



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

March 27, 2011

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Sermon Text: [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 42:14-21](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 143](#)

Second Lesson: [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39](#)

### Wake Up

Christ's Light Shines

Reflect It

So you get here this morning a little early, you come in and sit down, and you take a look at the Bulletin. You see the Sermon text. You see the theme of the Sermon...Wake Up. How many of you thought I was going to be talking about you? How many of you are feeling a little guilty thinking "He's going to talk about how I sleep during a Sermon."

Last week actually, someone came into church, I won't use names, and said to someone else, "Man, I'm really tired today. Pastor is going to have to really keep my attention or I'm going to sleep." That same person found me in the basement last week and said, "I was really tired. I thought you wouldn't keep me awake, but you kept me awake. You did pretty well."

"Wake up, O sleeper and let Christ shine on you," however, is not talking about this kind of sleep that often goes on during a Sermon. When Jesus is talking to us about "Wake up, O sleeper," he's talking about the kind of sleeping we often do as we go through our life. Sleep walking, spiritually, through our life. The light of Christ is shown into our hearts and we believe he is our only Savior and we rejoice that he has taken away our sins and yet, quite often in our life we want to go through our life and just kind of pull down the shades and say, "I don't want God's light in this area of my life because I don't like what he tells me. In fact, I want to use my own light in this area of my life." That's the kind of thing that Paul is telling us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, through the inerrancy of the Holy Spirit to wake up from those kinds of spiritual sleep walking naps that we all want to take in our lives. We want to take them because we are filthy rotten sinners and we think we know better than God. God says this, and we think this would be better, so that's just your interpretation of Scripture and that's really not what it says.

Look at what Paul tells us this morning. Look what the Holy Spirit moved his pen to write. It says, "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." You're not light in yourself. You're light in the Lord. In the circle of Jesus Christ, when you're connected in Jesus, when you're (like we saw this morning) baptized into Christ, when his righteousness and his perfection covers you and clothes you, you are in the Lord, and now you are light. When you're born in this world, as we said when we went through the Baptism Rite, we're not light in the Lord. We're darkness.

A couple of Chapters earlier, in Ephesians 2, he said, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sin." That's the darkness. That's what each and every one of us is like. But in the Lord, when Christ's light shines on us, this Gospel, God changes us. We don't change ourselves. It's in the Lord, not in us. He comes to us. He makes those that are spiritually dead, you and me, he makes us alive through the power of the Gospel. He does the work. He makes us alive. He shines that light in and shows us that we have nothing. It doesn't matter how hard we try. It doesn't matter what we do. There's nothing we can offer to God to make ourselves get into the light. He has to do all the work. That's what this tells us. He's done it. Over and over we are reminded of this glorious truth. He's done it.

In response to that, he tells us to live as children of the light, isn't that what he said there? "Live as children of the light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)." Goodness, righteousness and truth...there's absolute truth? Our world doesn't want to say that anymore, right? Our world wants to say whatever you think is right, that's right for you, and whatever I think is right is right for me. And if they're not the same, well, live and let live.

But look at what he says. He says, "find out what pleases the Lord." All goodness, righteousness and truth. That's what living in the children of light is...goodness, righteousness and truth. Find out what it is. Let the light of God's Word shine into your lives and show you where you want to go your own way and don't want to go God's way. That's exactly what he is telling you to do here in response to Christ making you alive, giving his very body and blood to take away your sins. We love that and we rejoice in that and we say, "Hallelujah, this is great. God has taken away my sins." God says to respond not just with words but with your actions. Live as children of the light. Live by what God has said. If he said it, I don't care if you understand it or I understand it. It doesn't matter. He said it. He's smarter than we are. We're sinful rotten human beings. How can we say, "God, I know you say this about who we should worship with and who we should practice fellowship with, but I think it's more loving to do it my way." Really? Do you really want to tell God the way you think things should be done? Are you also then willing to say "God, I'm going to save myself my way. I don't need you." I don't think so. Or "God, you say that this is sin and the world around me says it's not sin. Today, it's not that bad, God, so I think I'm going to go with today because I really kind of want to do this."

God says to live as children of the light. Find out what pleases the Lord and then have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness. I don't care what the world says is right and wrong to tell you the truth, except so that I can expose it because he says to expose those fruitless deeds of darkness. I want to find out what Christ says is right and wrong. I want to find out what he says is goodness, righteousness and truth, and then I want to do it. I'm not always going to do it because I'm a filthy rotten sinner just like you are. But one of the marks of living as a child of the light is having the humility to say, "Lord, I don't know what's right and wrong, you do. Lord, it's your world. You created it. It's your rules." It is spiritually lazy to say that the Bible can be interpreted any way that you want it to be interpreted so I'm not even going to look at it.

That's really just saying, "I want to be God, and I want to decide what is right and wrong." That's not reflecting the light. That's trying to determine what is light on your own.

They're parts of God's Word. I don't know why he says what he does. There are parts that he tells me that I like doing. He tells me they are sins and I have to knock it off if I want to honor and thank him for the gift of salvation. Would I prefer that he wouldn't have told me that those things are sins? Most certainly. But it's not up to me to change what he has said. It's up to me to find out what he said and then say, "Lord, help me to do what you said because I love you because you took away my sins." If I'm unwilling to do that, the question I have to start asking myself, and we have to start asking ourselves this question seriously...if I am unwilling to search out what God said and I'm unwilling to submit to what he says, not that I'm always going to do it perfectly, but if I'm unwilling to find that out and to struggle against it, do I really now live in the light? Do I really love my Savior more than I love me?

Those are hard questions. And if we're honest with ourselves, sometimes we have to say we love ourselves more than we love our Savior. We want to pull that shade down and take that spiritual nap and just let God's Word not shine into that part of our lives. When we find that shade springs up and it rolls up and it makes that loud thunk and God's light shines into our life and we see our sin, does it hurt? Yes. It hurts at times. It hurts to see what a filthy rotten sinner I am. But God tells me that when I live in the light, that light takes away my sin, not my actions, not my seeking to do better, not my getting more serious about it. I might want to do that, but your doing it and my doing it doesn't take away our sins. What takes away our sins is Christ. And on this day, we have his very body and blood coming to us and saying, "I love you so much that I poured this blood out and gave this body to take away your sins for the times when you loved yourself more than you loved me." That's Jesus coming to us and saying, "My love is still greater than your sin. My strength is still greater than your weakness. In this forgiveness, I will give you the strength and the help so you can let the light shine in your lives and see what God's Word says and then not buck against it, but say, 'Lord, help me to live it.'" Yes, you are going to screw up in the future, just like we all do. But when you screw up, don't pull down the shades and try to make excuses. Don't try to use the world's reasoning for why it's okay. Throw yourself back at the foot of the cross and in Christ find forgiveness.

So when you wake up, let Christ shine on you and you will find the joy of salvation.