

Living in the Kingdom Time Zone

Ephesians 5:8-17—For at one time you were darkness but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them; for it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible. For anything that becomes visible is light, therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

I John 1-7—What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Let's pray:

Father, we are so thankful for the wake-up call through Your precious Word, and now we pray that the Holy Spirit would make it real to all of us. We know that the times are near, and if we are awakened we will see it for ourselves. So make it real by the Holy Spirit's trumpet call in the soul of each person that we may know what the times are and what we ought to do. We thank You for the time together; we commit it into Your hands. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.

I have spoken about the time and *the* times. Do you know what time it is? Do you know the times we are living in? Our time is actually important. Even our time here tonight is important because God has decided in His wisdom to affect eternal things in the realm of time, and that is what makes time important. God wants to intercept our time here on earth in some way with eternal and higher purposes. He wants to meet us at the crossroads where suddenly we realize that it is not a dream, that there really is a ladder up to heaven, and this really is the house of God. All those times in the Scriptures where somebody was just going through time and suddenly awoke to a whole different realm right in front of them, but they could not see it. So the Lord wants to awaken us to what He is doing in these days and make it real to us; so it is time to wake up.

Many years ago I remember preaching in Indiana in a country church, and there was a deacon there who was probably the most gifted for being able to fall asleep. As soon as I started speaking

he fell right away into a sleep and snored occasionally while in a deep slumber. Well, he did that week after week, and one week I had a message about Jacob going back to Bethel, and I yelled at a certain point and said, "Jacob!" This man suddenly woke up and hit his head on the back of the pew, and you could hear it throughout the whole place. And everybody woke up and wondered what was going on.

Paradise Lost

There is time and *the* times, and you need to be awakened to the times to see what is going on. At the very beginning with Adam and God, heaven and earth used to be connected. Heaven is the realm where everything is perfect; it is where God dwells with the angels all around, and then earth was created finite. God had a marvelous plan; He wanted to take that which was earthly and make it heavenly. He wanted to take time and bring it into eternity. He wanted to take mortality and make it immortal. So He created this earth and put Adam on it, the paradise of God which was heaven on earth. Heaven was above and earth was down here. God was in the heavens and Adam was here on earth; but there was fellowship every day. In the cool of the day Adam and Eve were walking through the garden, fellowshiping with God because Adam's spirit was alive to God Who was Spirit. There was communication and daily wisdom in the cool of the day. There was a oneness, a connection, and God meant to use that connection to draw time into eternity.

However, paradise was lost. Man sinned, and his spirit died; thus he no longer had such a fellowship with God. As a result his soul feared God for what he knew in the past, but his spirit could no longer communicate with Him. His conscience could feel bad in the presence of God which made him go and hide in the trees when God came by, but that fellowship with Him was broken. Paradise had to be vacated, and heaven on earth had to be closed up and guarded by fiery cherubim.

As we read the record of the generations down to the times of Noah and so on, each generation got darker. Heaven became further away from earth, and heaven and earth were separated. Time and eternity were completely out of sync. Nevertheless, God had a deep mystery hidden in His heart which came out of the love that He has for man, and God's good intention was somehow to reconnect man to God and heaven to earth and time to eternity. The way He did it was by breaking into man's time. It was with Noah that God suddenly broke in, and Noah discovered the righteousness of God. One day Abraham was in Ur of Chaldees, and God broke in with a vision of His glory. Then God opened the eyes of the prophets to the times and to His righteousness. Moses' eyes were opened by God to the I AM, the Holy God. And to David was revealed the God of love and mercy. He would break into time and reveal Himself in many different ways, and every time He broke in something of the times and epochs changed. People were called or chosen, a covenant was made, promises were kept, kingdoms rose and kingdoms fell. Every time that God could break into time, there would be a change and something happened.

The Reconnection of Heaven and Earth

All of those moments were God's divine preparations for the moment that He by His grace would reconnect heaven and earth through Jesus Christ, and when Jesus came to earth, heaven came down. The eternal Word of life became flesh and dwelt on this earth, and we could behold His glory. It was not just a momentary flash and then disappearing. Now this Man, no this God is standing before us. When Jesus came, heaven came down and John saw glory. He saw the glory of God in Jesus Christ. He saw that Jesus was the ladder between earth and heaven, that Jesus was the Mediator between God and man, and by His death and resurrection, by His great salvation, heaven and earth are joined again. Heaven is still the place of perfection where His perfect sacrifice was offered in the heavenly tabernacle, but here on earth there were touches of perfection, touches of eternity, touches of the glory and life because of Jesus Christ coming into this world.

