. The Bible teaches we are to be respectful towards governmental, parental, and employer authority.
 - Oh, how this is needed today. Children grow up with no respect for authority, and this leads to a lawless society which will crumble and decay.
 - What a light you can be by showing proper respect wherever you go.
4. Paul courageously confessed his faith. vs. 14, 24-25
 - Paul did this in the courtroom publicly (vs. 14) and also privately (vs. 24-25). Notice that Paul told them about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. He just laid it out courageously to these evil people, attempting to reach their conscience, and convince them of their sins and need of Christ.
 - This is remarkable when you consider that Paul was dependent on Felix for his release. Most people would have kept it warm and fuzzy and watered it down.
 - When you are filled with the Spirit, you testify to the truth of God no matter the consequence. The Holy Spirit gives boldness. Acts 4:31
5. Paul's testimony was totally honest. vs. 11-21
 - Unlike Tertullus, Paul gave the facts, plain and simple. Romans 12:17
 - It's a good thing he did. He didn't know (nor did Tertullus) that Felix had a letter from the chief captain, Lysias. It would show that Paul was speaking the truth.
 - Christian, you'd better live honestly because you never know who is watching.
6. Paul chose character over compromise or convenience. vs. 26-27
 - It seems that Paul could have secured his release with an under-the-table bribe to Felix, but Paul would have nothing to do with this. Result: Paul rotted for two more years in prison! Mark it down, it is not always convenient to do right.

In Conclusion:

1. What is your identity? Who are you? You are either a child of light or a child of the darkness. There is no in between. 1 Thessalonians 5:5
2. If you are a child of the light and Christ's Spirit lives within you, God expects you to manifest that divine life each and every day. Time is short. We must get serious. Romans 13:12