**Ephesians 5:8-14**

“…For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light [9] (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), [10] and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. [11] Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. [12] For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. [13] But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, [14] for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

**“Lights On: This is Home!”**

 Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. The modern age compared to other times is like light and darkness. Who does not own a vehicle, refrigerator, or use a phone? At the same time, such enlightening knowledge has also brought with it other kinds of darkness. The death toll from wars the past hundred years surpasses anything in history. Corruption now spreads faster and farther with mass communication. Problems of life have been exchanged for others problems no less threatening to humanity. In response to such massive failure in the modern age, the present view of many today comes with skepticism, distrust, and rejecting absolute truth.

 Lent offers an answer to the disappointing and troubling life none can get around. More than just repentance, Lent was first about baptism. Those who were baptismal candidates went through preparations for 40 days, which finally led to baptism on the night before Easter. All of it helped to show the former life being left behind and those waters gave as new life in Christ. Luther saw it this way for us whenever we pray as the baptized, “Deliver us from evil.” It is, “that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature would not deceive of mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice.” Jesus is the light able to keep eyes fixed upon Him against the darkness that confronts us.

1. **Darkness is far more than the absence of light.**
2. The devil is the source of darkness.
* His will constantly conflicts with God’s will any way it can.
* Doing good to him is only for the purpose to work some greater evil.
* The Devil loves to exercise his power whenever and wherever he has opportunity.
* He seeks pleasure than in enslaving children of light back into his darkness.
1. The world is engulfed in this darkness.
* Humanity on its own is simply spiritually dead to God in every way.
* Modern knowledge has not brought us closer to God and maybe has left us in a worse position.
* What is good, right, and true no longer has any basis becoming only unfruitful works of darkness.
* Our Lutheran Fathers warned about the pride of intelligence stating, “They want to understand these spiritual things with their reason. But the more diligently and seriously they try, the less they understand or believe. Before they become enlightened and are taught by the Holy Spirit, they regard all this only as foolishness or fiction” (Concordia, 726:522)
1. The sinful self as well is blind to the darkness.
* St. Paul made that point clear to the Ephesian Christians and us, “for at one time you were darkness.”
* Beyond physical sufferings of life, which are hard enough to acknowledge, such as that blind man who the disciples figured somehow got what he deserved.
* If we can barely notice suffering of others, how can we ever see the depth of being a sinner? The Old Adam in us is asleep to God and His way of salvation.
* Just as healthy eyes have no value without light to see, so Christ must shine on us so spiritual eyes can see.
1. **Jesus has awakened us from darkness for He is the light.**
2. Christ is God who confronts the darkness.
* He is the only Son of Father calling all to Him as savior saying, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
* Jesus proclaimed the Gospel to darkened lives wherever and whenever He went exercising His power as God.
* What looked like only evil, the crucified Savior saw fit as the way to draw all darkness into to His death to work all good.
* His resurrection is proof that a greater light shines and Jesus now confronts sinners by baptism so, “you are light in the Lord.”
1. Christ enlightened you by baptism to be children of light.
* This distinction you did not see, but now you do by God’s Word of Law and Gospel that shows your sin and lets you see the Savior.
* Self-motivated desires of the old Adam are to die and rise daily with Christ to discern what is pleasing to God.
* Temptation seeks to redirect us to the unfruitfulness of a world to share in the darkness, lies, and arrogance of the Devil.
* Yet, Christ walks with us and His Sacrament proves there is no foolishness only forgiveness, no wisdom without bearing crosses, and no love apart from how He has loved us.
1. Christ lets us share His light by our lives so others look to Him.
* This is the boldness a blind man healed by Jesus who spoke when seeing through the falsity of the Pharisees.
* The fruit of light comes from Christ for He exchanges our shame to celebrate in Him what is good, right, and true for life.
* Abstaining from darkness is not good enough, since it does nothing for others who need exposure to the light of Christ.
* Everyone wants transparency today like with government, but the baptized know life is transparent when Christ shines on any who are asleep.

 What good are my eyes when there is no light? What good is our western world when all we have left is doubt and disbelief? If the stars can reach us with their light hundreds of light years away, how much more does God’s love in Christ shine for a sinful world? Lent gets dark, but we confess the cross saying, “My eyes are ever toward the Lord…” (Psalms 25:12a). Jesus is the light able to keep eyes fixed upon Him against the darkness that confronts us. Amen. Now the peace of Christ be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to live everlasting. Amen.