John says, "I cannot believe it! I heard Him, I saw Him, I touched Him, and I tell you, it is eternal, it is life, it is Zoe. That is what I touched. Not only did I touch Him but I am declaring to you that I touched Him, I heard Him, I saw Him, and I have fellowship with Him. And even though He has gone back to heaven, it is still uninterrupted fellowship. The Father and the Son through all time and eternity have had fellowship back and forth. Now I am included in this triangle, the Father speaking with the Son, the Son speaking with me, and me speaking to the Father. We are in a fellowship now. There has been a reconnection of time and eternity, earth and heaven, and we have been included in it also. This reconnection which we see at the end of the Bible of the new Jerusalem perfection of glory coming down out of heaven to earth and wedding heaven and earth once more is complete, and we hear God saying, "Now I dwell among men and men dwell among Me." Heaven and earth have become one, and glory shines through us and through the new Jerusalem. Time has been brought into eternity, mortality has put on immortality, and any separation has gone. This was God's wonderful plan, and Jesus came down and we have fellowship now with the Father.

Walk in the Light

In this way we see how God breaks in from eternity to time, and He does it by Light. This is the key to how He changes kingdom time when His Light shines. And so we read here in I John 1:7: "If we walk in the Light as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." When we live and walk in the Light, if the kingdom should suddenly come, you are already in. If you are walking in the Light right now as He is in the Light, when the kingdom comes, you are not completely surprised because you had this feeling of it; but you are in. It is as simple as that. If you are a child of Light, then there is this wonderful potential that we will be ready when the kingdom comes, and for those who are walking in the Light they are so near to this moment because they sense it so well.

Margaret Barber was walking in the Light of the second coming of Jesus and so many of her songs describe the feeling that she had of the whisper from the glory and all these kinds of things.

We are children of Light; that is the end of the story. We should have a prayer and go—except for one little problem. This world is full of darkness, and that darkness can even influence us and remove us from kingdom Light and kingdom times right out of this time zone and out of sync with God. Darkness can infiltrate our hearts. So we want to fellowship now about living in the kingdom time zone as children of the Light.

Becoming Sons of Light

Jesus said in John 12:36 that we are children of Light, but we have to learn how to continue in that Light to become sons of Light. There is an interesting maturity implied here. “While you have the Light, believe in the Light” he says, “so that you may become sons of Light.” There is “a becoming” here. While you have the Light, while you are in it, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light. But when we read Ephesians 5:14, we realize this fact, that it is possible for children of Light to fall asleep which means effectually you are not aware of what the times are, and you are out of sync with the living God. “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Of course, Paul was speaking to Christians, not to sinners. So I just want to list as an example five ways that we can be children of Light but be asleep and out of sync.

Children of Light but Asleep

1) If we as a Christian have unconfessed sin in our lives, then we are not walking in the Light, and we are out of sync with the Lord of Light.

2) Maybe some people are saved but probably because they have never understood, they have never taken up their cross and become a disciple following Jesus. Thus Jesus has left them behind because they continue living their own lives.

3) There are some Christians who are living in carnal darkness, a completely selfish life, and they have never offered themselves upon that altar in consecration as a living sacrifice. And it is easy for such an unconsecrated Christian to find themselves in darkness and not in light.

4) There are some people who are saved, but unfortunately they are under condemnation, feeling defeated all the time because they have never understood that they are crucified with Christ. They never come to that place of rest in the life of Christ, as John simply puts it, they have never come to the place where they are abiding in Christ and Christ is abiding in them. So all of that self-effort and defeat and sin cause condemnation, and condemnation takes us out of the Light.

5) Strangely, even servants of the Lord can find themselves out of the Light because they have tried doing things their own way. They have never really allowed Jesus to yoke up with them and learn from Him how to serve. And bound and determined to serve on their own they become exhausted, and some servants go right out of the Light in defeat and in discouragement. But the good news is that when we awaken, we can buy back time or redeem the time, which is what buying back means, because the days are evil (see Ephesians 5:16). The days *are* evil, and we are

often not awake, and darkness begins to slip into our lives. It does not have to be major ways; it can be in very minor ways, but darkness slips in.

Ephesians 5:8: “You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.”

