

***Ephesians 5:8-13 ( KJV )***

*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, urges them to stay on the path, to live in the light of Jesus Christ than in the darkness of the world. Those words are just as appropriate today as they were when Paul wrote them.

Jesus tells us that we are the light of the world. ***Matthew 5:14 ( KJV )*** *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

What we heard this morning in the Epistle warns us of the consequences of living an immoral life. Basically, if we live that kind of life we have no hope of eternal life. It is all finished for us if we continue on like that.

We are reminded, particularly in Lent, of what kind of life God wants us to live. We are reminded to amend our lives; to change our ways. God's mercy is infinite and God will welcome us back, no matter what we have done. Remember the story of the lost sheep; how the shepherd left the ninety-nine and went looking after the one who was lost and what was said, *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*

Then there is hope for all of us; hope that will have mercy on us and forgive us when we stray off the path. Like the prodigal son, if we have true repentance for our actions, we will be welcomed back into the arms of our father, our Heavenly Father.

But we have to stay on the course that God has set for us.

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel what happens when we straighten out our act but do not fill our lives with his presence. **Luke 11:24-26 (KJV)** *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*

**John 14:23 (KJV)** *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

The idea is to have God come and move in, to fill the place in our soul that is all swept and cleaned. We have His promise that they will IF they are invited. If we invite them the Father and the Son come and dwell in us. In fact the Greek used here is to move in lock stock and barrel; pictures on the walls, rugs on the floor, pots and pans in the kitchen cabinets.

The key here then is love. We are to love God with all of our heart, all of our soul and all of our mind. If we truly love God as we should, we will have no time or inclination to sin.

That is true. If we really love God as we should we won't have any room for sin because God will have filled up our soul with His presence to the point there is no room left.

But we are poor pathetic human beings and we keep getting ourselves in the way of God; we are letting our egos and our wants and our stuff and our propensity to make ourselves gods.

I feel God knows that. He knows everything else about us. He knows how weak we are.

That is why Jesus Christ came, to save us, to take those sins on himself and die for us. That is why it is only through us. Each one of us, dying to the world and rising with the Risen Christ that we have a chance.

As Paul wrote, ***Ephesians 5:14 (KJV)*** *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

Amen.