Sometimes it is good to remember that you used to be darkness, but now you are Light. Now we know that everybody’s life is at a different point of salvation. I was not saved until I was twenty years old, so I really have many memories of what it was like to be darkness, not only to walk in darkness but actually produce darkness in my life. But remember that Paul says, “You do not have to be that way now. You are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.”

Solomon is a great example in the Bible of this, who although he was gifted with such wisdom, in his latter days he began to worship the gods of his wives and concubines. When he did that, he came out of the kingdom time zone right into under the sun, and he began to live out of the Light and in the shadows under the sun, and he was disconnected from heaven. When this happens, we do not know what heaven is up to. All we know is the weariness that is going on upon earth, and Solomon describes it in Ecclesiastes: “Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.” His heart was so far away from God, and in Ecclesiastes 3 he says, “There are cycles of time, seasons of time, a time to be born and a time to die, and so on. There are cycles going around endlessly, boring, vanity.” That is what life is like under the sun, and yet even Solomon recognized in Ecclesiastes 3:11: “God has set eternity in my heart.”

He just could not figure it out, but under the sun he had a gnawing feeling that there had to be something more to life. He knew that there is eternity and not time, but he was lost to it. The clouds were covering the heavenlies. Solomon is an example of what it means to be darkened.

Einstein’s Theory of Relativity

When Light shines, it changes our time into *the* times. Now for the sake of young people I am now going to give the parable of light and time from Einstein’s theory of relativity, but remember that I am not a scientist. I think you probably have noticed in the last two weeks Einstein’s theory of relativity has come back into the news, because as they are looking at other new galaxies they are seeing that his theories are proving true in outer galaxies. Einstein’s theory was called relativity because basically things that were thought to be settled and constant became relative and things that were thought to be relative became constant. New discoveries in atomic energy, which of course was the breakthrough of the 20th century, revealed that mass is no longer a solid constant. Mass is actually made up molecules, and inside are protons, neutrons, electrons, morons, and all kinds of little things. So we thought mass was a constant, but no, mass is relative to the speed of light. So energy equals mass is now relative according to the speed of light; therefore the speed of light turns out to be the constant and matter turns out to be relative. It is quite a change, plus the fact it was due to spectroscopy. As astronomers studied the far galaxies and the stars they began to trace the actions of particles as they approached the speed of light, and they found some interesting things. Of course, the main part

of the equation has to do with energy, and what they discovered was that as particles were accelerated to the speed of light, there was an atomic bomb, an explosion. Mass became energy as the speed of light was reached by these particles zipping around. But that is not the part I am interested in.

The other part of this that is also very interesting is this. Time, Chronos was thought to be a constant—tick, tock, tick tock. There is a clock in the world that keeps perfect time and all times are adjusted to it; I think it is in Greenwich, England. We thought time was a constant until Einstein came along and said, “Wait a minute. Look what happens to time when it approaches the speed of light. It gets thicker.” So his analogy was like an hour glass where sand is going through this little throat. As the sand reaches the speed of light, meaning as time reaches the speed of light, more sand comes through than in regular circumstances. This was called by the scientists (not by Captain Kurt or Hans Solo) time-warp; in other words, time could be bent and condensed toward the speed of light. It was not a constant anymore; it was variable. That is where we get this warp speed. Okay, hit five warp speed, and what it really means is that if you get up to the speed of light you can go ten years in two minutes; something like that, but you get the point.

Jesus Changed the Times when He Came

Here is the point of the parable. In the kingdom time zone time is condensed in the light of the kingdom. It is not just la, la, la time anymore; it is time that has some density and purpose to it, and some fullness to it. That is why in the Gospel of Mark the first thing Jesus said was: “The times are fulfilled, the Kairos is filled. The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel.” That is what Jesus said, but when Jesus was living and walking in Galilee or in Jerusalem, the time changed. I am sure you have noticed that. Mark says, “Let me tell you how much the time changed. Immediately Jesus did this; immediately then, immediately then. Immediately, immediately, immediately, the time was changed. It says that those in Galilee that sat in darkness saw a great light, and the whole time changed in Galilee. You might in one sense say the Galilean time was changed to kingdom standard time. Everywhere Jesus went the Gospel was there, and there was provision, food, healing, there was raising the dead, there was truth, there was conviction. Everywhere Jesus went that Light shone down and people who were just walking through time, just sleep-walking woke up and said, “Whoa, God is here! I need to repent.” That is what we are talking about. That is full time; it is time that has stuff in it. I can honestly say that I am sure the disciples would say this twenty years after the fact that they never spent any time as full as the three years with Jesus. Can you imagine living in that kind of time! It is a picture of kingdom time zone where time is condensed and so much is going on.

God came through Jesus Christ exploding by His Light into the lives of people with grace, mercy, forgiveness, salvation, and healing. This is Jesus, the Light of the world; Jesus coming into time; Jesus changing our lives completely. This is in effect what the Lord wants for all of our lives. We should make every day a day filled with those events that alter or illuminate our times.

Sometimes a day just goes by and seems pretty basic, but if you are walking in the Light there is something of eternal purpose that God is doing in your life whether it is a correcting, whether it is a squeezing, whether it is a building up, whatever it is. Even though it seems like you just passed twenty-four hours and nothing seemed to be going on externally, when you are in the Light, the time changes and you see things in a different frame.

Praying in Kingdom Time

Some older ones like me can remember back in the seventies when God broke in to the United States in an amazing way. Time was changed in many places in the United States in what we call the Jesus movement, and some call it the Charismatic movement. I can remember during this time in my early days as a servant of God preaching the Gospel and playing my guitar in a public meeting place and seeing two or three hundred young people, teenagers get saved. All of them were drug addicts, drop-outs, hippies, but God was just all over the place. Now we cannot expect that to happen all the time, but I am sure in your life at moments or at seasons you sensed the Lord working in condensed and extraordinary ways. He does that to awaken us to show us the depth of His reality. Most of us live on two dimensional flat land. We so rarely get to see how multidimensional this kingdom really is, but God by His grace breaks into time and our time changes.

Praying Under the Sun

Let me give you one example; it is a kind of stupid example from my brain. In prayer the more Light you have, the less time it takes. For example, praying under the sun. If you pray under the sun a religious prayer, and many people pray religious prayers under the sun, it is snail mail. When you pray, the prayer lifts up from the ground and begins heading toward heaven, but I do not know if it is going to get there. It is going up by snail mail. You pray and somehow some way, sometime you hope this prayer gets in God's mailbox. That is a pretty slow prayer. "I have been praying for years, and I am just trying to push that prayer up. But I don't know if it is up there yet. So I sent the reminder to God that I sent Him a notice about the notice that I sent." This prayer does not work so well.

How about the prayer with a living word of faith. Jesus said, "Now when you pray, believe that you have received it, and you will have it." If you pray with a word of faith, as soon as you pray the answer comes back. That is pretty fast. But wait a minute, there is a faster one. If you are seated with Him in the heavenly places and you begin to pray, before you can finish the prayer comes back and hits you. It is because you are praying something that God is already answering before you can pray it because you are in God's eternal purpose, praying from the heavenlies. Now that is a speedy prayer. You pray and God says, "Sorry, I have already answered; just turn around and look."

The saints were praying for Peter to get out of prison, and Peter was knocking on the door. And people said, "We have to pray some more; send Him another snail mail. No, just look around; there he is." The kingdom time zone changes our times; it changes our lives.

Paul Met Jesus and His Life Changed

Paul testified in II Corinthians 4:6: "For God who said, 'Let there be light is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'" When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, wow! did his kingdom time zone change! His whole life changed. His purpose changed, his methods changed, his motives changed. Wow! When Paul met the Light, his whole life was full of the sense of the presence of Jesus and the nearness of His coming, so he is always talking about the Parousia, which means the presence of Jesus. He sensed that He was so near.

Now I do not want to hold Paul up as an example. Have you had a blinding experience on the road to Damascus? Few of us can say that; but I would like to ask you, "Do you feel like you have ever been in the kingdom time zone? Have you ever sensed the Lord rushing upon you like a mighty wind? Or a truth that penetrates through your soul into your spirit? There is a shaft of light that comes into you, and sometimes in those moments, because it just takes a moment, and Light comes into you. You cannot explain what that Light is, but you saw something because eternity broke into your time. Well I can say one thing, if you have been in kingdom time zone you will agree with me it is not a boring time. The Lord begins to fill you and your days with challenges. He brings you under an open heaven and shows you His purpose. He gives you His blessings, which is every blessing in the heavenly places, and you are suddenly living in a seemingly different realm. But of course, you are here on earth, still in your time zone, but something has changed in your life. I think many of us Christians actually feel sometimes as if we live in two time zones. Maybe we go to church on the Lord's day and have a time of worship and sense the Lord's presence, then we go to work on Monday, and where is the Lord? I hope that you being in the kingdom is not a matter of what day of the week it is.

I used to tell the young people that my definition of the kingdom of God is where Jesus is Lord now—not in theory. If He is not Lord of your life, do you think you are in the kingdom? The King has to be over you for you to be in the kingdom which makes sense. This is a famous quote from Hudson Taylor: "Either Jesus is Lord of all or He is not Lord at all." That is what we are talking about. It is a position under the Lord and not a general saying, "Yeah, Jesus is my Lord, I know. I love Jesus; He is my Savior." No, that is not what I am talking about. Is Jesus Lord now? Is He telling you what to do and you are obeying? This is a wonderful place.

Redeeming the Time

We see that this problem is such that Paul has to go into some detail about what happens when the world's darkness affects us, and pulls us out of sync with kingdom time. We eventually fall asleep, and so he says in Ephesians 5:15-16: "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

It seems that children of Light, which is everybody who is saved, have a free choice of what time zone you want to live in. In other words, you choose. Now as a child of Light you should be in the kingdom time zone, but you can choose to live there or under the sun zone.

So Ephesians 5:8-10 tells us that we can walk in the kingdom time zone. Listen to some of the wonderful information we get from that. "Now you are Light in the Lord" (see v. 8). When you are in the kingdom time zone, you actually bear a certain Light within yourself. It may be small; you may be a young Christian, but you have a Light that others can notice because you are the Light of the world, and you have something in you that is qualitatively different from somebody who is only in the darkness. When you walk in the Light, it says that you can discover what is pleasing to the Lord (see v. 10). How wonderful to walk and do this and then do that and find what is really pleasing to the Lord. It is wonderful to walk in the Light, and as you walk in the Light learn how to walk more effectively and redeem the time more perfectly, all as you walk along like that.

A Child of Light Living in the Dark

But you can look at Ephesians 5:11-13 and see something of what it is like to live under the sun zone, that is to say you are a child of Light living in the dark. Verse 11 says, "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them." There are so many deeds we can do under the sun that are unfruitful and futile. Verse 12 says, "For it disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." And we can be Christians yet be doing these disgraceful things that bring condemnation and shame to our conscience. There is nothing more miserable than a child of the Light who is walking in the darkness. Condemnation just rings around your heart and squeezes all the faith out of your life.

Verse 13 says, "But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light." If you are trying to hide in darkness you know you will be exposed. Sometimes when kids get out of high school and go away to college, they try to hide the things they are doing for a while, but they know they are going to be exposed. You are doing some stuff that is wrong, and you know you are doing it, but you think you will never get caught. Well, I am sorry. You are going to get caught, and you are going to get exposed, and you live in the dread of knowing that the jig is up. That is no way to live.

Paul talks about this being a child of Light, walking in the Light, being Light. And he mentions it in other places as well. The times are affected by the Light. In Romans 13:11-14 Paul talks about the same matter: "Do this, knowing the times, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ (He is your armor of Light), and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." Now I think you know these things already, dear child of Light, so do not fall asleep; wake up.

In I Thessalonians 5:4 he is speaking to very young Christians. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert

and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

This is no time to sleep for those who are children of Light. Awake, sense the times we are in and you will understand what to do.

Paul again in Ephesians 5 says, “Don’t be ignorant or foolish. Understand what the will of the Lord is.” That means as a child of Light, you know what the will of the Lord is; it is very clear. Don’t be foolish; you know what the will of the Lord is for your life. Be obedient to the Light and walk in that Light.

The Difference between Light and Teaching

Now we want to explain some of the more subtle problems that we get into as Christians to where we actually think we are walking in the Light, but we are not walking in the Light. So I would like to ask you a question just to use an example in the Scriptures and then apply it to ourselves. The elders, the Pharisees, the scribes and all in Jerusalem were so intelligent and knowledgeable about the kingdom of God, about the Scriptures of the coming of the Messiah and all of these knowledgeable things, why is it that when Jesus came they were out of sync completely with the kingdom of heaven? When the King came, the very King of the kingdom of heaven, the King they were waiting for, they did not see Him and rejected Him. How is that possible?

There is an interesting differentiation I want to make here because it applies to us. There is a difference between Light and teaching. There is a difference between Light and doctrine, but sometimes we confuse the two. In Acts 13:27, when Paul was preaching the Gospel on his first missionary journey, he speaks of those leaders in Jerusalem and this is what he says: “For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Jesus nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these Scriptures by condemning Jesus.”

What is Paul preaching? First of all, he is saying that the leaders in Jerusalem knew the Scriptures; there is no doubt about that. They knew the Scriptures, and yet they were blind to two things. First, they had doctrine but they did not have Light. And why were they blind? It is obvious that when Jesus came into their midst, they did not recognize Him. That is a simple litmus test. If we are here tonight in this meeting and Jesus is here, do you recognize Him or not? When Jesus came into Jerusalem these leaders, with all of their vast messianic prophecy and Bible knowledge of the kingdom of God, did not recognize Him.

Secondly, he says that though they heard the prophets every Sabbath in the synagogue, they never heard the voices of the prophets underneath the Word. And so he says that ironically they fulfilled the very word that they did not understand. They knew the doctrines and the knowledge, as an example Isaiah 53, but because they did not hear the voice behind Isaiah 53, they ended up crucifying the very One spoken of in Isaiah 53. That is pretty ironic that somebody could have doctrinal knowledge but not have light, and so be blind to the truth. This is an important

distinction, and Paul makes the distinction to tell us that it is possible for us to know a lot of doctrine and even know the Word of God really well, and yet not have any light. Do you believe that it is possible that a person can be a scriptural genius and not even know that Jesus is the Light, never had that Light shine upon them? If that happens there can be a deception, this thought: "Certainly I am in the Light because I know all of this stuff." Before Paul was saved, as a true Pharisee he really knew the Word, but when he met the Light, everything changed for him. When he went back to the Old Testament and started reading it, he saw Jesus in the law, Jesus in the prophets, and Jesus in the writings; He was everywhere. Paul knew the law, the prophets and the writings, but he never saw the Light of what these were talking about until Jesus was his focus, and now he understood the Word of God. There was a tremendous change that came about in Paul's life.

The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation

We know in Ephesians chapter 1 that Paul prays for the Christians. He really goes into the heavenlies and shares God's eternal purpose and a lot of high and wonderful things, but then he prays, "Oh God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ please give My brethren a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (v. 17). Otherwise all these great doctrines from Ephesians are just great doctrines, but Lord, if You will shine Your light on the doctrines they will see the Person behind the doctrines and see the Light in what they are talking about, but not just as doctrines, as Light."

Probably the majority of you grew up in a Christian home, went to a Christian church, heard the Gospel, knew you were a sinner, and you knew you needed Jesus. You knew all of that and heard it many times, but then, thank God the light shone one day and you saw that you needed Jesus, and He saved you. Whatever it was you saw, that is what brought you from a doctrinal growing-up Christian who had an understanding of things into the reality of that understanding. There are so many wonderful things in the Scriptures, but unless we see them in the Light of Jesus Christ they just remain things. Paul does not want these people just knowing about God's eternal purpose so they can use those words. He wants them to see God's eternal purpose because as soon as you see it, then you know what to do regarding it. It is not just a doctrine, but you see what to do and how to cooperate with that purpose. However, many run against God's purpose totally ignorant that they are doing so because they do not have Light of the things that we are talking about. There is this danger of being taught and understanding things without the Light of truth ever reaching our hearts. Doctrines are great, but unless they reach our heart with Light we have problems.

Hearing the Talk but not Seeing the Light

Now when it comes to our children growing up in such a church, unfortunately some of our young people have heard all the talk, but they do not see the Light. Now I hope before they get off to college that you as parents and you as elders or responsible brothers will talk to your teenagers and be sure that they see Light. If they only see doctrine, by the time they reach college

our doctrines, the requirements, the truths involved in our assembly and all the things we do—all of the women wearing kerchiefs on their head and all these kind of things—really begin to look kind of stupid unless they see the Light of why these things are being done. The next thing you know our young people get into a Christian group in college, and of course, they are immediately stars because they know the Bible. They can turn to Jeremiah and that makes them the Bible leader in one week. Most Christians love the Lord, but because their Bible knowledge is very shallow, our folks become leaders. And in the midst of the leaders they are introduced to what I would call broader gospel or another gospel or a gospel that is easier to live in. Under the sun there are doctrines, there are works, there are things to do, there are many wonderful things, but it is no longer walking in the Light; it is walking under the sun and doing Christian things. Now if we do not capture our children with Light and teach them how to walk in the Light and obey the Light, they can grow up and become doctrinal whizzes.

I like how Paul defines the church in I Timothy 3:15-16. He is talking to Timothy about how people should conduct themselves in the house of God, and he calls it the church of the living God; then he juxtaposes two things (place close together): 1) “The church of God which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.” So you see there is truth there, there is doctrine, there are teachings, there are things that are true, and the church should be the pillar and foundation. Do you want to know the truth? You should go to the church; you should gather as the church, and you will see the Truth standing right before you.

2) Then he goes on in verse 16 and says, “Now by common confession, great is the mystery of godliness.” Here he says, “It cannot just be doctrine; there has to be a life lived by Christ in you, the hope of glory.” There has to be that inward life to match that doctrine. That is the church as it is walking in the Light. So here is the challenge for our teenagers. But frankly, we have a challenge for ourselves as veteran Christians, and it is a whole other kind of thing, but here is what happens. Many times, and I think for many of us, by the grace of God we saw the Light in some fundamental way after being a Christian for a while and trying this way and that.

Don't Let the Light Dim

In 1975 I came to the Christian Family Conference for the first time, and I saw something that changed my whole life. I had been studying the Scriptures a long time, and I was a minister who had gone to seminary and the whole thing, but I did not see Christ the center, Christ the Head, Christ over all, Christ all-sufficient. I never saw that. And when my eyes were opened, I had to start all over again, but I am so thankful for that time. And for many of you at one time or other somehow the Lord opened your eyes to bigger and better things, for kingdom things, and your eyes began to see wonderful things about what God was doing in all these things. But the challenge is to remain in that Light because that Light can dim and after a while be replaced by a mental knowledge of doctrines, and no longer have Light in our spirit. That is the problem. Light is a function of God in our spirit; it is something revealed, and out of that Light comes truth. However, after a while we can get truth in our head but no longer be walking in that Light, and

we are just talking, talking words. So we develop habits and traditions based on our knowledge but not really in the kingdom time zone.

When the church gathers together, is it in the kingdom time zone? Is the Lord pressing Himself, presenting Himself, reigning over us? We claim all the things, but is it really true? Maybe we have learned to pray, but we are not really watching for His coming. Maybe we are serving, but we are not bearing that freewill, sacrifice testimony that our brother talked about this morning, and we are just serving as a kind of duty: "I have to speak this Sunday." Our worship can be full of wonderful words, full of emotions, and full of sentiments, but just be formula. Do we realize that we can deceive ourselves about these things and actually be out of step with our King and our Lord and what He is doing in these last days, but be absolutely convinced that we are totally in the thing because we are saying all the right words and doing all the right things? And usually when the Lord comes to us as He came to the seven churches and He really opens our eyes because by His grace and love He wants to reveal and expose to us that we are out of the Light, it is usually those same things, isn't it? *We have lost our first love.* The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches have choked our inheritance right out of our lives. Our desire for our self-preservation has taught us some way to get around a life of the cross, and we save our lives instead of offering our lives and laying them down. We become exhausted because we have spent years serving by our own soul-life and so rather than being renewed in our spirit our soul is just wasted, and all we can think of doing is retiring or escaping. I hope you are not sixty-two years old looking to retire from God's purpose, from kingdom time. I am not talking about your job now. I am talking about retiring in exhaustion from the purpose of God. "Oh, let the kids do it; I am tired; I am just going to watch my favorite baseball team; that is all I need." Sometimes we can even fool ourselves by looking around smugly and comparing ourselves with other groups and saying, "Ah, we are a lot better than that." That is not the question at all. Are we walking in the Light as He is in the Light? If we are not then all that we are doing means nothing.

Three Different Growths of Light

Now what do we do about it? John is our brother who brings recovery to us. He recovers Life and Light to us; his testimony is to get back in the Light and walk in the Light with Jesus. Have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and you will be walking as you should be walking in righteousness, love, and Light. The whole letter of I John just spells all these things out. John is a son of Issachar; he knows what time it is, and he knows what to do.

He says, "My little children, the time is late; the end has come. Right now antichrists have gone out into the world, so you know this is the time, and here is what you need to do." So having spoken about this matter of walking in the Light he comes and appeals to three different growths of Light in our lives.

1) In I John he is speaking of the children, and they have two qualities about them. They know their sins are forgiven; praise God, they have that much Light. And they know their Father.

Little children, you know the Father, and you know your sins have been forgiven; that is walking in the Light for a little child of God. Isn't it wonderful! The enemy would try to attack and say, "You sinner!" And he says, "But my sins are forgiven." You know that, and you know He is your Father. The devil cannot rob you of that unless you fall into darkness. So walk in that Light, and then the Lord will give you more Light so you can become a young man.

2) John says, "I write to you, young men; do you know what time it is? Do you know what to do? Young men, I am writing to you because you are laying hold of the Word of God." Now if you are a little child and you want to become a young man, you have to lay hold of the Word of God, and begin to study it, getting it into your heart because he says, "You young men, the Word of God abides in you. You young men, you can overcome the evil one because the Word of God abides in you, and now you are walking in the Light. And this Light is not only coming from here but this Light is coming from the Word being made life to you, and you are able to do some spiritual battle against the enemy. Wonderful! Wonderful!

3) Anybody that has been a Christian more than a handful of years, I write to you, fathers. Now do you know Him who has been from the beginning? Do you know what that means? Do you know of His depths, His heights, His purpose, and His ways? You should be seeing and understanding His ways by now and not just His acts, so you can help other people on the way. We need spiritual fathers, sisters who are spiritual fathers, brothers who are spiritual fathers who can tell people what the times are and what to do, just like John is showing us right here. There is an eternal purpose behind all of these things.

All I can tell you to do is wake up. I hope maybe somebody who has fallen asleep will wake up spiritually. Maybe you are a teenager and you have been through the whole mill; you have been through the family conference classes and studied all these guys, but you are not living in the reality of it. The children go through these classes, and they know Daniel, David, Ruth and others better than most preachers. They come back and tell you what they have learned, and you say, "I didn't know that." The teachers are teaching wonderful things, but even though you have been through the whole thing, the Light is not upon you right now. You have gotten into a dark little shadowy place: "Wake up! You are a child of Light, now walk as children in the Light. Don't be foolish; you know what the will of the Lord is." Does that leave any room for fudging? "I do not know what God's will is." Oh yes, you do; step into the Light for one second and you will know exactly what to do.

Never Stop Seeking to Know More about Jesus

Let me say a few final things here just to encourage the young people. There is so much yet to be discovered in the Light. Oh, we are down in the foothills, but there is so much more to know about Jesus. There is so much more to know about His purpose, the way He does things, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't be satisfied with where you are; there is so much more to learn in the Light, dear young person. Go on in the Light; learn more of His life and power. Start off where you are. You know He loves you; you know He is your Savior; now walk in that love and

respond back to Him with love. Give Him a freewill offering every day, worshipping and thanking Him. Grow in that Light, and become a student of the Word. Really lay hold of this Word, and even if you do not understand it all, God will shine light on it as time goes along, and you will understand even the things that you have heard about.

David talked about the time when he was in training to become a doctor, and at 3 AM in the morning on the way to the hospital he would listen to the old cassette tapes of the Family Conference messages. Those tapes would speed up and jam up, and all the time he was trying to listen and understand what was being said. I am sure he took in a lot of stuff. I do not know how much he really saw of the light in those messages, but now the Lord is showing him more and more. The Lord needs a basic data base of the Word of God to really bring us further into the Light. There is so much yet to be recovered of kingdom life.

It is such a privilege when you get to bring somebody into the kingdom time zone. I know many people are introverted and have a tough time, but there is nothing more wonderful than to witness to somebody and suddenly see the light bulb come on. They hear the stuff, but they have heard it before. "Yeah, yeah, I have heard all that." But then you say one thing, and they realize they need Jesus, and you have brought them into the light. Praise God! There is so much more to these mysteries of how God moves and works, and He wants you to be a part of it as a child of Light becoming a son of Light, dwelling in that Light more and more and more. And then when the kingdom comes, are you prepared? Absolutely, absolutely; you are not in the dark; you are in the Light. You are walking with the Lord, and He will change your mortality into immortality, your imperfection into perfection. He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, because you are walking in the Light. We are children of Light, and the day is at hand. So walk as children of Light.

Let's pray:

At times, Lord, You pull back the curtain and allow us to see that things are precipitously moving towards your return. When we see the global matters of kingdoms rising and falling and we see the instabilities and the problems and the sins becoming more and more endemic in our nation and in our world, we see that the time is ripe for Your coming. Lord, we want to be those who are so found in the Light and living in the Light that we are ready to be the bride in the Light. Lord, teach us how to walk in such a way that we are not just living by doctrines and things we know, but we are still quickened and enlivened by the Spirit within with a vision of You in our world. Change us, Lord; condense our time, fill it with purpose, with blessing, and with challenge. Lord, we want to live in Your time zone. We know that by Your mercy You will shine light and show us the way, and so we pray and thank You. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.